

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 25th February, 1993

Mr Speaker (The Hon. Kevin Richard Rozzoli) took the chair at 9 a.m.

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

First Day's Debate

Mr PETCH (Gladesville) [9.0]: I move:

That the following Address in Reply to the Speech which His Excellency the Governor has addressed to both Houses of Parliament on opening this third session of the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales be now adopted by this House:

*To His Excellency Rear Admiral **Peter Ross Sinclair**, Officer of the Order of Australia, Governor of the State of New South Wales in the Commonwealth of Australia.*

May it Please Your Excellency -

We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our thanks for Your Excellency's Speech, and to affirm our sincere allegiance to Her Most Gracious Majesty.

2. We beg to assure Your Excellency that our earnest consideration will be given to the measures to be submitted to us, that we will faithfully carry out the important duties entrusted to us by the people of New South Wales, and that the necessary provision for the Public Services will be made in due course.

3. We join Your Excellency in the hope that, under the guidance of Divine Providence, our labours may be so directed as to advance the best interests of all sections of the community.

His Excellency's Speech, which reinforced the Government's economic strategies and necessary management objectives, has been delivered at a time when this nation faces a Federal election and, as His Excellency correctly pointed out, at a time when the community at large is becoming increasingly aware of the enormous deficit in Australia's balance of payments and the structural weakness of the Australian economy. It is no secret that the Federal mismanagement of the Australian economy has had a severe impact on the financial performance of New South Wales. Despite the arguments advanced every year at the Premiers Conference for fair and just returns for the taxpayers of this State, we have been short-changed more viciously and more discriminatorily than any other State in the Commonwealth. This has placed an enormous burden on New South Wales and has emphasised the responsible manner in which the Fahey-Murray Government has addressed this problem and delivered the necessary services and capital works projects to the people of New South Wales.

There is little doubt that, since the election in March 1988, our Government has led the way in responsible financial management and has set standards now attempted to be emulated by other States. I am proud to be a

member of a government which will implement policies of sound management and reforms culminating in greater security and quality of life for all our citizens and for generations to come. These reforms will provide a level of choice and control, never experienced before, over goods and services received from the Government within the entire spectrum of education, health, community services, transport, power and water, as well as local government, thus ensuring that citizens benefit in real and tangible ways from greater efficiency in the public sector. Much criticism in recent days has been directed towards dividends paid to the Government as a result of improvements and efficiency gains in trading enterprises such as the Water Board. Indeed, the payment of tax and contribution of dividends has enabled the Government to constrain its budget deficit and release funds to employ 800 additional teachers, provide more beat police and build new hospitals.

It is logical that, with the competing demands placed on government to provide more and more services and the reluctance of the Federal Government to return our share of income tax collected in this State, our Government now expects a level of performance from all government enterprises comparable with those performance levels traditionally displayed by the private sector. This, of course, includes the payment of dividends to the shareholders, and in this case it is the people of New South Wales who are the beneficiaries. Instead of being a liability on the State Budget, government trading enterprises now contribute significantly to the funding of many social and community services within the budget sector. To clearly illustrate this point and demonstrate the magnitude of their performance, dividends and tax contributions from government trading enterprises have increased tenfold since we came to government - from \$100 million in 1987-88 to almost \$1 billion in the current financial year - and we are totally committed to further commercialisation and corporatisation of GTEs. There is no doubt that the consumer is the beneficiary when GTEs are subject to competition and exposed to market forces.

As His Excellency appropriately pointed out, the unacceptably high level of unemployment throughout Australia cannot be adequately addressed without Federal intervention. However, the Fahey-Murray Government is demonstrating its commitment in ongoing programs to provide sustainable employment opportunities through substantial increases in public works and stimulation of the private sector. The injection of an additional \$540 million to capital works spending this financial year is expected to create 18,000 direct and indirect jobs across the State which will result in better roads, better hospitals, cleaner water, and Olympic standard sporting facilities. Much hope and anticipation is placed on our bid to host the year 2000 Olympic Games, and with only six months to go before the successful bid

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is announced the outstanding efforts of the Minister responsible for the Olympic bid, Bruce Baird, and his dynamic team have proved to be an overwhelming success as Sydney is now placed as odds-on favourite. The success of our bid will benefit Australia as a nation with a gain of \$13 billion and will create an additional 100,000 jobs in New South Wales over the next decade. Additionally, we will gain a world standard sporting complex which not only will benefit our athletes of today but will become a symbol of encouragement for our young and promising athletes of tomorrow.

I am pleased to serve as chairman of the ministerial advisory committee for sport, recreation and racing, and share the Minister's enthusiasm for the capital works programs which have been implemented to cater for the State's sporting needs. It is worthy of noting that, in addition to the massive capital investment in the Homebush Bay Olympic sports complex, \$11 million has been granted in the past three years in capital works assistance grants throughout New South Wales. With the multiplier effect from funds contributed by various community and sporting organisations, the Government's investment of \$11 million has generated more than \$61 million in projects. The success of the Eastern Creek Raceway, both as a generator of economic activity and a source of employment in western Sydney, certainly should make the critics eat humble pie.

Not only is Eastern Creek bringing new money into the area but the recent Winfield triple challenge achieved record attendances of over 40,000 people each day and provided employment for at least 1,000 people. In a similar manner the use of Eastern Creek to stage large outdoor concerts has proved an overwhelming success. The recent Guns-n-Roses concert attracted a crowd of more than 80,000 and, once again, provided employment for over 1,000 people. The enterprise of Eastern Creek as a racetrack, as a concert venue and as a sporting complex has been a greater success than the pundits ever realised. It enjoys the endorsement of the

Blacktown City Council as a major community asset. The council had the intelligence from the onset to appreciate the potential of Eastern Creek and recognise that the massive investment in capital works and land acquisition by our Government would provide world standard sporting facilities for the people of western Sydney. Obviously it now takes pride in its success.

It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge the tremendous support provided by the Sydney Turf Club and the Australian Jockey Club for Sydney's Olympic bid. Their contribution, which will be of the order of \$8 million, has been raised from the special Sunday race-meetings. It is a magnificent effort on their part, particularly at this time when they, like the rest of Australia, are experiencing the stresses of our current economic climate. I am proud to have a warm association with the Wheelchair Sports Association, which has its headquarters in the Royal Rehabilitation Centre at Ryde in my electorate. To witness its enthusiasm to compete at all levels up to the Paralympic level is a unique experience, and it, too, is looking forward to holding the Paralympics in Sydney in the year 2000.

The continued strengthening of Sydney's position as the key financial, business and communications centre in the Asia-Pacific Basin is testimony to the stability that stems from the sound business environment created by our Government. The recent decision by Cathay Pacific Airways to relocate its massive worldwide computer base from Hong Kong to Sydney is indicative of the confidence displayed in us by overseas enterprises. The reshaping of the New South Wales Tourism Commission is another positive initiative to ensure that a strategic marketing focus is directed to maximising the growth of the State's lucrative tourist trade, which earns New South Wales almost \$8 billion annually. In keeping with our precedence to make government instrumentalities more accountable and accessible, the first comprehensive review of the Local Government Act for more than 70 years has now been completed and the Local Government Bill 1993 will be introduced into Parliament this session.

The Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Gerry Peacocke, deserves recognition for finally achieving the revision that Ministers before him only dreamt of. This long-awaited revision of the Local Government Act will place a welcomed emphasis on the openness of decision-making by local government bodies as well as their accountability to the residents and ratepayers. It is also designed to remove ambiguities created by numerous amendments that have crept into the old Act over those 70 years. The new Act will streamline the regulatory process so that all members of the community benefit from better service and greater value for their rates from their local council. The other major local reform is in urban consolidation and improved metropolitan planning. His Excellency correctly pointed out that cities are pre-eminently places for people to work, live and raise their families, and we, as a Government, are committed to urban renewal to provide a more efficient use of resources within the community infrastructure. Redundant or underutilised industrial land will be transformed into residential, commercial and cultural facilities serviced by improved transport links and an integrated transport strategy will soon be released for public comment.

Already the Government has substantially reduced the waste and massive drain on the State budget by the cost of public transport. Five years ago, when we took over the Treasury benches in this State, the losses in transport were not \$1 million per day as we were led to believe. A full audit revealed that these losses exceeded \$3 million per day. Not only has the Minister for Transport completely rationalised the transport portfolio by substantially reducing costs, he also has invested in a host of new initiatives and safety measures, such as much-needed signalling equipment for the State Rail Authority, and new standards to provide greater safety for bus and coach travellers. The provision of additional XPT services with sleeping facilities, as well as

Xplorer

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trains, will change the state of rail travel to a fast, clean and comfortable mode of transport and certainly place New South Wales well ahead of any other State in Australia in respect to the quality of rail travel.

The provision of RiverCat ferries has been revolutionary. They enjoy the status of being the most pleasant form of any public transport. With the delivery of the remaining two ferries, making a total fleet of six RiverCats, travel from Sydney to the upper reaches of the Parramatta River, including the Homebush Bay Olympic stadium and further on to Parramatta in rapid time will complement and extend the well-patronised

services that currently terminate at Meadowbank. The Government's commitment to greater utilisation of our waterways in this manner has provided an environmentally friendly mode of transport and a welcome alternative, particularly at peak hours, to our arterial road system.

Our commitment to the environment will be exemplified with the introduction of endangered species protection legislation in this session of Parliament. For the first time measures for the protection and recovery of species will be integrated into the normal planning approval process. In terms of improving our quality of life, it is a welcome announcement that further measures will be introduced to improve and sustain the quality of the water we drink and the air we breathe. To give these measures real validity a special Cabinet subcommittee has been established to review all arrangements in the management of water resources. To address the recent outbreak of blue-green algae in our waterways and to minimise its impact on future occasions, the announcement of a State algae contingency plan is great news, which will be appreciated by people in western New South Wales as well as those in the metropolitan area who utilise the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment area for their recreation.

With the aid of modern technology our metropolitan air study will determine the most effective strategies to ensure that the major regions of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong enjoy the highest quality of air by keeping pollution to the minimum. Already the Government is trialing natural gas powered buses on major trunk routes to evaluate their potential as a clean air replacement for the current diesel powered units. As a passenger, I was most impressed with their smoothness and the considerable reduction in engine noise. I have been reliably informed that the exhaust from these natural gas powered vehicles contains no harmful chemicals whatsoever. In keeping with the Government's clean air policy a further program to reduce motor vehicle emissions will be evaluated and trialed. Another factor which impacts on air pollution is the number of vehicles that traverse our cities every day, and without integrated trunk and arterial road systems this problem is continually exacerbated.

The need to amplify and upgrade existing traffic routes as well as encourage private sector involvement in the funding of toll roads has been an ongoing strategy of this Government, and quite frankly the people in western Sydney would be in a hell of a mess today without the benefit of the western distributor. They will benefit even further when the new Glebe Island Bridge is opened in 1996. The massive boost of \$1,800 million to roads this year confirms our commitment to building better highways throughout country and urban New South Wales, which in turn provide for increased levels of safety and reduced levels of vehicle emissions and air pollution.

Like other honourable members, I am always receiving requests for assistance in the provision of public housing and it is welcome news that the reform of the Department of Housing will focus on service to the community and will provide more housing options and the better utilisation of funds so that more services can be provided to meet the client's needs. It is a sad reflection on our national economy that more than one million Australians have registered for unemployment benefits. This has placed enormous demands on State governments to respond to their housing and community service support needs. The Minister for Community Services has recognised the valuable contributions made by the various community agencies and service groups to help alleviate the stress and loss of self-esteem associated with unemployment and has responded by providing supplementary funding to many of these community groups to assist them to continue with their valuable work.

We are very fortunate to have the Hon. Jim Longley as Minister for Community Services, a compassionate man of great depth and understanding, who is consciously aware of the needs of the underprivileged in this State. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the valuable assistance I have received from the Minister, particularly in respect of a public meeting I conducted at Ryde last year to give assistance and relief to the unemployed. This meeting, held just before Christmas, was in conjunction with the Ryde family support group and AUSFAM, an extension of the Uniting Church in New South Wales, to help families experiencing the hardship of unemployment cope with Christmas without any income, many of them for the first time, and to assist unemployed people in general.

Particular emphasis was placed on making those in need aware of the support services available to them within the community. Many local community service agencies were available to lend their assistance at this meeting and I wish to place on record my appreciation for their help and express my thanks to Ryde council for its support in providing to the meeting the facilities of the Ryde civic hall at no cost. It is also pleasing to note that in conjunction with the United Nations declaration that 1994 be the Year of the Family, the Fahey-Murray Government should be commended for sponsoring a week in August this year to promote family awareness and to strengthen family relationships.

As a committed family man with six children, I have always recognised the family unit as the foundation of our society. If the family unit is under threat then so is society. Conversely if the family unit is strong and healthy then all prosper from a strong and healthy society. It will give me a great deal of pleasure to participate in the various activities and programs undertaken by my local community during

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family awareness week in August and to explore more deeply the concept of family and the different ways that families care for their members. Within the family unit our future is vested in our children and it is absolutely essential that they receive the benefit of a good education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

As His Excellency correctly pointed out, investing in young people is investing in the State's future. As the Government continues to provide greater freedom of choice for parents to maximise the quality of education, the benefits ensuing from this greater quality and freedom optimise the student's potential. It is assuring to learn of the initiatives currently in place or proposed to ensure that New South Wales enjoys a world standard in education. The quality assurance program in public schools - involving the community, parents, children and teachers with its four-year cyclic review, together with an international advisory council on assessment procedures to measure New South Wales student performances against national profiles - is absolutely essential if we are to ensure that the standard of education in our State remains world class.

Freedom of choice and flexibility are exemplified by the current set of proposals to permit greater access to the higher school certificate by permitting working students to improve themselves by undertaking part-time higher school certificate studies. Furthermore, a joint venture between School Education and TAFE will broaden the learning and training pathways currently available between secondary school and the work force, and this year additional courses will be made available and expanded to cater for more than 14,000 students. All these initiatives will better equip our young people to compete in commerce and industry.

The provision of health care services is equally as important as education provision. As Sydney's population expands in a westerly direction, where many new suburbs have been recently created, the need for more hospitals and medical services to meet that expansion becomes of paramount importance. New hospitals at Penrith and Liverpool have been commissioned to meet this need, together with two regional hospitals at Albury and Lismore. That is indicative of the Government's commitment to put people first in health care by affording them the freedom of choice between public and private health services whilst developing the customer care programs for all. His Excellency's announcement of legislation to establish the complaints unit to ensure the providers of health services are properly accountable to their clients is further reinforcement of the Government's commitment.

The much hackneyed phrase "justice is available only to those who can afford it" will be a thing of the past with the welcome announcement that the Legal Aid Commission will be streamlined and will become more accountable, and that legislation will be introduced to facilitate quicker and cheaper forms of dispute resolutions in the courts. Everybody is entitled to justice, and those reforms will go a long way towards ensuring that there is justice for all. With reports of domestic violence becoming more prevalent, I am pleased that a domestic violence advisory council will be established to co-ordinate Government initiatives to reduce the incidence of these occurrences. Strengthening of the Drug Trafficking (Civil Proceedings) Act to make it more effective to combat the illicit drug trade is a clear indication of the Government's determination to eradicate this scourge on society. As I stated earlier, the family is the foundation of our society, and nothing threatens the stability of the family unit more than when a member of that family is addicted to drugs. The results are swift and devastating,

both to the family and society which is often the victim as the addict seeks a means of financing his habit.

I referred to the initiatives taken by the Minister for Transport in improving rail services in New South Wales. New South Wales is leading the rest of the Commonwealth in the class and the standard of rail travel. One of the initiatives proposed is private sector involvement in the provision of a fast rail link between Sydney and Mascot airport. The envisaged route is from Sydney business district through Beaconsfield, Mascot, and then on to the international and domestic terminals, and from there will continue on to join the East Hills line and ultimately finish at Badgerys Creek. In other words, a privately funded underground rail service between Sydney and Mascot, which will be complementary to the existing rail network which travels to the Bankstown area, will eventually extend to Badgerys Creek. This will afford the opportunity of fast travel from the city to the airport and between airports.

Another great initiative on the Minister's agenda relates to exploration of the use of the tilt train. I had the opportunity last year to travel on the tilt train from Gothenburg to Stockholm, in Sweden. This train is unique in design. It is capable of travelling at very high speeds on existing rail networks so that passengers are not subject to inertia when the train comes into bends at high speeds. The carriages, through a computer network, tilt as an aircraft would bank into the turn. As a result of the tilting mechanism the weight is transferred on to the rails and bogies, so that passengers are completely unaware of what is happening. These trains, travelling at approximately 120 miles per hour, can do so on track that would normally be restricted to about 80 miles an hour. The suggestion of upgrading the rail link between Sydney and Canberra will be a welcome relief for commuters who have to use current air services, with early check-in times, and will convey passengers almost from the centre of Sydney to the centre of Canberra. This in itself is a positive initiative and is indicative of the progress of a can do Minister in the Fahey-Murray Government.

In conclusion, His Excellency has announced clear objectives to contribute towards an improved quality of life for the citizens of New South Wales and his address contained the essential ingredients to maintain stable government in this State. I am deeply honoured to be afforded the opportunity to move this

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Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency on the opening of this session of Parliament.

Mr TURNER (Myall Lakes) [9.27]: I second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech, as moved by the honourable member for Gladesville. It is an honour for me to second the motion for the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech on the occasion of the opening of the third session of the Fiftieth Parliament. I congratulate His Excellency on his Speech. Throughout His Excellency's Speech there was, in my view, a compassion and direction, a strength that will see New South Wales surge forward and give hope to a State strained by the vagaries of a Federal Government that has lost the plot, a Federal Government that has plunged Australia into unheard of unemployment of one million people. The Government's proposal outlined in His Excellency's Speech is visionary and is designed to lift this State from the recession we had to have to new economic and social heights. The people of New South Wales, who have seen through the gloom of recession, with our triple-A rating retained, will see the benefits outlined in His Excellency's Speech flow to them sooner rather than later. They will see the continued megastrides in the services to health, schools, roads, community services, law, order and justice.

The honour of seconding the motion caused me to reflect objectively on my half decade in this House. Because we often move at breakneck pace in our representative lives, it is wise to stop for a while, to gird our loins and look at where we have come from and where we want to go for the betterment of our electorates and the people in them. I suppose one should sit on the other side of the desk from time to time and see oneself as others do. I took the opportunity to read my maiden speech, which I believe is the initial yardstick or benchmark for the matters desired to be attained on behalf of an electorate and constituents. I looked in that document at what I wanted to achieve for my electorate and what I expected the Government to provide to assist me in my goals. I looked at the broad mission statement I made:

I will brook no nonsense from either side of the House if the integrity of country New South Wales is challenged or we do not receive treatment equal to that of the city.

I then looked at His Excellency's Speech. I believe that the direction outlined by His Excellency is achieving a balance between city and country. I am satisfied that during the past five years the country people have received a reasonable share, and a bit more, to assist them to catch up after 12 years of city-based, Labor policies. I am equally satisfied that the new arrangement and the betterment of country New South Wales are directly attributable to the influence of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads, my National Party colleagues in Cabinet, and the rest of my National Party team. But the tyranny of distance in the country needs to be overcome. I have significant roads and roadworks in my electorate. Every year record moneys are spent on work on the Pacific Highway, but that money, as well as the investment in road safety issues, is paying dividends. The Pacific Highway through my electorate is now significantly better than it was five years ago. There are now dual carriageways, more overtaking lanes and, most pleasing of all, fewer road deaths. More improvements are contemplated. For decades there has been talk about a dual carriageway between Hexham and the Queensland border. Today, at this very moment, a document is circulating in the North Coast community outlining a proposal to build a dual carriageway in just 10 years, to start as early as 1993. It is possible that this carriageway will be partly operational as early as late 1994. This is a reality unfolding before our very eyes; a reality made possible by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads. It is a victory for action over tardiness and it will be a victory for the saving of more human life. If this proposal proceeds through the private sector, moneys will be released for work on other roads.

His Excellency also outlined initiatives in the area of law and justice. There is no doubt that all men and women are not equal before the law. The gap between those who are genuinely aggrieved but cannot afford legal representation and those from the big end of town who can is widening at an alarming rate. In recent days defendants have had their charges dropped because of a High Court decision that if they cannot get legal aid and cannot afford legal representation they should not be proceeded against. This naturally raises sinister overtones about the legal costs debate. In many matters the average person will be frustrated because of his inability to prosecute a claim. The Government's intention to introduce legislation to facilitate quicker and cheaper forms of dispute resolution is to be applauded. The courts must not be the bastions of the wealthy; they must be available to all people.

Family Week is a new initiative of the Government, as outlined in His Excellency's Speech, and it is most gratifying to me. The National Party believes that the family is the backbone of our society. The strength of the family is what binds and holds together the community in which we live. Recognition of the family cannot be purchased by payments to support children in day care centres, and it cannot be purchased by paying mothers to stay at home, as the Prime Minister would like. The family is that magical circle that binds together those near and dear. How many times did we hear our parents say, "I want you to have a life I never had"? Often it was said by parents who had endured the depression years. Regrettably, a generation of children in years to come will again say that to their children. This Government has shown again that it recognises the value of the family; that it recognises the gigantic - and it is gigantic - role that the family plays in our society; and that it recognises the plight of the family at this time when pressures are so great that the disintegration of family life as we know it is a daily occurrence. Whilst I accept that other forms of relationships are important, none is as important as

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the family. The pressures on families today are oppressive. Financial hardship has seen many families disintegrate. Nothing is more soul destroying, more heart wrenching, than a father and mother not being able to provide for their family.

The economic hardships presently facing the family stem mainly from the Federal Labor Government's economic policies - policies that have been tried and failed. It is therefore incumbent upon this Government to work hand-in-hand with the new Federal coalition government which will be elected on 13th March to ensure that we, as a State and a nation, regain our pre-eminence in the developed world and, after doing so, that we participate in enjoining the rest of the world to our desired destiny. The Government's intention to cut through the bureaucratic red tape, to stop the delays of bureaucracy and, as the saying goes, to stop stuffing around, will mean that its goal of shaking this State into a frenzy of activity will be achieved. The 18,000 direct and indirect

jobs to be created throughout this State this financial year will be a reality. The invigoration of the private sector, as well as the public sector, is vital to the metamorphosis from the welfare-induced stupor of the Federal Labor Government to the crystallisation of activity promoted by free enterprise thinking.

Part of that free enterprise forward thinking movement, something which will lead to the re-invigoration of our economy, must occur when we are successful in winning the right to stage the Olympics in Sydney in the year 2000. I do not believe I have seen a more morale boosting activity than this State's bid for the Olympics. In most instances petty animosities have been set aside, and a surge of statewide pride has been evident as we pursue this bid. No stone has been left unturned, and no stone must be left unturned to secure the Olympics for Sydney. The successful bid will be like the ear-splitting crack of an amphora against Mount Olympus as it allows the ambrosia to flow freely throughout New South Wales. It will light the flame of economic recovery in New South Wales. The Olympic Games will not just be for Sydney, they will be for the whole of New South Wales and Australia. People will filter through the beautiful areas of the Myall Lakes electorate; they will visit Taree, which has already, through its council, taken an initiative to invite the Sydney 2000 bid committee to use the mighty Manning River for pre-Olympic training in rowing. The Olympic tourists will visit the beaches and rivers of the coast, the hinterland around Gloucester, and the wonderful national parks - parks, I am reminded from my maiden speech, that are for the people.

The statement that parks are for the people is about to be challenged in my electorate as a wilderness proposal for the Barrington Tops National Park is about to go on exhibition. This proposal will see the virtual locking up of what today is an accessible national park, a park where at this very moment people are walking, driving and camping, and where the old, infirm and young can enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Recently I walked in an area of the Barrington Tops National Park which has been nominated for inclusion in the wilderness proposal. My guide said that in the area in which we walked mothers could push their babies in prams and enjoy the wonderful scenery and nature. That will be no more if a few selfish, self-centred people have their way. At the risk of plagiarising the famous statesman Sir Winston Churchill, I say of the wilderness proposal, "Never has so much been lost to so many by so few". There is no doubt that we need environmental protection, but we also need common sense. As His Excellency said:

The Government needs to ensure that decision-making processes about natural resources are sensitive to the full range of impacts and are capable of delivering certainty and security for environmental values and for employment and investment.

A balance such as that envisaged in His Excellency's Speech is evident from the mining that is to occur near Saltwater in my electorate. This project will see a barren, useless piece of previously disturbed land re-mined and then rehabilitated to the level it should have been in the first place when it was mined over 20 years ago. The land will then be incorporated into a nature reserve agreed to by the Government, with the vegetation and habitat of the adjoining area becoming dominant. The land will not be left as the scant barren land that it is at present, where we would have to hand-feed the rabbits. This environmental consideration is a win for both employment and the environment. I am pleased to note in His Excellency's Speech that penalties for marine pollution offences are to be increased and that an estuary management policy will be put into place. This is excellent news for my electorate, particularly the Forster-Tuncurry region of my electorate, which has the magnificent estuary area of the Wallis Lake and the Wallamba River, as well as Smiths Lake and Myall Lakes. The purity and intensity of the waters in the lake system in my electorate must be protected zealously. The only darkening of the clear emerald green waters of the lakes, the rivers and the beaches that abound in the area should be the beautiful shapes of dolphins as they frolic in this idyllic playground.

The tourism of the coast is significant, as is the hinterland of agricultural pursuits. Fishing and oyster farming are significant industries in this area. Regrettably, recently the oyster farmers of Wallis Lake experienced a significant heat kill of their oysters. Many lost almost all of their stock, and they must be assisted to re-establish themselves. The fishermen and oyster farmers, once they are on their feet again, the farmers and those involved in agricultural pursuits in the hinterland, including Gloucester and its region, can expect to benefit from the Government's expected growth in agricultural production and gross income. It is only now that the Prime Minister, Mr Keating, has acknowledged the value of the Asia-Pacific rim as a trading

partner. This Government has long seen its significance and has been highly visible and active in that area to the betterment of primary production in New South Wales. The State's energetic export marketing strategy for primary produce is paving the way to larger export activity.

Earlier in my contribution I spoke of the Government's intention to cut red tape and delays in

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order to create security and predictability for investment. In my electorate I have significant manufacturing industry, light industry and service industries. As I move around and inspect those industries, the role they play in the economic fabric of the area never ceases to amaze me. Water skis are exported from Forster to the Argentine, Portugal and Switzerland. Car parts are exported from Taree. Boats are built by Stebercraft for the Japanese market, and components are made for manufacturing industry right around Australia. These industries are vibrant at present, and will be more so under the program set out by the Government. To facilitate this vibrancy it will be necessary for the State Government and local government to work hand-in-hand to nurture that which is there and to encourage that which is not there to be established there. One of my roles in the Parliament has been chairman of the advisory committee of the Minister for Local Government and Cooperatives and chairman of the legislation committee on local government.

It has been a great pleasure to work with my National Party colleague Gerry Peacocke, who has developed and refined the Local Government Bill. This bill has been the subject of vacillation; it has been put aside, talked about ad nauseam, and generally pigeon-holed by former Ministers. The present Minister for Local Government has taken hold of the Local Government Bill. He has prepared a document that has dragged the local government community from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to the very verge of the twenty-first century.

The bill is not prescriptive; it thrusts upon local government accountability and an openness of decision-making not previously seen. It brings councils up to modern standards from the Anglicised and Dickensian era which was mongrelised with early twentieth century local government necessity. I have had the privilege of being directly involved in the shaping of the local government legislation. I only hope that the minority Independent element of this Parliament, those who profess to be the fount of all knowledge but declined to partake fully in the legislation committee process - in particular in regard to the legislation committee on the Local Government Bill - which they insisted on the Parliament adopting, will not now seek to impose their minority will upon the well enunciated and considered views of the majority.

Those views were collected during a period of public consultation that has not hitherto been seen in the Parliament. That consultation has involved all major parties. Let the Independents at their peril impose their minority rule in regard to this and other popular legislation in respect of which they have been invited to take part, but have chosen not to participate. Finally, as a member of the National Party, which is a specialist party designed to look after provincial and rural Australia, I should reflect on the words of the Rt Hon. Doug Anthony, a former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and Leader of the National Party. The words he used about 20 years ago are as true today as they were when he spoke them. He said:

A strong National Party does keep a balance - the balance of stable government, dependable government; the balance of development between city and country areas; the balance of economics and development; a balance between the rural, industrial and other sectors of the community. We want to see a balance of opportunity for education and employment; a balance of special justice between different sections of the community. We keep a balance between extremes of political thought.

I believe that those words encapsulate the role of the National Party in coalition. Far more subtly than the remarks I made in my maiden speech, to which I referred earlier, they imply and demonstrate the important role that this party plays in the shaping of the State and the role it plays in determining the future of this Government in the policy area. It has been an honour for me to second the Address in reply to His Excellency's Speech. May the outline of the Government's program for the third session of this Parliament be seen for what it is: visionary and practical. But above all else the Governor's Speech was about hope for all the people of New South Wales, no matter what their affiliations. It was about our hope for survival and progress into and for a

better twenty-first century.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [9.44]: I am delighted to speak in the debate on the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech on the morning on which the news headlines are that the Prime Minister of Canada has lost his position because of his insistence on the goods and services tax. I hope that Dr John Hewson was listening to this morning's radio broadcasts of the news, because the die is cast in Canada and certainly it will be cast in Australia very soon. When I listened to His Excellency's Speech I was struck by several matters. One was the suggestion that the Government is being responsive to the public. I shall comment on that later. In regard to justice His Excellency said, on behalf of the Government:

In the area of law and justice the Government's main aim is to increase the accessibility, variety and affordability of legal services.

I shall make further remarks on that. His Excellency said at page 4 of his Speech:

The Government will introduce legislation to facilitate quicker and cheaper forms of dispute resolution under the supervision of the courts, reserving expensive litigation as a measure of last resort.

On behalf of the Government, at page 5 His Excellency said:

This year the Government will propose legislation arising from the review of the Victims Compensation Tribunal to ensure that the system is working properly and that victims of violent crime receive compensation.

Before moving to further address those matters to which I have referred I should remind honourable members of a plea that I have made on behalf of my constituents, seeking a ministerial visit to Thomas Street in Ashfield. I should be fair to the honourable member for Strathfield: Thomas Street is partly in his electorate and partly in mine, and he also has encouraged the Minister for Roads to visit this street. Enormous difficulty is being experienced by our constituents as a result of the huge numbers of

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vehicles that traverse this local road. After 22 months the Minister has refused to visit either of the electorates to personally see the problems faced by our constituents. At 4 o'clock in the morning the first of about 10,000 vehicles comes from the western area of Sydney and uses Thomas Street - which is a small, narrow-gutted thoroughfare, typical of many streets in the western suburbs - to bypass Liverpool Road. They travel from west to east in the morning and in the afternoon make a right-hand turn off Liverpool Road.

The problem becomes exacerbated in the late afternoon. There is a two-way flow of traffic, which is bad for the people of the district, who suffer noise pollution and all the other deleterious aspects that result from the passage of a large number of vehicles. The Minister has promised the honourable member for Strathfield that he will come and see at first hand the problems to which I have referred. I never thought I would ever say that the Deputy Premier is an apparition, but he has not been to the location, nor has he given any indication of when he will do so. The second problem relates to a roads project that has been on the drawing board since 1985, the city link road. Notwithstanding that the local Ashfield council, particularly Alderman Ted Cassidy, is leading the charge on behalf of the people in the Haberfield area who want the Government to re-examine the proposal, nothing has been done.

Again I am speaking about enormous numbers of cars traversing residential streets, and the attendant results, including noise pollution, danger to children, lead poisoning, and pollution from exhaust fumes from the huge trucks which travel along residential streets. Again it has not been possible to get the Minister to meet a deputation from the council, members of Parliament, or the vast number of people who have signed a petition in an effort to get the Minister to see at first hand the difficulties being experienced by my constituents and the people of Haberfield and nearby. Those two matters illustrate the failure of the Minister to visit local areas. The third instance in which a Minister has been requested to take action involves the Minister for Transport, Mr Baird. He has been asked repeatedly to make a definite decision about Ashfield railway station. Surely pre-planning is involved in improvements to a railway station. No one suggests that Ashfield railway station is not in need of repair.

Lewisham railway station, which is also in my electorate, won a competition on the former Mike Carlton radio program as the worst railway station in New South Wales. The Government did nothing at Summer Hill, Ashfield or Croydon stations but responded very quickly and spent more than \$1 million on Lewisham railway station when the public spotlight was on it. However, train services were then reduced. For some time the Government has had a ridiculous proposal to block the northern end of Ashfield station. Thousands of people living on the northern side of that station, some no more than 10 metres from it, will have to walk 400 metres around and underneath the railway station to gain access to it from the southern side.

The Government has made no response about the massive problems and inconvenience that will be caused to children, women with prams, the aged and disabled and other residents of Ashfield. A large number of people in the Ashfield electorate who have some physical impairment and are unable to traverse the station steps will have to walk an additional 400 metres and then climb 30 or 40 steps to get onto the railway station. I am sure the Minister is being advised by his departmental officers, but I have asked him, the council has asked him, and even Liberal aldermen on the council are trying to ask him, to do something to ease the gross inconvenience that will be caused to my constituents. The Government claims to be responsive to the needs of the community, but the two examples I have cited show that Ministers of the Crown are not doing their job and are not responding to the wishes of the community. I was shocked to hear His Excellency say in his Speech:

In the area of law and justice, the Government's main aim is to increase the accessibility, variety and affordability of legal services.

That statement by the Governor does not accord with the vast number of communications I am receiving from people in the market-place and general community, nor is it the response from the 20,000 people who overnight were rendered unable to obtain legal aid. The chairman of the Legal Aid Commission - who is also president of one of the North Shore Liberal Party branches - has severely criticised the Government's cutback on legal aid and has pointed out the error of its ways. So this is not a Labor Party plot. The Government says it will introduce legislation to facilitate quicker and cheaper forms of dispute resolution, that it will deal with victims' compensation and increase the accessibility, variety and affordability of legal services; but it has cut back legal aid entitlements. What hypocrisy! Department of Housing tenants have received notices that their applications for rental rebates have been refused because there is no money. Legal aid funding has been cut off for matters involving consumer credit contracts entered into in unjust circumstances. Eleven clients with personal loans with a major financial institution - which had been refused a credit provider's licence in Victoria, but managed to obtain one in New South Wales, though that is a separate issue - are unable to receive legal funding to respond to the company's application for reinstatement of civil penalties worth about \$100 million.

The Victims Compensation Tribunal is said to have refused, on an interpretation of the Victims Compensation Act, an application by the family of a man who was decapitated and had his toes ripped off but whose killer was found not guilty by reason of insanity. Without legal aid that family - and who could be more deserving of legal aid? - is unable to appeal to the District Court to seek a moral interpretation of a technicality in the Act. This so-called generous Government claims it will improve the availability of legal aid, but what has it done? It has said that legal aid funding for civil matters will cease from 31st December but that its main aim is to increase accessibility, variety and affordability of legal services. How could the Government make such a claim when it is aware that 20,000 people have been denied legal aid, sometimes in tragic circumstances?

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Many people other than the family I have mentioned have been disadvantaged. Sixteen people have complained about various time-share operators. Notwithstanding representations to them, responsible Federal and State Ministers have failed to resolve the problem. The problem can only be resolved through access to the justice system, to courts and litigation. But legal aid will no longer be available for litigants in civil matters, including even wills and probate administration cases or anything to do with the civil law. Rights or entitlement to legal aid in those cases will cease - and accessibility to and affordability of legal services will decrease - through the actions of the Government in denying people their rightful claims to legal aid. A

commissioner of the Legal Aid Commission stated in a note, inter alia, that the decision to cut legal aid was brought about by the acute financial position in which the commission presently finds itself, and that this is in part due to the failure of the New South Wales Government to adequately support the commission with funds as promised and to honour its obligations under the Federal-State funding agreement.

The Government, in stopping legal aid funding, will no longer receive the 55 per cent of costs previously paid by the Federal Government. The State Government, for every 45 cents it spent on legal aid, received 55 cents from the Commonwealth Government - better than dollar for dollar. In 80 per cent of civil matters costs and damages were awarded to the defendant and went into the Legal Aid Commission's pool. The Government claims to be an economic manager, but its actions display economic stupidity. Yet the economic gurus opposite cut out that funding. The Government, by denying people their legal aid entitlements, is cutting off its nose to spite its face. The legal aid commissioner also said that the decision to cut aid in civil cases was not a decision which was made without lengthy and involved discussion and consultation at the commission level, that naturally the commission would have preferred not to have made the decision but that it had no choice in accordance with proper financial responsibility and management. In other words, the New South Wales Government has reneged on its commitment to provide legal aid in New South Wales.

The claim by the Government, outlined in the Governor's Speech, that in the area of law and justice its main aim is to increase accessibility, variety and affordability of legal services is fatuous, false and deliberately untrue. The Government says it will set legal fees, which will be reviewed in consultation with the community. In the dying days of the Parliament last year the Government was going to give barristers fee increases of in some instances up to 250 per cent. However, the Opposition combined with Independent members to defeat passage of the relevant regulation. The Government was seeking to grant barristers an increase of up to 250 per cent. It was only as a result of action taken by the Opposition that legislation for that purpose was defeated. I suggested then and I suggest now that there is some legitimacy in the entitlement of barristers, but they are no different from anyone else - they are entitled to no more than the consumer price index. They certainly are not entitled to an increase of 250 per cent.

The Government had the Governor say that it is going to set legal fees. Obviously the fees will be set by giving everyone in the legal profession a massive increase. The Government, through the Governor, says it will introduce legislation to bring about quicker and cheaper forms of dispute resolution. That does not sit well with the Government's attitude. Honourable members should ask the Minister for Justice and the Attorney General why they have stopped funding the arbitration system in the Parramatta district, where there is a logjam. Everyone acknowledges the outstanding success of the arbitration system which was commenced by the former Labor Government. It resulted in an increased number of matters coming before the courts, thereby avoiding unnecessary costs involved with court processes.

This Government is seeking to change the system of dispute resolution. How can that be done? Why does it seek to create a new method of dispute resolution when the present arbitration system throughout New South Wales has been tested and proven? No allocation has been made to fund arbitration throughout rural New South Wales and Parramatta, and it will soon cease in Sydney, where arbitration has been a cost-saving mechanism. How can the Government in all honesty have the Governor stand up and say there will be a cheaper method of dispute processing? I wish to refer to the Government's proposed legislation on victims' compensation, to analyse whether the system is working properly and whether victims of violent crime receive adequate compensation. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Legislation with regard to victims' compensation is in need of reform. I remind honourable members that when criminal offences are committed against persons, those persons, as victims of the crime, are entitled to seek compensation. The maximum entitlement is an award of \$50,000 for injury sustained as a result of a criminal act. The problem in the past of a delay in matters being dealt with has basically been resolved. However, I understand that the recommendations in the Government's private internal paper will result in a massive reduction in the amount of compensation available to victims of crime. For example, at present if a policeman in the cause of duty is injured and loses an eye as a result of being hit over the head with a gun or bottle, he is entitled to receive compensation from the Victims Compensation Tribunal. The Government, as

set out in this internal paper, now proposes to prevent policemen, firemen and ambulance officers who are injured in the course of their duties from claiming victims' compensation. This action is being taken by the same Government that claims it proposes to ensure that victims' compensation works properly and that victims of violent crime receive compensation. This same Government will denude people of their rights to victims' compensation.

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The methodology of the Government's proposal to streamline the process will deny people access to the Victims Compensation Tribunal. The Government's secret agenda is to wind down victims' compensation, thus disentitling the people of this State to compensation. Any legislation designed for such a purpose will not be passed by this House, because I am confident that the Independent members of this Parliament will stand with the Australian Labor Party Opposition and resist it. In relation to the Legal Aid Commission, I will be introducing a private member's bill that will restore the pre-31st December situation so far as legal aid in this State is concerned. I am quietly confident - though one can never judge the position until the vote is taken - that the legislation will be passed. I hope that when that bill is passed and given assent, meaning will be given to the following words in the Governor's Speech: the Government's main aim with regard to law and justice is to increase accessibility to, and the variety and affordability of legal services. I am confident that the Opposition will win the debate on this issue and that the position with regard to legal aid will be resurrected. I have received numerous letters that support the Opposition's attitude to this matter.

I shall now refer briefly to a health matter. One of my constituents, whose name I shall not mention in the interests of privacy, is concerned about the Government's proposal to close the melanoma clinic at Prince Alfred Hospital. Anyone who has experienced or observed the great work done by that hospital would support its continued existence, particularly the female members of our community who rely on the melanoma clinic and its follow-up processes to ensure that those who are suffering from this disease are properly cared for. Such a closure would have tragic consequences. I do not know how the Minister for Health can live with himself. It is proposed that the clinic be broken up and incorporated with another oncology clinic. In a letter to me a constituent wrote:

As this disease is a major killer of fit young people who have yet to appreciate their own mortality, the clientele of this unit often fits in awkwardly with the older, less vigorous people who are likely to suffer from other life threatening illnesses.

The Melanoma Unit has been a leader in the use of day surgery for procedures that not long ago, required days of hospitalisation. Even though we are talking about people who are not physically debilitated, the situation cannot be compared to say, the treatment of a sporting injury. The combination of the powerful drugs used and the "fight or flight" response brought on by a threat to one's life, can bring about some pretty volatile responses. The management of this situation depends on a regular team which cannot be readily reproduced in a private hospital which is only occasionally involved in this work.

Despite the difficulties faced by melanoma sufferers - which were referred to by my constituent - this Government is proposing to close the melanoma unit at Prince Alfred Hospital. How can the Government in all conscience suggest such a horrendous proposal? Have honourable members on the Government side of the House, on behalf of their constituents, raised the issue with the Minister for Health? On 2nd February I wrote to the Minister about this matter but I have not yet received a response. How can the Government possibly say it cares for the health of the people of New South Wales when the truth is so far different? The Government is taking away the fundamental health care needs and the lives of the people of New South Wales. Honourable members whose relatives or friends have suffered from cancer will understand the trauma and the chagrin that the Government's proposal will cause to those in need of treatment for melanoma. Those requiring treatment now and in the future will have the prop that may save their lives removed by the proposal to close the melanoma unit. Shame on the Government. It is an absolute disgrace. The pious hypocrisy of the Government is no more evident than in its claim that it will look after people through health and legal aid services. It makes me sick!

I wrote a letter to the Attorney General in relation to a tragic case which involved a male person shooting

his de facto wife at a kindergarten. Bang! She was dead. Obviously there was a mental problem, a family problem, a domestic problem. The man was charged with murder in September. He was in prison but on Christmas Eve, without any notification to the family, an application was made to a judge who was a specialist in equity law, and the prisoner was released from prison. The family, understandably, is living in fear. I was so concerned that I wrote to the Attorney General, Mr Hannaford, and went to see him about the matter. I said, "You have to do something about these circumstances". He said, "My hands are tied. I cannot do anything". Then he issued a press release stating, "Mr Hannaford said advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions has clearly pointed out that there was no basis for the Crown to seek review of the Supreme Court's decision". He also said in the press release, "I have today spoken to the Director of Public Prosecutions and he assured me that immediate action will be taken on any evidence". In relation to this application there were a number of disturbing factors. First, the family was not notified of the intended application for bail; and, second, the verbal evidence of the psychiatrist was not taken into account. For some insupportable reason bail was granted and the family is now living in real fear of a repetition of the incident.

The Attorney General also stated that I was ignorant of the law. Maybe I am, but I do know the difference between right and wrong. I do know the fundamental difference between who should be incarcerated and who should not. I know who are the real victims in these circumstances. Is it not strange that the accused receives legal aid but the victims, the family, do not? It has cost the family \$10,000. In this instance the criminal got the support. The Attorney General said that I was ignorant of the law but the Director of Public Prosecutions has now announced that he has found reasons for appeal against the court decision. The House would be surprised that the reasons are: one, that the family was not notified; and, two, that the psychiatrist's report was not presented to the judge! The Attorney General does not owe an apology to me; but there has to be an apology to the family and friends who have been living in fear.

I have a letter from a person who is not a

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constituent of mine but whose child goes to the kindergarten at which the incident occurred. The child has been removed from the kindergarten because the parents are living in fear of a reprisal against anyone opposing the granting of bail. This Government is supposed to be caring for people. But this same Government has stopped legal aid and it has taken the funding away from health. The Minister for Health came into the Chamber and said to the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai, "Whelan is the biggest liar I have ever seen". I ask the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai, when he speaks, to tell my constituents on behalf of the Government that the melanoma unit will not close. If he gives that guarantee, I will be very happy to tell my constituents of that. I know what the Government's proposal is because my constituency is experiencing it. [*Time expired.*]

Mr O'DOHERTY (Ku-ring-gai) [10.14]: It is a privilege to speak at this point in the debate and to welcome on behalf of my constituents in the Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby areas the general thrust of the Speech of His Excellency yesterday. In beginning my speech I say on behalf of the Government to the honourable member for Ashfield that the melanoma clinic at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital will not close. It was never down for closure. It will not close. It will remain open. If the honourable member for Ashfield is really concerned about the health and well-being of his constituents, especially those with dreadful diseases such as melanoma, he ought to stop perpetuating Labor's cancer. Labor's cancer in New South Wales is that it is very careless with the truth. The honourable member for Ashfield, the shadow minister for health and the Leader of the Opposition perpetuate those sorts of lies in the community. For some months they have been peddling this untruth which has been causing great alarm and concern not just in the electorate of the honourable member for Ashfield but right around New South Wales. Concern about it has been expressed to my office as well. This has been brought about by Labor's careless handling of the truth.

Just a moment ago I spoke with the Minister for Health. He came into the Chamber because of the lies being peddled by the honourable member for Ashfield, who has now left the Chamber. He cannot stand to hear the truth. The Minister for Health said - and I repeat it - that the melanoma clinic will not close and it was never even proposed for closure. So let that be the end to that lie. As I said, Labor's cancer is that it is very careless with the truth. We have to be concerned, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, about what is being said by Labor now and, no doubt, what will be said by its supporters throughout the rest of this year. It

will be an important year not just for New South Wales but for Australia.

As His Excellency pointed out in his Speech yesterday, 1993 in New South Wales has a backdrop of difficult economic times throughout Australia. The debate in the current Federal election campaign has focused our attention on the state of the economy. The honourable member for Ashfield mentioned the resignation this morning of the Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney. He put it down to the goods and services tax in Canada. He neglected to mention that Sir Roger Douglas from the former Labor Government in New Zealand is in Australia. He is the man who introduced the goods and services tax in New Zealand. He fully endorses the goods and services tax being proposed by the coalition in the Federal election campaign. He sees it as a way to get Australia moving again. It certainly is a way to get around the Labor lie that the economy is going to improve.

Mr McManus: It did not do that in New Zealand.

Mr O'DOHERTY: Again the cancer. It is popping up all around Australia. How long do we have to put up with this Labor lie? The cancer is terminal in the case of Paul Keating and his team, because on 13th March the people of Australia will decide to do what New South Wales sensibly did some time ago: toss Labor out and return to sensible economic management on behalf of the people. I welcome the thrust of the Governor's Speech, which was outlined as follows:

The State budget reflects my Government's view that good financial management is not an end in itself, but rather a means of improving living standards and social welfare in a sustainable manner.

That statement by the Governor underpins the entire economic approach of the Government of which I am privileged to be a part. Our focus on economic management is not as a means in itself. We have seen what happens when governments focus on economic management as a means in itself. That has occurred in the Federal arena for the past 10 years. People were pointing to beautiful sets of numbers and trying to produce marvellous balance-sheets alone. They played around with interest rates, the money supply, and so on. But what happened? There are more than one million unemployed.

Mr Blackmore: How many?

Mr O'DOHERTY: More than a million. It is shameful, and it will be written on the tombstone of Prime Minister Paul Keating, who has this burden of terminal cancer of Labor's lies about the economy and other matters. Economic management is not the be-all and end-all; it is not the means alone; but it is a tool for serving people, as spelt out by His Excellency yesterday, and it is at the heart of the focus of the Government of New South Wales. Serving people and using economic tools to ensure the most efficient economy possible is what the Government is about. Another strand of His Excellency's Speech is that the family unit is the fundamental building block of society, not economists. Thank goodness! Serving the family through whatever tools are available, including sensible economic management, is what the Government is all about. The family is, and ought to be, at the heart of the decisions of members of Parliament and the Government. I am delighted that not only will the family be the focus of the Government in its economic and other policies, but for one week in August the community's focus will be

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concentrated on family relationships. In his Speech the Governor said:

Families in their many and diverse forms will be given special recognition by the Government during 1993. The family performs the critical role in our future and therefore requires our collective support.

Every member on this side of the House supports the family unit as the fundamental building block of society. In the family unit is where we learn how to be people; where we learn how to relate to others and how to live in society; where we develop our sense of attitude, our sense of morals, our sense of what is right. Families can be units of growth, love and encouragement. Sadly, families can also be centres of abuse and neglect for small children. Families set the pattern for the lives of children. Society has many dysfunctional families - the result

of the essential selfishness that is inherent in all human beings. It must be recognised that as we focus on relationships within families and talk about how we relate to and care for one another within our family unit, a pattern can be set for our younger generation which will benefit society in generations to come. If we can nurture families built on love, respect and hope, we can nurture a future for our country that is built on love and respect and hope.

If families can be encouraged not to bury their problems but to think and talk about them, to seek help and advice when required, society will improve dramatically for generations to come. Many decisions can be made by legislators to impact on the family. The effect of economic decisions, made sometimes in apparent isolation from the reality of family life in society, has a direct impact on people and most importantly on family units. A common thread through the programs outlined by His Excellency and the programs outlined by the Government is the family unit and our care for that unit. I should like to mention some of those programs. First I refer to community services.

It is no accident that the community services portfolio is administered by Minister Longley - a man with a deep commitment and passion for the family unit. That portfolio and that Minister have the carriage of Family Week and directing the focus of the International Year of the Family, which has been proclaimed by the United Nations for the next year. The community services portfolio acknowledges that welfare is not a safety net for our society, it is not a way of trying to provide some form of sustenance for dysfunctional families and people in our society. Nor is it a way of keeping such people quiet. Rather it is a means of rehabilitating the disaffected within our society and bringing families back together; a means of helping families that are falling apart to resolve their differences.

Family break-up impacts not only on the family involved. Society also is affected. It has a direct economic impact on society. Many like to denigrate the role of the traditional family; many people focus on the breaking down of traditional family values. Indeed, it is the catchcry of all left-wing and left-leaning groups, part of whose agenda is the breakdown of our society. As they denigrate what has been the traditional and solid family foundation of our society for millennia, they break down society itself. That cannot be allowed to happen. One of the directions of the community services portfolio has been - and rightly so - to rehabilitate and reunite dysfunctional families. Community services provide a quality of life for the disabled, regardless of the level of the disability.

I have visited centres in my electorate and nearby electorates in which people with horrendous disabilities - emotional, developmental, as well as physical - are being cared for. Such people need to be cared for and require a quality of life to enable them to live their lives in the best way possible. Community services is continually developing new programs. During the next 12 months it will focus its attention on what impact, if any, those programs have on the community, the disadvantaged and the disabled. It will concentrate also on quality assurance, to make the department accountable to the community. I am excited by the prospect of being a member of the ministerial advisory committee on community services for the next 12-month period. His Excellency said also that employment is another important aspect with regard to the way we care for families. His Excellency said:

Sustainable employment opportunities are being encouraged by my Government's commitment to ongoing programs, encouragement of private sector development and through substantial increases in State capital works.

It is important to note that an additional \$540 million has been allocated for capital works in 1992-93 to create real jobs in New South Wales. This is against the background of an Australia that has been in recession for a long time and which has, under a Federal Labor Government, reached that unwanted milestone of one million people on the official unemployment list. The dreadful federally induced recession will end only when there is a complete turnaround by the country in its approach to government, by its turning to the coalition parties to enable a dramatic re-working of the economy to free up money.

The honourable member for Bulli was not here when I spoke of Sir Roger Douglas. If he was present, it is obvious he was not listening. Sir Roger Douglas has endorsed the Federal Opposition's goods and services

tax proposal. Labor is not able to face the truth, that job creation must be the hallmark of economic policy. It lives in hope that the numbers will come right without freeing up the tax system and industry, by doing away with seven key taxes including payroll tax, and by doing away with many of the disincentives to employment in Australia. The Federal coalition will assist the New South Wales Government to create more jobs. The Opposition members laugh at these proposals, but theirs is the laughter of dying people.

Mr Downy: Dying jackals.

Mr O'DOHERTY: Dying jackals indeed. Their laughter will cease on 13th March when the electorate will vote in a new Federal Government. Opposition members are laughing about the plight of families in New South Wales, even families in their own electorates. I should have thought the

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honourable member for Bulli would show more concern for families in his electorate who are on the unemployment scrap-heap, because above all else such families need us to care for them by providing jobs. It is no good the Opposition persisting with its rhetoric, lies and scare campaigns, similar to that which we witnessed in this Chamber earlier when it was claimed that the Government was proposing to close the melanoma clinic at Prince Alfred Hospital or that which we hear every day in the public arena relating to the Federal election campaign. How will lies and scaremonger tactics assist the people of Bulli or Ku-ring-gai or any other part of New South Wales or Australia?

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Bulli to order.

Mr O'DOHERTY: The way to care for the people of Australia is to help them by creating jobs and a sustainable economy in which families can get sustenance, can improve their quality of life and have the sort of pride that comes from having a job and being able to take a meaningful part in society. That is why the Government has spent an extra \$540 million on capital works in 1992-93. Its focus on job creation is part of its service to the people of New South Wales, aimed at families. Another area is education and training. With dramatic economic changes in our society and the impact of technology in the workplace and other areas, kids need more options than ever before in training for employment. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The Government's Start to Life program has been a key element in building flexibility into the education and training system. For example, children in the Ku-ring-gai electorate are able to embrace a crossover between school education and technical and further education training, which gives them a real start on good vocational training and not just the traditional areas in which TAFE has been involved. Technical and further education has blossomed and will continue to do so as new and exciting programs are developed to cope with and underpin the growth of technology in society. Children in the future will demand flexibility in education. They will not start at kindergarten and be tossed out at year 10 or year 12 in the hope that they will gain an apprenticeship. The new system will develop the skills they require to move into industry that is developing year by year. Changes are happening so fast in industry that only the flexible education system developed by this Government can cope with those changes. Children can start at any level, or move through levels, with much greater ease than ever before. The Government is developing strategies to enable the crossovers between TAFE and schools and universities to become better and even more flexible.

This Government is developing community participation in education, which is important and is demanded of us by the community. The quality assurance program that is being geared up now will become an important part of the Government's commitment to delivering to the community its demands for education. Approximately 400 schools have stated that they want to work with the quality assurance teams being established for 1993. I am looking forward to helping to implement this exciting development in the many excellent high schools and primary schools in the Ku-ring-gai electorate. In the six months I have represented Ku-ring-gai, given the time constraints of the parliamentary sittings, I have visited more than half of the schools in the electorate, listened to the community and spoken with those involved in community education. During the current session of the Parliament I will visit the other schools. All the schools I have visited are doing excellent work.

I am loath to single out any school for fear that the others will feel left out, but Wahroonga Public School has an interesting history and has developed extraordinary links with its community. The school community is fiercely proud - and so it should be - of the record of the Wahroonga Public School, the bush school as it is called. The new principal is doing marvellous work with his teachers in trying to move the students into this whole of life education, the Start to Life approach. Ku-ring-gai High School, which faces competition from the private sector, is doing marvellous work in attracting pupils.

The school is in a unique environment and makes use of that environment in a special way. It has environmental education programs that could become the model for other schools in New South Wales. It has a drama program, which makes use of the special facilities available, a terrific music program and an art program. It is an excellent school for all academic pursuits, offering a balanced education through a dedicated team of teachers. There is a great school community spirit. I met recently with the school's student council, which comprises students who reflect the leadership qualities one would hope for in our not too distant future leaders. Many of the year 12 students I have met have a deep concern for their community.

At Ku-ring-gai High School they have received a balanced education and a useful set of skills and approach to moving into the community. That is not to deny Asquith Boys High School and Asquith Girls High School, which I have also visited in recent months. In these schools the community is becoming more aware than ever before of its role in education and is playing an important part through school councils and other mechanisms in the running of those schools. I look forward to taking part, with the parents, in moving education in Ku-ring-gai forward throughout the next decade. The Government is developing a quality assurance program for education which will review all schools over a four-year cycle. Parents and teachers, together with the executive staff and the community generally, will have a role in ensuring that the quality of education is as expected, as it should be, and of world standard. Though I could talk about the schools in my electorate for quite a long time, I want to move on from education and training to law and justice, the legal area mentioned yesterday by His Excellency in his Speech and also touched on by the honourable member for Ashfield. His Excellency said:

The Government will reform the legal profession to eliminate restrictive practices, promote greater competition and accountability within the profession and greater choice for consumers.

Those are important words. His Excellency said

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further:

The setting of legal fees will be reviewed in consultation with the community.

In recent weeks I have spoken with a number of barristers from within my electorate and outside it who are concerned about a letter sent to them by the Bar Association. The rumour that was going around, in part - I will not titillate honourable members with the entire rumour; I am sure they have heard it - was that the whole thing had to be settled and assurances had to be given before His Excellency made his Speech opening the Parliament. The barristers said that they had good information that His Excellency would announce the abolition of the bar. Did His Excellency announce the abolition of the bar? Did that happen yesterday? Did anybody notice that in the Speech yesterday? I certainly did not hear it, and it is not in my copy. The rumour mill, as usual, had it wrong. One has to ask: who was being served by the rumours circulated by, amongst others I assume, the Bar Association? Barristers, as a profession, were concerned and, like any profession that feels it is under threat, they started squealing. That is understandable. But they were doing so on the basis of wrong information. The bar was not abolished yesterday.

Despite many assurances from the Attorney General that the process of review is being conducted in full consultation with the bar, the Law Society and members of the community generally and that a decision has not been made, the barristers were still spreading rumours. I hope they have taken special note that not one of the things they feared - that the world would come to an end, that the sky would fall, that Russia would go back to communism or that the bar would be abolished - was announced by His Excellency yesterday. But we need to

note that the Government is intent on eliminating restrictive legal practices and intent on promoting greater competition and, yes, accountability. That is an important word because as we focus on service to the community we should note the words of one barrister who rang me during the week to talk about what he said the Government proposed to do. He acknowledged that there are problems in the legal profession, that it is not fully accountable and not as good as it should be. It might even be more expensive than it should be. Any member of the community knows that. Most members of the legal community recognise it as well. But this barrister said that the Government should not be legislating in areas of the law, that it has nothing to do with the law and should leave it to the lawyers.

Mr Kerr: That is a worry.

Mr O'DOHERTY: It is a frightening prospect, with all due respect to many of my colleagues who are in the legal profession and for whom I have the utmost respect, that we should leave the legal profession entirely in the hands of the lawyers. Come on! The barrister said there is nothing wrong with the legal profession that the Government needs to be worried about or to step in to do anything about. He said the real problem is that a number of solicitors and barristers should not be in the profession because they are no good. The legal profession is largely in charge of its own standards. It is a self-regulating body, and that is as it should be because it is a professional organisation. The legal profession should weed out lawyers who are derelict in their duty or those who never had or have lost the skills required. According to the barrister I spoke with during the week, that is not happening. He said that we should leave the Government out of it and that the profession should deal with the lawyers who should not be practising. The Government is intent on making the legal profession accountable. Part of that accountability relates to reducing costs.

I am dismayed at the number of my constituents who have legal problems relating primarily to costs. They include people who cannot get legal aid. The honourable member for Ashfield lectured honourable members about the legal aid system. The Legal Aid Commission, by and large, makes decisions independent of government interference, beyond the broad parameters set by the Government in terms of the Act. The commission has to be accountable and has to answer for its decisions to deny legal aid to people, including many of my constituents. Later in this session I may have something more to say about one case in particular in which I am trying to get what I believe to be justice for a woman with complex problems who was granted legal aid. She was eventually awarded \$20,000 in an out-of-court settlement for a physical injury she received to her neck, only to have the Legal Aid Commission take the entire lot for costs. The Legal Aid Commission had decided that she qualified for legal aid. She passed the commission's standards and was granted legal aid. The out-of-court settlement of \$20,000 was a small amount of money, but it would have been helpful to her. The woman is in need of care and attention, but she received nothing. When I inquired about it, the commission decided to waive its percentage, and recently she received a cheque for \$2,000. I have not yet let go of that case, and I may have more to say about it later this session because that woman needs our care, and so do all the people of New South Wales.

The Government is about serving the people of New South Wales through sensible economic management used as a tool in our duty of care to the people who elected us. Each member should have the same attitude to his electorate as I have: to be of service. The Government has that attitude to the electorate at large. Economic management is a tool for serving people. The family is the fundamental building block of society. In my view everything we do ought to be balanced against the effect on the family unit, the family unit being the thing that we must preserve above all other institutions in society if we are to have a society that is healthy, not just for this generation but also for generations to come.

Mr CLOUGH (Bathurst) [10.44]: The Governor's Speech yesterday to the assembled members of Parliament was the poorest I have heard in the many years I have been in this Parliament, and I have heard many speeches by Governors. The Speech was full of rhetoric and said little. Before I touch on some of the things that affect my electorate I should like to say that the concept of the Governor,

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who represents the Queen, must, without doubt, fade away from the political arena in Australia, and in New South Wales. I should not like people to think that I am not willing to swear allegiance to the Queen; I am. I

met the Queen when she visited my electorate in the early 1980s, but I have grave reservations about saying that I am prepared to swear allegiance to her heirs and successors, particularly her principal heir, whose main objective in life appears to be to come back on this earth as Camilla's trousers. I have a few problems with that.

I listened to the contribution of the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai. I applaud him for his reference to the family unit and his belief in it. He is the first Liberal Party member I have heard refer in this Chamber to the family. Such references usually comes from members of the National Party, who themselves find difficulty in adhering to that belief in practice. The man who wishes to be Prime Minister of this country did not have much regard for his family and his three children when he left them and married another woman. I believe that factor should be taken into account by people who are strongly in favour of family life and the things that go with it. But I turn to things that affect my electorate. The township of Oberon, south of Bathurst, is going through what could be considered a minor upheaval because of a local development that is causing a great deal of concern to the citizens. The dodging and weaving of Oberon Shire Council in support of the owner of the property on which the development will take place - none other than the shire president himself - is the principal matter I wish to raise here this morning.

Mr Causley: On a point of order. This is the Address-in-Reply debate, and contributions to it should refer to His Excellency's Speech yesterday and to the program for parliamentary debate this session. This is certainly not a grievance debate but I put it to you, Madam Deputy-Speaker, that the honourable member for Bathurst is debating a grievance matter and not referring at all to the Speech to which the House is supposed to be replying.

Mr Clough: On the point of order. Yesterday the Governor referred in his Speech to the intention of the Government to introduce a State planning policy, and it is my intention to tie that reference in within the next 30 seconds.

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! On the basis of those comments by the honourable member for Bathurst I shall allow him to continue, although I was concerned that his remarks had little association with the Governor's Speech. Honourable members should ensure that their remarks are relevant to the Governor's Speech.

Mr CLOUGH: Madam Deputy-Speaker, not only are they relevant, they are extremely important. I will regularise my comments by saying that yesterday the Governor in his Speech said that the Government intends to introduce a State planning policy. Having said that, I return to the fact that the development taking place in Oberon is on the property of the shire president, an unsuccessful National Party candidate for preselection for the Federal seat of Calare. Not only was he a candidate for preselection for the seat of Calare, but he is a close personal friend of the Minister for Planning.

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Bathurst of my earlier ruling. I do not understand how an individual's political allegiance or preselection procedures are relevant to the Governor's Speech. He is entitled to discuss the issue of planning and the many other issues that were referred to in a wide-ranging speech. However, a personal or political attack is out of order.

Mr CLOUGH: I bow to your ruling. I will continue on the same subject but omit any reference to the individual's political leanings. I will now deal with what has happened in the shire council. The other night I attended a council meeting at which the subject of development was discussed. The recommendations of the council are germane to this debate. A staff report was presented to the special meeting of the council, which was attended by a large public gathering. The report indicated that three options were available to the council. The first was to proceed to determine the application in the normal manner, that is, following prescribed planning processes.

Mr Causley: On a point of order. The honourable member for Bathurst is continually trying to thwart your ruling. If one looks carefully at the Governor's Speech, one sees that it dealt with broad issues and policies to be dealt with by this Parliament. If the honourable member for Bathurst wants to talk about the

broad planning issues for the State or for his electorate, he is in order. However, he is dealing with a specific matter which is the responsibility of either local government or the Minister for Planning. It is specific and is outside the ambit of the Governor's Speech.

Mr Clough: On the point of order. The National Party is obviously a little sensitive about this issue. In the course of my remarks I will tie the Minister for Planning to this issue. He will be responsible for the introduction of the State planning policy referred to in the Governor's Speech, which was delivered yesterday. If you intend to silence me on this matter, you will have to put it to a vote because I will not be silenced by the taking of a point of order. Although I defer to rulings from the Chair, I believe what I have to say is clearly within the ambit of the Governor's Speech and that his reference to the State planning policy permits me to make fairly wide-ranging remarks about how that policy will be implemented.

Mr Causley: Further to the point of order. Many avenues are available in this Parliament, other than the Address-in-Reply debate, in which the honourable member for Bathurst may draw to the attention of the Parliament an issue that he believes is of importance. In fact yesterday the honourable member for South Coast said that many procedures had been broadened by the Government to allow

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members to have their say. I put it to you that he is still outside the ambit of the Address-in-Reply debate.

Mr McManus: On the point of order. On a number of occasions since I have been a member of this House, different Speakers have ruled that the Address-in-Reply debate is a wide-ranging debate which allows members of Parliament to raise specific issues. That is what the honourable member for Bathurst is doing. The previous two speakers mentioned specific issues and the Minister for Natural Resources did nothing about it. I suggest the Minister should be ruled out of order.

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! There are a number of rulings on the record relating to the Address-in-Reply debate. The member for Bulli is right when he suggests the Address-in-Reply debate is wide ranging. I think all members understand that. The Chair does not intend to silence anyone. If that is to happen, it must be decided by the House, not the Chair. I am concerned that the member for Bathurst is trying to weave into the debate a fairly specific matter which could probably be better dealt with in a grievance debate or a private member's statement. For the information of the House, I shall refer to one or two rulings by previous Speakers. Speaker Weaver pointed out that discussion on the Address in Reply should be upon the broad question of policy. That is the matter referred to by the Minister. Speaker Ellis and Deputy-Speaker Cahill pointed out that the Address-in-Reply debate should not be used to make a personal attack on another member. If the member for Bathurst wants to continue in the present vein, the latter ruling to which I referred would include the Minister for Planning to a certain degree. I will allow the member for Bathurst to proceed if he confines his remarks to the ambit of the debate, which is broad discussion on policy.

Mr CLOUGH: To encompass it under broad policy, I place on the record that the council recommended that the Minister for Planning be requested to exercise his powers pursuant to the provisions of section 119 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to direct that an inquiry be held to determine whether the development application should be accepted by the council, which it was. I have grave fears in relation to this matter because the Minister for Planning is intimately involved with it. However, it would seem that if I am to follow the forms of the House, I must raise this matter now or at another time. I do not intend to raise it at another time. I believe that as a member of this House I have the right to debate this matter at the time of my choosing. Unless I am ruled totally out of order, I intend to persist with it. The issue is causing a great deal of concern in the Oberon district. I can possibly leave the matter there and turn to another matter of concern in the Bathurst district.

Some weeks ago a young prisoner was found dead in a cell at Bathurst gaol. I believe there has been a giant cover-up by the Department of Corrective Services in relation to this young man's death. His name was Dean Leonard Pisani. To date no cause of death has been established and the circumstances of the tragedy have still not been explained. A number of questions relating to this matter have not been answered. I intend to place those questions on the record of this House right now. Why has no cause of death yet been established?

Are earlier suggestions that Mr Pisani died of an overdose of methadone or another drug correct? If so, how did a prisoner who had been in gaol for more than two years gain access to sufficient drugs to kill himself? Have allegations that Mr Pisani and other inmates at Bathurst were assaulted on the night prior to his death been investigated? Why have other inmates reported that screaming was heard in the gaol wing that evening? Was it a fact that a special group from Malabar joined prison officers from Bathurst in a drinking spree at the gaol after midnight and decided they would have a little entertainment from that point on? Were other inmates on the morning of Mr Pisani's death warned to keep quiet about the events of the previous night? Have these inmates now been dispersed to gaols throughout the State?

Mr Causley: On a point of order. I am reluctant to take another point of order, but the honourable member for Bathurst has either been in and out of this House so often that he has never learned the standing orders and procedures for debate or he is deliberately ignoring them. He is again referring to a specific issue that has nothing to do with the broad structure of the Governor's Speech. If he wants to talk about law and order, let him talk about law and order and what should be done about it. As I have said before, no one is trying to stop the honourable member for Bathurst from having his say, but there are procedures in this House under which specific issues such as this can be dealt with. Those procedures should be abided by. I submit he is again outside the ambit of the Governor's Speech.

Mr Amery: On the point of order. I have listened to one or two of the points of order taken today. It is obvious that the Minister and the members of the Government are trying to disrupt the presentation of the honourable member for Bathurst. Members of Parliament have always been able to raise matters pertaining to their electorates in the Address-in-Reply debate. The issue raised by the honourable member for Bathurst relates to his electorate. I submit that he is in order.

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! All members will want to raise specific policy issues that relate to individual electorates, and if the honourable member for Bathurst undertakes to relate his remarks to the Governor's Speech, he may continue. I return to a point the honourable member made earlier which I did not address at the time. The standing orders specify the scope of the debate. Honourable members should comply with the standing orders and are not entitled to debate matters as they see fit, as implied by the honourable member for Bathurst. I remind the honourable member of the scope of the debate.

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Mr CLOUGH: Madam Deputy-Speaker, it is because I have been in this House for so long that I do know the standing orders, and I know the procedures that have been followed over the years. That is why I am raising these matters. The Address-in-Reply debate has always been wide ranging and honourable members have been allowed to raise matters that affect their electorates. I listened for 30 minutes to the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai refer to general matters that probably bore no relationship whatever to the Governor's Speech. I have made the point I wanted to make with regard to the two matters I have raised. I will follow them up and ensure that they gain publicity in my area so that people know that honourable members are not allowed to say what they wish to say in State Parliament because of the somewhat fragile nature of the National Party's approach.

Another subject referred to in the Governor's Speech is industrial relations. Located in the Mount Piper power station is an organisation known as the Metal Trades Industry Association office, run by a man named Alex Premer. The Minister for Natural Resources is shaking his head. This is a specific matter that I am entitled to raise on behalf of my constituency. The Minister can keep shaking his head, but I have participated in many more Address-in-Reply debates than he has. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

It is difficult to realise that 17 minutes of my time has already elapsed, Madam Deputy-Speaker. Of most serious concern about the Metal Trades Industry Association office at the Mount Piper power station is the fact that anyone who has any trade union background or any association with trade unions cannot obtain employment in that area. That is the crux of the Government's industrial relations policy which was trumpeted yesterday by the Governor. Previous speakers in the debate have made reference to unemployment in

Australia. I do not think we can ignore the fact that unemployment in New South Wales constitutes 37 per cent of total unemployment in Australia. In New South Wales 360,000 people are out of work, yet the State Government has recently announced that a further 10,000 public servants will go, including many people involved in the railways system in this State. There are so few people left in the rail service; I cannot understand how the Government proposes to abolish an additional 5,000 jobs. The Government is turning over to private enterprise all of the lucrative aspects of maintenance in the State Rail Authority. Men who have spent a lifetime in the service of the railways are now getting the sack.

The management of the Water Board and the Water Board's plans for the future disposal of Sydney's sewage were encompassed in the general reference by the Governor to services provided to the community. Thousands of tonnes of Sydney sewage, excreta, have been dumped in the Bathurst electorate because it is not wanted in the area represented by the Premier. Influential people in the Premier's electorate, including a retired Army major, took exception to it. I understand also that at a meeting with the Minister for Natural Resources, the Premier indicated he did not want the sludge in his electorate. Where could it go? It finished up in the electorate of Bathurst; but there has been widespread opposition to that occurring. It is somewhat of a joke for the Government to suggest that it will improve public services and services to members of the community, particularly those in country areas. The railway system in New South Wales is practically non-existent west of Lithgow. There are no passenger trains operating in that area, except for a daily XPT service to Dubbo and a once-weekly Indian Pacific service that goes beyond that area. People in that wide area are restricted to using bus transport to get them either to Lithgow or directly to Sydney.

Recently, the Minister for Planning indicated that he is prepared to agree to a proposal to allow 450,000 tonnes of coal to be transported in 20-tonne loads along the Lithgow-Mudgee road to the Mount Piper power station. The Minister said he was prepared to agree to the proposal because there is no railway facility available at Mount Piper. He was the Minister for Energy responsible for the erection of Mount Piper power station and knew quite well that it was not proposed to establish a rail link, yet he came up with that excuse later. The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai referred to the effect that the Federal coalition's policies would have on people involved in health food.

I must say at the outset that in the last decade we have seen the onset of economic rationalism at both Federal and State level. I agree only in part with many of the economic rationalism proposals put forward by the current Federal Labor Government, but I disagree entirely with the extension of the ridiculous economic rationalism that the Liberal Party-National Party coalition proposes to implement if it is successful in the Federal forthcoming election. The partial removal of tariffs by a Labor Government and their entire removal by a coalition government will throw at risk many industries in New South Wales, and a number of those industries are located in my electorate. Industries such as clothing and footwear will be decimated if such a policy is introduced by a Federal coalition government.

This morning in our national newspapers reference was made to the medical system in Australia. A doctor has inserted an advertisement in the newspapers to the effect that the election of a coalition government will mean the eradication of bulk billing. That in itself will penalise many people who cannot afford to pay up-front when they visit a doctor. Under a coalition government Australia's health care system will rapidly descend to the level of the American system where anyone who does not have the money to pay for health care will die. I very much regret that I have been frustrated by the sensitivity of the Minister for Natural Resources in my efforts to raise the issues I had intended to raise at some length. As I indicated to the Minister earlier, I have been a member of this House longer than he has and I have heard many more Address-in-Reply debates than he has. I presume it is a sign of the times that free-ranging debate on the Governor's

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address to the assembled Parliament is no longer palatable to those in government. I assure honourable members that I propose to raise the issue to which I referred as a matter of public importance until such time as I can have it debated because I believe this Parliament should know a great deal more about the involvement of the Minister for Planning in that matter.

Mr KINROSS (Gordon) [11.10]: It gives me great pleasure to contribute to the Address in Reply to the

Governor's Speech in opening the third session of the Fiftieth Parliament. His Excellency's Speech follows an address he made of similar quality to many thousands of people gathered at Darling Harbour on Australia Day. If time permits I will return to some of the comments the Governor made in that address. The first issue I wish to canvass is, of course, the economy. It is to be expected that the Federal Labor Government's policies and the recession we had to have are still having a devastating impact on people. They are hurting.

One of my constituents is trying so hard to help herself before she queues for welfare that at present she is going without electricity. People such as this from my electorate, who refuse to join the unemployment queues, are reflective - as a recent study has shown - of the real unemployment level of almost two million people. What a disgrace! What a legacy the Federal Labor Government will have to live with for many years, not to mention the horrific levels of net debt it has left us and future generations of this great country. In 1983, when the coalition lost office the net debt was \$23 billion. Today that debt is in the vicinity of \$162 billion - almost seven times the 1983 figure. If New South Wales had not undertaken the reforms initiated by the Greiner administration when it came to office in 1988 we would have the debt levels and the credit ratings which the Cain and Kirner governments left their people. That is no record on which to hang one's hat.

I turn to law and justice. The announcement by the Governor yesterday about juvenile justice is apt. Of course, rehabilitation must be our first priority. But if people, especially juveniles, willingly flout the law, the law's sanctions must prevail. What hypocrisy for the honourable member for Ashfield to say that the Victims Compensation Tribunal will suffer cutbacks when the operation of that tribunal is being reviewed by a well-regarded magistrate in this State, Mr Cecil Brahe. This Government has had the courage to create more efficiency in the legal system.

Mr Nagle: On a point of order. It is a standing order of this Parliament that members shall not read their speeches. I have been observing the honourable member for Gordon reading his speech. He should refer to his notes but not read from them.

Mr Kinross: On the point of order. I am simply referring to extensive notes that I have made.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Hazzard): Order! I indicate to the honourable member for Gordon that he is not allowed to read his notes. If he is simply using copious notes that is an entirely acceptable practice in this Chamber, and one that is often followed.

Mr KINROSS: I repeat that the Fahey Government has had the courage to create more efficiency in the legal system. That has resulted in a substantial decline in court delays and the time taken to get a matter on for hearing. Last year the Minister for Justice announced in this Parliament that substantial delays occurred in the legal system in getting matters on for hearing. That evidence was presented at the estimates committees last year. One other example of this Government's platform in the law and justice field is truth in sentencing legislation. What hypocrisy for the honourable member for Ashfield and the Leader of the Opposition to say that they would bring in legislation to have the release of Bruce "Snapper" Cornwell, as he is known, terminated.

Labor is making two fundamental errors. First, by bringing that type of hyperbole to bear, it is interfering in the court processes that have been well and truly tried over many years and the rights of our courts to proclaim a verdict and a sentence in accordance with the law at that time. Second, this hypocrisy is evident in that the law at that time - before the Greiner Government came to power - made a mockery of truth in sentencing. An example will suffice. Someone who was sentenced by a judge to about 10 years gaol would, after various periods of parole and being released for other purposes, be allowed to come out of gaol after about three or four years. That is not what truth in sentencing represents, certainly to the wider electorate. The people of New South Wales had no comprehension that 10 years meant four years.

This Government addressed that question in its 1988 reforms, which resulted in a direction being given by the honourable member for Vacluse. Truth in sentencing now prevails. I repeat: it makes a mockery of the attempts by the honourable member for Ashfield and the Leader of the Opposition to try to overturn a decision that they well and truly know, especially as they are lawyers, is limited. This was reflected also by Senator

Tate when he spoke about this issue, I think last week. Another issue concerning the law and justice portfolio is the abolition of the bar. As the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai said earlier, that just cannot happen. The bar will always remain. I notice that the honourable member for Auburn shares my concern that the bar should remain. Perhaps some of the rumour that is current ought to be directed to the New South Wales Law Society.

Mr Nagle: On a point of order. It has not been confirmed by the honourable member for Gordon that the bar will be retained, but I wish to make it clear that the Minister for Natural Resources has just said that he intends to ensure that it is.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved.

Mr KINROSS: The honourable member for Auburn has made a mockery of his attempt to make an issue out of this. There will always be a necessity for advocates to represent people whose rights have
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been affected in various ways. Those concerns should be conveyed to the New South Wales Law Society. Let me give another example to make my point clear. If we remove most of the advocates from the New South Wales bar they will go to big law firms. It is fairly well recognised that some of those law firms are charging rates of at least \$400 an hour. If those sorts of rates continue what would that say not only for the price of justice but also for the right of access to it of various people in this State? People would not be able to get a specialist in that field because the specialist would have a conflict of interest. There would be a conflict of interest because the specialist would be tied to a big legal firm. There will always be a necessity for the bar. In my view, the rights that the bar has established to date will continue, with some changes in the future, as has been stated by the Government.

The final subject I wish to touch on in the area of law and justice is the Independent Commission Against Corruption and its impact in relation to a committee on which this Parliament has seen fit to place me. The whistleblowers legislation committee, under the chairmanship of the honourable member for Ballina, is seeking to examine the impact that the whistleblowers legislation will have. As a number of honourable members would recognise, under the legislation there are three bodies that will seek to address and protect whistleblowers, as they are known. Those three bodies are the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Ombudsman and the Auditor-General's Office. In about 1988 a well-recognised Supreme Court judge of this State, Mr Justice McLelland, had this to say about the involvement of a body that may remove itself so much from supervisory jurisdiction or overview that there should be some cause for concern:

Apart from anything else, there must be concern that an ICAC, no matter how well intentioned, may in time become part of the corruption problem, which means that criminals may then have access not only to enormous funds, but also to a powerful body well placed to intimidate people and pervert the process.

The relevance of that is that the whistleblowers legislation committee will be seeking to examine all areas and the necessity to explore whether the three bodies to which whistleblowers will report ought themselves to be subject to the provisions of the whistleblowers legislation. I ask rhetorically of the honourable member for Auburn whether he agrees that to reduce the barrister's scale of fees would have the effect of penalising a litigant who has bothered to take his or her case to court and succeeded. That will be the effect of the reforms, that successful litigants will be penalised in recovering their costs. That will increase the gap between the rights of the verdict awarded and litigants' rights of recovery, and that would be a substantial limitation on the administration of justice and the involvement of those successful litigants.

I turn now to family and community services. The frightening level of divorce in our society - almost 40 per cent of first-time marriages end in divorce and the figure is even higher for those entering marriage for a second time - presents a disturbing example of the effect on family life, leading to what is often termed the dysfunctional family or an attack on the nuclear family, as I referred to in my first speech last year. We need to concentrate on and set goals in the area of family and community services, and part of that goal is the individual's role in understanding the part that the family has to play and also in trying to motivate individuals to

achieve a higher standard of living for their families and the wider community. Already the Minister, a very caring man, has visited Sir Eric Woodward's school for special children and the disabled situated at St Ives in my electorate. Pupils attending that school are both intellectually and physically disabled. I am sure that the Minister will continue to address the concerns expressed about that school and provide a sufficient level of resources so that the school will be able to meet its goals. A number of my colleagues in neighbouring electorates have also visited Karongah Special School for disabled children. The Government is continuing to provide a better and more effective allocation of resources for post-school care of these people.

The electorate of Gordon has an environment which many electorates aspire to have. Recently there has been a further recognition of the role of catchment committees in my electorate. I refer, for example, to the good work undertaken by the Middle Harbour and the Lane Cove catchment committees. The members of these committees, who work on a voluntary basis, play an important part in the development and sustainability of the environment and ensure that Ku-ring-gai local council and surrounding electorates share and will continue to share in the great environmental assets of the area. A recognition of the environment and the need for sustainable development also is plain common sense. The Government's aim is to ensure, as it acknowledges, "that environmental values are not compromised for short-term gains".

The policies of this Government, unlike those in place during the 12 years of hard Labor, focus on the broader goals - not the quick fix that the former Labor Government exemplified and is currently being explored by the Federal Labor Government, with \$1 million handouts to bribe various sectional interests in the community in, as today's *Sydney Morning Herald* described it, "Keating's \$1 billion gamble". Let us not forget that the environment is not only trees; it is water and a better quality of life for its citizens. This Government's establishment of a Cabinet subcommittee to undertake a fundamental review of the administration and statutory arrangements for the management, regulation and distribution of water resources in New South Wales is most welcome. The Government recognises that there are no short-term solutions, as acknowledged in the Governor's Speech when he said, "It will take many years to effectively control the problem"; and that is why there has to be a price. Nothing comes for free. The Australian people and the people in my electorate in particular are intelligent enough to recognise that there must be a price for the continuing maintenance of the clean waterways and the environment in which we live. The environmental levy reflects this. Lest there be

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any doubt about this Governments' commitment, it has also increased the penalties on waste polluters. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

My immediate predecessor, the Hon. Tim Moore, was a strident advocate of increasing penalties for waste polluters, so again it marks the hypocrisy of those members opposite when they talk about the effect that this Government's policies have on the environment. This Government has introduced stringent tests to ensure that those who pollute the environment are made to pay. The Government's policies on waste management have been recognised also by my local council, Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council. That council can take some pride in that last year, for the third quarter, it received the highest recycling rebate in this State. The council's commitment to recycling is clear. The Government has released a green paper on this issue, and at present it is engaging in extensive community consultation. The Minister for Planning and I have had some discussions on the matter of hazardous chemicals, and we will continue to monitor this issue closely.

I come now to urban renewal and infrastructure. The release in about March of this year of the new metropolitan planning strategy for Sydney, together with an integrated transport network plan, will allow for ample community consultation. It is another example of this Government's long-term goals and its planning for the future. Development will not come without analysis of the effects on, for example, air quality. The Government's metropolitan air quality study is at the leading edge of technology in this area. On the subject of transport, railway stations have continued to be upgraded and, for example, Lindfield and Gordon stations have benefited enormously. Gordon station will soon have a new car park to encourage commuters, to use the expression in the advertising slogan, to "Park and ride". Buses continue to provide an effective mode of transport in my electorate. I refer, for example, to the excellent service provided by the St Ives bus company to schoolchildren and the elderly.

Another example of this Government's commitment to transport is the road safety 2000 strategy, which sets a plan for road safety well into the 1990s and beyond. In the past 10 years traffic accidents in New South Wales have caused 10,000 deaths, 95,000 serious injuries requiring hospitalisation, 270,000 minor injuries, and obviously countless other injuries that are never reported. There has been a substantial decline in the number of deaths and serious injuries or, to view the other side of the coin, a substantial increase in the years of productive life brought about by the Government's policies and its vision for the future concerning road safety in New South Wales. Not only has there been damage to life but there has also been damage to property, which must not be overlooked. Annually, about 35,000 crashes are recorded involving property damage only.

Another topic I wish to address is local government. The link between transport, roads and local government is apt. Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council and the Government are exploring the use of the CARES program. For those who do not know, CARES stands for Community Action and Road Education System, and will specifically apply to schoolchildren as young as those in year 7. It will be a most rewarding scheme, providing children with the opportunity to learn driving skills at a young age. This will have the long-term benefit of reducing the road toll by educating children in the processes of driving, accident prevention, and care and responsibility on our roads. Mr Acting-Speaker, as chairman of the Staysafe Committee, you would be aware that the council has sought to adopt the old police driver training school situated opposite the showground at St Ives.

Contrary to the attempts of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition early this year to claim this policy initiative as a credit of the Labor Party, it is not a Labor Party initiative; it is the coalition's proposal. Indeed, there is already a great facility being operated in the New England area and this, together with the new initiative being undertaken by the Government in conjunction with Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council at St Ives, will provide a welcome opportunity to residents of my electorate and of neighbouring electorates in the Sydney metropolitan area. People have been known to travel from well and truly south of the Sydney Harbour Bridge to attend the New England course, and that will continue to apply with less time constraints if a facility is situated in the St Ives area, in my electorate.

I am pleased to report that in relation to the 1992 higher school certificate a number of schools in my electorate benefited from the Government's commitment to education, choice in schooling, and quality assurance. Two high schools in my electorate featured in the top 18 New South Wales schools. Killara High School, a school very well regarded not only for its arts involvement but for its high standards, and Turramurra High School, rated well. Neither of these high schools is selective. Killara High School had 11 students in the top 1,000 and came fourteenth in the State; Turramurra High School had seven students in the top 1,000 and came eighteenth in the State. Of course, other private schools in my electorate also did well. Pymble Ladies College and Ravenswood School for Girls also performed very well.

The point I wish to make, to the echoes of "Oh, gee" from the Opposition, is that public schooling in my electorate is right up there with private schooling. Because of the commitment of the Government, schools such as Killara and Turramurra high schools, each of which have more than a thousand pupils, are proud of their records and will continue to apply the high standards given to them by the Government in resource allocation, quality assurance and choice in schooling. Parents who have forsaken an enormous amount of their lives and resources in caring for and educating their children wish it to be recognised that they have a fundamental role in the development of their schools. This Government - not the Labor

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Government in its 12 years to 1988 - has allowed choice in schooling and quality assurance to take off and to continue.

In conclusion I refer, as I did in my first address in the House on 13th October last year, to Sydney's year 2000 Olympics bid. Clearly, this will provide a vision for the State. The Olympics 2000 bid and its slogan "Share the Spirit" provide an ample opportunity for all people to take part. If the bid is successful, the Olympic Games will provide a large number of investment opportunities to all people. The number of jobs that will be created in the western regions of Sydney and New South Wales, where our Government is equally committed to providing jobs, education and opportunities, will be welcomed by the people of the State.

Mr SCULLY (Smithfield) [11.35]: The Governor's Speech was particularly disappointing. It was the same tired old stuff - no initiative, no vision. It is clear to honourable members of the Opposition that the Premier's honeymoon period, if he ever had one, is over. His lack of direction is apparent from that Speech. It is obvious to those on the Opposition side of the House that he had never coveted the position of Premier and when the ball was thrown in his lap he had no real idea of where to take the State. He has simply adopted the policies of his predecessor, something I regard as second-rate Greinerism without the intellectual endeavour of the former Premier in his administration of the State. We have a second-rate Greiner trying to second-guess what Greiner would have done if he were still in the job.

The Governor's Speech is proof of what a waste of time opening ceremonies are. We have to ask ourselves: why did we waste our time yesterday; why was Parliament prorogued? There are two reasons. Liberal and National Party members wallow in pomp and circumstance. They wallow in the royal trough and they love days like yesterday so they can bow and scrape. The Opposition has contempt for that sort of indignity. The Premier wanted to invent an occasion. The Romans used to put on bread and circuses; the Premier puts on an opening ceremony with red carpet, regal banners, trumpets and such apparent nonsense. When we turned to television news programs last night did we see the Premier walking along the red carpet as the trumpets blared and the banners came out? No. There was the GST, the Treasury document. So he wasted his own time. Events such as that held yesterday can be questioned. They are anachronistic and should be relegated to an historical item in a New South Wales parliamentary newsreel.

Mr Schipp: Is that Labor policy?

Mr SCULLY: I will be putting to my colleagues some proposals which, I am confident, in the fullness of time will be adopted. If they are adopted by the people of this State, the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing will have a cardiac arrest, because I know that people such as the Minister love tradition and cannot cope with the thought that these anachronistic notions of vice-regal loyalty can be changed. The Leader of the Opposition has foreshadowed legislation which will remove the vice-regal reference in the oath of allegiance. That is very timely. I know how honourable members of the National Party will vote; they will have coronary occlusions. They cannot even cope with the thought of vice-regal references being removed from the oath of office. It will be interesting to see how honourable members of the Liberal Party vote. The Opposition will legislate that the oath should not be to the Queen, to the Head of State of a foreign power, but to Australia. I will be very disappointed if honourable members opposite do not support that. The Opposition will also seek to exclude from statutes and from the names of statutory offices any reference to the Crown. That is the position of the parliamentary Labor Party at this stage. I believe the Labor Party should go much further, and it will. I will be campaigning amongst my colleagues in the parliamentary Labor Party to adopt positions that are considered abhorrent to the monarchists in this House.

It is time to end the pomp, pageantry and circus nonsense which we had yesterday. We need simple procedures which are becoming of the identity of Australia, not the nonsense which we had yesterday. Australia Day ceremonies are similar to the charade we had yesterday, but we want none of that. We want an institution which is unashamedly Australian and I think the majority of Australians support that statement. Yesterday the Prime Minister indicated that a referendum will be put to the Australian people in due course to convert Australia into a republic. If Dr Hewson is elected, he will not pursue that course, but Labor will keep the issue on the agenda. Those opposite would be delighted at the thought of Dr Hewson being elected. There is no doubt that that would be an abomination on the Australian people, because that would lead to lower wages, a dismantling of the health care system and higher prices. What effect would it have on State finances? There would be lower grants.

If the goods and services tax is introduced there is an absolute certainty that the New South Wales coalition will not be re-elected at the next State election. Those opposite should think about that. They should be praying that the Labor Party wins on 13th March because their lurks and perks will be gone. If Dr Hewson wins the Federal election the goods and services tax will come in on 1st July, 1994, and nine months later we will have a State election, I can absolutely, categorically and unequivocally assure the House that the people

will be so outraged by the GST that they will throw the State Government from office. The honourable member for South Coast spoke about Speakers being elected and standing orders being carried by a two-thirds majority. That will not be a problem after the next State election because the Labor Party will have three-quarters of the members in this place. Those opposite had better pray that Dr Hewson does not get elected.

So much is wrong with the Governor's Speech that it is hard to believe it could have been printed. It has an audacious claim that there is control of the Budget and that the budget deficit will eventually be eliminated. I invite honourable members opposite to carefully consider that claptrap and to look at the

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budget statement for the six months ending 31st December, 1992. The projected deficit for the year ending 30th June, 1993, is \$1.225 billion; the actual deficit for the six months to the end of December was \$704 million. Those opposite may say that that is basically on line. That is not so. When we look at the fine print we find the general picture is misleading. We have to compare the receipts from that six months with the projected receipts, the expenditure of that six months with projected expenditure. We also need to look at the income from government trading enterprises.

We have heard a lot about government trading enterprises lately. The projected income from dividends from government trading enterprises to the year ending 30th June, 1993, is \$980 million. We would have expected the outcome at the end of the first six months to be \$490 million. What did the Government get its hand on? The actual amount for the first six months was \$682 million. If the projected receipt is accurate - I have no reason to believe that it is not - in the first six months the Government drew \$192 million more than expected. That money will not be available during the second six months.

I refer to expenditure, and in particular to current outlays. As honourable members know, the Premier and Treasurer each year allocates \$100 million to an advance and determines how it is expended during the year. For the first six months we would have expected \$50 million to be expended from that fund, but no money was expended. Of much greater concern are capital outlays. Capital outlay projected for the year was \$4.033 billion. For the six months it was only \$1.549 billion, meaning that in the first six months capital expenditure was down \$477 million. If we add all that up - the early receipts of dividends of \$192 million, no Premier's advance of \$50 million, and underspending of capital works by \$477 million - we have \$719 million in the first six months which we can add to the deficit of \$704 million.

So, in the first six months, the deficit is \$1.4 billion, which is already \$200 million more than the anticipated deficit for the entire year. That suggests that the projected deficit is totally unsustainable, unbelievable and cannot and will not be achieved. The Government has referred to the sale of the GIO. I predict that when the Treasury documents are released for the end of this financial year, even after the deduction of proceeds for the GIO sale, the Budget will still be in deficit. The goods and services tax document is an outrage. The Premier and Treasurer has insulted the people of New South Wales by pretending that there is something secretive about a document which obviously sets out in detail the brutality of the 15 per cent tax on the goods and services of New South Wales.

Mr Harrison: We are not allowed to know about it.

Mr SCULLY: We do not know about it because of the bogus excuse that it went into the Cabinet room and became secret.

Mr Harrison: It was stamped confidential.

Mr SCULLY: Yes, it was. It was stamped as a confidential Cabinet document so we cannot see it. Those opposite are a bit stupid because they have given Labor free publicity. The people of New South Wales are now even more paranoid about the GST. What does the Premier and Treasurer have to hide? If he has nothing to hide he should release the document - we want to see it. The Governor's Speech talks about a previous announcement - there is nothing like announcing a previous announcement - of a \$540 million capital

works program, creating 18,000 jobs. It has already been outlined that underspent capital works funding totals \$477 million. We challenge the invention of 18,000 jobs. We accept that if all of that money was spent, each job created might create one indirect job. That would be a total of about 12,000 jobs, not 18,000 jobs. We then have to deduct the 50,000 jobs lost from the public sector, so there is a nett loss of 38,000 jobs, plus the effect that those job losses cause on other people's jobs, even if that extra capital works money is expended.

The New South Wales Government is the biggest unemployed in Australia. The Government has the audacity to talk about job creation when it is brutalising New South Wales public sector employment. If honourable members want proof that the Government is not getting rid of people in the public sector they should look at the balance sheet for the six months ending 31st December. Projected payment of redundancies is \$26 million. We would say to ourselves, "Redundancies would be on line for the first six months if the Government had spent \$13 million" - but it spent \$50 million! The projected expenditure for the year was \$26 million. How many people is the Government getting rid of? By the end of the year \$100 million might be spent on redundancies. How many jobs have really been created?

I refer to government trading enterprises, special dividends and the so-called special environmental levy. We always said that the special environmental levy was a tax. The former Minister for the Environment, Mr Moore, said that it was not a tax but a warm and green levy which would be spent on trees and fixing up beaches, which no one from western Sydney enjoys. We copped it for a while but suspected all along that it was just tax by stealth. Mr Moore said that we were wrong and that it would go into a special warm and green account for tree and beach funds and that funds raised from the levy would not be used by the Government to finance its deficit. How right we were and what a liar the Government has been found to be.

As the Leader of the Opposition in the upper House said, if a pauper says he is starving and needs \$20 to buy a meal and you give him \$20 but later see him walk out of a grog shop with a couple flagons of plonk you might get upset and say to him: "That is a bit rough. You asked for a meal, I gave you \$20 but you spent it on plonk". He then might say: "No, I still have your \$20. This was the other \$20 I had for another account, so therefore I have not spent your money on grog". The Government has pursued a

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similar unconvincing argument. It says it has a warm and green account with \$100 million in it and that it has taken \$100 million from another unrelated account. If no less a person than the chairman of the Water Board resigns because of the similarity between the accounts and his suspicion that the people of New South Wales will see this as tax by stealth, I believe him. The Minister came out and said that the chairman of the Water Board - not a junior employee or even a senior officer - got it all wrong.

A letter from the Premier appeared mentioning a \$100 million asset exchange. The Minister then said: "That is right. I had better fix this up. You can have all those stormwater channels and unnecessary and useless bits of catchment". He thinks that will fix it up. Members opposite should listen to the talkback programs and to people in the community. They are upset about what has happened on this issue. Last year Professor Walker - a great friend of the Government - spoke at length about the Water Board. He said that the Water Board's finances, compared with those of normal private companies, are prepared in a different way. He converted the Water Board accounts and rearranged them as if they were prepared by public companies.

Professor Walker found that the whining and screaming that emanates from the Water Board about not having enough money was false and that the return on assets in the Water Board is 15 per cent compared with a 5 per cent return in the private sector. He then compared profitability per employee and found it was \$57,000 per employee in the Water Board and \$3,000 in the private sector. He raised the obvious point: Is this because the Water Board is magically productive or because it is a monopoly? People may not be able to afford water rates but they have to pay them. They have no choice, even if they have to sell the car. People must have a water supply to their home. Professor Walker rightly said that the Water Board is a price set-up, not a price take-up. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I am concerned about the so-called Clayton's capping of rates by the Government. Rate increases allegedly have been pegged at approximately 3 per cent. The former Labor Government pegged individual

rates, which meant that a person's rates could not be increased by a set percentage amount. Councils have been told that their total rates cannot increase by more than approximately 3 per cent but that they can increase individual rates. Constituents have come to me complaining about rate increases. A resident of Bossley Park complained about a 13.2 per cent rate increase, and I understand that many are affected in that way. Such an increase, on what really is just a charge, at a time when inflation is running at less than 1 per cent, is a bit rough. The Government should look seriously at pegging individual rates so that rate increases for each and every ratepayer are capped at a certain percentage.

The Government, through the Governor's Speech, spoke about quality assurance programs, quality of education and so on. I wish to detail my concerns about targeted graduates, a concept invented by the Government to stop what was classed as a brain drain from our colleges and universities to the private school sector. Good quality graduates who have waited for appointment to a public school but, finding that such appointments may not be available for some years, have sought positions in the private sector, would not be liable for appointment when their name comes up on the list. Philosophically, I have no problem with that but I question whether employing 600 targeted graduates is appropriate. Perhaps 100 or 150 would not upset the program too much, but the Government seems intent on employing hundreds and hundreds of them. If that is to be done, what measure will be used? Are the best teachers being employed, and if so what priority should they receive? Should the proposal apply to undergraduates in the same year or to those in earlier years who may have achieved exactly the same results or better but did not come into the targeted graduate program? Should they have priority only over graduates who have achieved lesser results? Unfortunately, the press is not interested in this issue, though I cannot understand why.

The motivation of the Government is commendable in one sense, in trying to achieve the introduction of quality teachers into the school system. The Government may want to achieve that aim but should realise that marks at university or school or results in an examination are not measures of teaching competence. Other members may be knowledgeable about the teaching profession. I know a little about it. I have done some teaching in my day. I am not a qualified teacher but I have met many teachers and am married to one. I have witnessed first-hand and indirectly some of the qualities that I understand go to make up a very good teacher, which do not include the marks they may have received in a university examination. I am greatly concerned that the Government seems to be going down the track of measuring excellence solely by marks. The Government and the present education Minister seem to think that a mark on a piece of paper is a sign of intelligence or competence or teaching ability. I severely question that belief.

I am appalled that targeted graduates are given priority over teachers on the waiting list who have been on leave without pay following maternity leave. I have met teachers with 10 years experience who have actually been put on the list for appointment and promotion to head teacher position, but that listing is only granted after a person has been inspected, over a period of two or three days, by a suitable inspector of the particular subject. An inspector, after watching a teacher at work in a classroom, may certify that the teacher has been inspected and has satisfied the requirements for the promotion. The teacher then goes onto the promotions list. Women who have done no wrong except leave the teaching service to rear families want to come back into the teaching profession. Yet kids wet behind the ears, having achieved so-called great results, are considered more valuable to the teaching service than a person with 10 or more years teaching experience who has been independently assessed as competent for promotion.

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We are losing sight of the wood for the trees and we are losing our way. That problem needs to be addressed. I do not question that the best teachers are needed in all positions. Some targeted graduates, on a better measure of competence, may well be more suitable than a teacher who has been inspected after being out of the profession for 10 years. Why not advertise all positions? I understand that advertising is left to individual schools, but many schools do not advertise and leave it to the department to make the appointment. I suggest that these kids be given no special treatment but be allowed to compete for all positions, against all teachers. If a properly objective and impartial selection panel thinks a candidate is best for the job, let him or her have the job. The Governor's Speech mentioned environmental matters. A waste management issue has

arisen in the Fairfield council area, in the Smithfield electorate. I am particularly concerned that the Government has abdicated its responsibilities on this issue. Councils should not be involved in waste management, which should be determined by the State Government. Fairfield council is considering a waste incinerator. My view might be parochial but I reject that proposal totally.

I mention also the environmental vandalism of Prospect Electricity in degrading, raping and removing thousands of trees across western Sydney. Apparently, Prospect Electricity targeted 80,000 trees for destruction. In the Fairfield area alone scores and scores of trees were removed. In one Fairfield street 26 trees were executed - and I use that word deliberately. The people of my electorate and western Sydney were outraged. In fact, I am informed that Prospect Electricity has breached the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which provides that a review must take place when something will have a significant impact on the environment. The National Trust of Australia has valued those 80,000 trees at \$800 million. It would cost Prospect Electricity \$20 million to remove those 80,000 trees. How that would not be environmentally significant is beyond my comprehension.

Prospect Electricity should be disgusted with its behaviour. It has the contempt of every member of Parliament and every alderman across western Sydney. A moratorium is not good enough. Under the various environment Acts this Government has the power to direct Prospect Electricity not to cut another tree, and it ought to do that. There should not be this moratorium nonsense, or talkfests with councils. The Opposition is not satisfied with that and it will be introducing legislation to ban councils and Prospect Electricity from cutting down trees. Prospect Electricity will say that having trees growing among powerlines will cause fires. This is 1993, not 1923. For years technology has been available to encase powerlines so as not to cause a fire hazard, and Prospect Electricity should be pursuing that option.

His Excellency's Speech made mention of air quality programs. I wish to express my severe disappointment that a monitoring station for the determination of levels of air pollution has not been located at Wetherill Park, despite it being the largest industrial estate in Australia. Many of the companies there produce toxic materials which could be dispelled into the area. I raise this issue because my electorate has a large population and is next door to Prospect Reservoir, a major source of Sydney's water supply. I noted yesterday there was some laughter from Opposition members when His Excellency stated, "My Government puts people first in health care" - and laugh we should have, because we know the Government's record on health. It causes Opposition members great mirth to be told that the Government puts people first in its health care program.

The Opposition is particularly concerned about privatisation of hospitals. In my electorate Liverpool Hospital is being targeted, and I have great concern that ultimately this Government will be looking for funds and may even place Fairfield District Hospital on the target list. That hospital is understaffed. Its nurses do a great job but more are required. Last year they made a demand, but did not receive anything. I shall be raising this matter further in the Budget Session. His Excellency mentioned the inquiry into housing. It interested me that there was no mention of HomeFund, FANMAC, or the scourge on those thousands of borrowers who have been ruined by that scheme. The responsible Minister poured bucket loads of rubbish on anyone who dared to criticise the HomeFund scheme, yet people are virtually homeless as a result of it, and during the past two years the head of FANMAC earned \$2 million in commissions. The Opposition will not accept that, and foreshadows legislation empowering the Commercial Tribunal to vary those mortgages. The Governor's Speech mentioned \$1.8 billion being expended on transport. Much of that money goes to Government electorates and I am looking forward to when the Opposition is in government and Labor electorates will receive more than their fair share of road funding. Liberal Party and National Party electorates have been on a good thing for so long, and it is timely that they receive less.

His Excellency's Speech is worthless. I confirm my contempt for the monarchical pomp and pageantry that was witnessed yesterday, and I look forward to the day when we have no more of it. We should be concentrating not on bread and circuses but on issues of substance to the people of New South Wales. It is obvious that the Government has no idea about the structure needed for this State to work effectively, and the Premier has no vision of where we should go. The Labor Party does, and I have no doubt that when the election is held - particularly if it is a post-goods and services tax election - Labor will be elected and will put in

place an effective structure for this State and its vision for what the people of New South Wales want.

Mr D. L. PAGE (Ballina) [12.5]: During the life of this coalition Government the people of New South Wales have experienced a standard of open, efficient and reforming government which remains an unmatched benchmark within Australia. Yesterday His Excellency's Speech highlighted the continuation

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of our program to improve the delivery of government services in New South Wales while, at the same time, applying fiscal responsibility. Perhaps now more than ever during this time of a federally induced recession, it is vital that optimum value be obtained from every dollar raised from the taxpayers of this State. As His Excellency stated:

The State budget reflects my Government's view that good financial management is not an end in itself, but rather a means of improving living standards and social welfare in a sustainable manner.

That containment and the elimination of administrative inefficiencies must be achieved in order to provide core State Government services of health, education, policing, court facilities, water, sewerage and the like. This applies especially to the rapidly expanding areas of this State, such as the North Coast of New South Wales. My electorate of Ballina - where during the past decade 30 per cent of the population has come from other areas - is continuing to expand, with an annual population growth of more than 4 per cent. Therefore, I welcome the Government's commitment to an additional \$540 million worth of capital works projects which will assist with the provision of infrastructure in these rapidly expanding areas. I applaud the Government's renewed emphasis on the needs of the family unit and the implementation of Family Week. Previously I have spoken on this subject and I believe that the concept of providing some form of counselling to prospective and new parents would be beneficial in preventing the unacceptably high level of family break-up, in many cases leading to domestic violence.

I welcome the Government's proposal to undertake reform within the legal profession, the Police Service and local government. However, I will reserve my comments on those areas for future debate. Another welcomed initiative announced by the Governor is the comprehensive regional development policy aimed at attracting investment and encouraging growth in country New South Wales. I look forward to being acquainted with the details of this initiative. It should be of great benefit to the North Coast because it has to compete with heavily subsidised government programs in southeast Queensland when attempting to attract business investment to the North Coast, where unemployment is unacceptably high.

Two agricultural initiatives announced yesterday by His Excellency will be of great benefit to the hard working members of our community in primary industries. The export marketing strategy focusing on the Asia-Pacific area is the sort of positive initiative which is needed at a time when the Federal Government is relegating the trade portfolio from No. 2 during the days of Jack McEwen and Doug Anthony in conservative governments to a position where it is now not even in the Cabinet but is in the outer Cabinet. It is no wonder that under that scenario Australia's export performance has experienced a rapid decline. The export marketing initiative announced yesterday will complement the North Coast macadamia industry. This industry is now focusing away from the North American market and towards the Asia-Pacific market. Another sensible agricultural initiative is to bind the Crown to control noxious weeds on Crown land and overhaul the State's weed control administration. This is a positive step and should successfully solve a long-running problem in the country, where landholders have experienced a double standard of governments previously saying, "Do what I say and not what I do". In other words, private landholders have had to maintain a much higher level of noxious weed eradication than has applied to Crown land. I am pleased that that double standard will be eliminated.

His Excellency mentioned balancing the environment and resource development. This is a very important issue, possibly the most important issue facing Australia today. For that reason I shall dwell at some length on it. In my view we have reached a critical moment in determining the environmental and economic future of this country. Our economy is sagging under the weight of investor uncertainty and pessimism. Development is not proceeding as it should and there is an obvious economic and social penalty in this for the whole

community. In political terms, all parties and political groups in Australia claim a commitment to comprehensive environmental protection and conservation policies. Our differences - and some would say our failures - lie in defining and agreeing how best to achieve these worthy ambitions. Despite the lip-service paid to concepts of ecologically sustainable development, it seems that few can agree on its meaning, especially when it comes to putting theory into practice. What is sustainable for one is frequently unsustainable for another. I think we can say as a starting point that neither the environment nor development will go away. It is not a case of all environment or all development. However, the former Premier of New South Wales the Hon. Nick Greiner said in April 1990 something which I think is very relevant today. He said:

... it is also true - as the evidence now emerging from the Eastern bloc attests - that a cleaner, healthier environment cannot be achieved, financially or technologically, without a thriving economic base. Contrary to the claims of some of the deep green environmentalists, it would appear that capitalism is one of the pre-conditions to an environmentally sound future for our planet.

In 1988 the Toronto conference on the changing atmosphere set a target that by the year 2005 global greenhouse emissions would be 20 per cent below their 1988 levels. The estimated cost to Australia is approximately \$6 billion in any year, involving at a rough estimate the loss of some 50,000 to 70,000 jobs, plus a real wage reduction of some percentage points. Notwithstanding the high cost to Australia, the impact of Australian reductions in CO₂ would have no significant or even measurable impact on global CO₂ emissions. Australia's emissions account for only 1.4 per cent of the world's total. The United States of America, the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and China account for more than half the world's emissions. The potential for increased emissions from the former USSR and, in

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particular, China is enormous. It may well be that Australia's expenditure on CO₂ reduction might be better spent on developing higher efficiency technologies for other countries rather than reducing our own emissions across-the-board. This concept also has union support. Peter Colley from the United Mineworkers Federation of Australia has said:

Australia should be careful not to act to penalise its economy unilaterally in ways that would not necessarily help solve the global problem.

The green movement's response to this would predicably be, of course, that we are in the wrong business: our resource-based economy is no longer viable and we have to create a clean, hi-tech, cottage industry economy. These alternative industries may well make a contribution to Australia's future, and I would certainly welcome such a contribution and the added economic diversity. However, resource-based industries are our big export earners. Coal, for example, is the largest, supplying 12 per cent of total earnings. New South Wales has a proliferation of legislation which has made something of a minefield for those wishing to start new projects. For example, we currently have the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which establishes the commission of inquiry and the Land and Environment Court; the Heritage Act; the Endangered Fauna (Interim Protection) Act; the Environment Protection Authority, which administers a dozen or more Acts; and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, administering its Acts.

While these Acts in themselves have their purpose, their proliferation creates confusion, delay and uncertainty for anyone seeking decisions through these processes. This uncertainty costs jobs and hinders economic recovery. There is no simple solution to this problem. In my view we must, therefore, look at an alternative dispute resolution mechanism which involves all parties in a non-adversarial search for decisions. If Australia is not only to survive but to thrive into the next century, a constructive way out of our present malaise of conflict resolution must be sought and achieved. We need new attitudes to environmental questions, incentives to care for the environment and more co-operative approaches to resolving conflicts and achieving sustainable development.

The maintenance of a healthy environment is fundamental to any question of environmental protection. Conversely, the maintenance of a healthy economy is fundamental to any question of environmental protection. We do not have to make a choice between development and the environment. A democratic capitalistic system

running a strong economy provides, I believe, the best means of producing sound development with rigorous environmental safeguards. In countries where there is no market incentive to care for the environment and no process of community participation, maximum damage has been done to natural resources. Weak economies, on the other hand, simply cannot afford environmental care, as eastern Europe, parts of Asia and South America starkly attest. To be pro-development no longer means to be anti-environment. That division is the very fallacy at the root of our paralysis. The fact is that we will continue to have development in this country, including development of our greatest asset, our natural resources. This development must and will happen.

At the same time, we must continue to meet the environmental challenge of living in the late twentieth century. We must continue to have, if you like, forests and jobs. What we need to ensure the survival of both is a clear commitment to sustainable development and a set of processes which are able to deal with the conflicts that will inevitably arise, and deal with them and push them through beyond stalemate to resolution. We may never devise a perfect system which suits all parties but it is dangerously naive to think that there will be any long-term winners - developer or environmentalist - unless the current system of conflict is resolved. As I said a moment ago, Australia has reached a critical point in the debate and we must devise a new way forward. This is the task facing us in this State and in this country. If we do not meet it head on, this decade, the last of the twentieth century, no doubt will go down as the decade of lost opportunity. Unless we can sort through the current antagonisms, the legacy of that lost opportunity will reverberate well beyond the year 2000. That strikes me as something of a tragedy in a country which has so much to give both in its natural heritage and in its natural resources.

On the question of roads, I note in the Governor's Speech the statement that the State roads budget has increased to almost \$1.8 billion this financial year. I am particularly delighted that this figure includes a 23 per cent increase in the capital expenditure program of the Roads and Traffic Authority and renewal of the 3 x 3 accelerated roads program. The 3 x 3 is probably the only popular tax in Australia. It will provide an additional \$210 million for important road improvements this year in New South Wales. Sixty-five per cent of the funds have been allocated on a needs basis to country New South Wales, a fact which recognises the neglect suffered by the rural road network under 12 years of Labor government. I also observe with great pleasure that the Pacific Highway received a 61 per cent funding increase from the State Government in the last Budget and many projects within my electorate have been beneficiaries. The recent release of the North Coast road strategy by the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Wal Murray, will enable us to know by the end of the year whether the Pacific Highway will be upgraded to dual carriageway from Hexham to the Queensland border or a tollway is the preferred option.

Of prime importance in the transport area will be implementation of the bus and coach safety standing committee's recommendation in relation to the safety of school students. A number of young schoolchildren have been killed in recent years after alighting from school buses. I am sure all members of the House will support an effective program aimed at preventing similar tragedies. A further transport highlight for country residents this year will be the

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introduction of new Xplorer and XPT trains, at a cost of \$46 million. Additionally, the introduction of sleeper cars to the North Coast and Melbourne in July this year is creating a lot of interest on the North Coast in particular. The refurbishment of the current XPT fleet at a cost of \$9 million, together with \$5 million being spent on the country station upgrading program and the refurbishment of CountryLink travel centres, will provide an improved rail service for the State's rural areas. One final transport matter raised by His Excellency that is of importance to rural areas is the continued introduction of competition and lower fares on intrastate air routes. It is vitally important to ensure that smaller rural communities are provided with suitable air transport links and a deregulated market.

I was pleased to hear His Excellency reaffirm the Government's strong commitment to children's education. The North Coast's ever-increasing population creates an almost unquenchable demand for new facilities. The Government has reacted admirably to the school educational needs of the Ballina electorate. The Byron Bay Public School \$3.1 million re-development, the current \$3.5 million construction of Ocean Shores Primary School, the continuing construction of the \$16 million K-12 Southern Cross school complex,

comprising a recently completed public school and a soon-to-be-constructed high school which will share numerous quality facilities, and the current \$500,000 revamp of Mullumbimby High School are all bricks and mortar evidence of the Government's priority with regard to schools in my electorate. Remaining urgent school needs in my electorate, which I will continue to pursue, are the continued construction of stage two of Alstonville High School together with new schools in Clunes and Wollongbar. His Excellency's Address also indicated the Government's commitment to more than 17,000 new vocational places in the New South Wales TAFE system. The commencement of stage one of the \$80 million regional TAFE college at Wollongbar in my electorate, which will service the entire Northern Rivers region, is a very positive development. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Despite the tight financial situation confronting the delivery of health services across New South Wales, a \$2.4 million redevelopment planned for Byron District Hospital, to which the Government is committed, will ensure that the health needs of the people of the southern end of the Byron shire are adequately catered for into the next century. It is also pleasing to see the Government's \$14 million commitment to statewide facilities for the early detection and treatment of breast cancer, with a unit based in Lismore being of particular interest to the women of my electorate. I should like to make some remarks which are perhaps tangential to His Excellency's Speech but are, nevertheless, relevant to members of this House. His Excellency said:

My Government will continue to implement policies of sound management and responsible reforms to secure a better quality of life for the citizens of this State and their children.

This is a laudable and true statement, but I wonder whether it would really mean very much to the average person these days. I constantly hear in the popular press that the citizens of this State do not think much of their politicians. As practising politicians we are often portrayed as cynical, not properly motivated, and possessing a lower morality than our fellow citizens. Let me place on record a few thoughts on this matter. I am of the opinion that the most honourable calling is to serve the public and to be useful to the many. As Cicero is reported to have said:

We best employ the fruits of genius, virtue and all excellence when we are able to bestow them on our fellow men and women.

The present-day abuse of politicians is not usually drawn from our personal experiences as members of Parliament but is more likely to be cant and parroting - phrases picked up from those who would consider it a kind of sacrilege were they asked to give up any of their ease for public service. These are superior beings who have all the answers but who would never offer themselves for public service through the election process. Certainly the typical politician has plenty of faults; but equally he or she must also have a hearty circulation and be a hard-working type of person who will do the best he or she can in often difficult or unclear circumstances.

Politicians do not have the luxury of detachment from the world around them. Disraeli was surely right when he said that great empires are built by acts of statesmen and not merely by the words of learned men. I cannot see that the vices and virtues of politicians are different from the vices and virtues of people who follow other professions. Our behaviour, like theirs, varies with circumstance - it is sometimes admirable and sometimes to be deplored. Like the lawyers, the medicos and the clergy, we are not incapable of generosity, compassion and trust, but like them we are occasionally tempted by opportunity to claim credit for that which is not rightfully ours and to behave in a childish manner.

The rules of our game, however, allow us a wide latitude. We spend a lot of time in conflict as our system of government is fundamentally adversarial. It is a tough environment and many of us could probably improve our bedside manner. Our conduct may sometimes be condemned, if you judge it by the standards of private morality. However, it would be absurd to insist on judging it by such standards, because the rules of this particular game of politics are so few and ill-defined as to impose no clear obligation that all players would accept. We are apt to forget that life for most people is a desperate struggle, often pitting individual against individual, nation against nation, philosophy against philosophy and, under our Federal system, even State against State.

Does anyone seriously blame politicians - the elected representatives of the people - for going into battle on behalf of their constituents fully armed with the best weapons available to win? Granting that politics is an honourable profession because its very essence is service to the public, but also

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acknowledging that it is played to ill-defined rules, it also has about its nature the ability to attract the sycophants, string pullers and the vanity seekers. Though some people may be impressed by the person who, like the frog, puffs himself up beyond his natural capacity, in my view as members of Parliament we must always seek to see clearly what is in the public interest and not confuse it with what is simply in our private interest.

We should not seek to play the gallery or to be a pawn of the string pullers if such an outcome may compromise us as individuals. When I first came to this place I was appalled by the behaviour of some members, and I still feel disappointment on some occasions. However, when one considers that this House is a microcosm of the community at large, should we be so surprised that on occasion the sizzle generates more heat than the sausage? I suspect not. Surely what is important is that members keep at the forefront of their minds the calling of our profession - service to the public. If we can establish that clearly in the public mind, those who view our actions with cynicism will not have a feather to fly with. That may not be an easy task, but it is one well worth aiming for.

Of course, the perception of politicians by those who do not know us personally is heavily influenced by how we are portrayed in the media. Unless both politicians and the media have a genuine interest in elevating the level of public debate and, therefore, the image of politicians and the media, it is unlikely to occur. Ultimately it all depends on how important it is felt by those inside this Chamber and those reporting our activities outside to change public perception. I commend the Government for setting a comprehensive program of reform for this year which will deliver many benefits for the people of New South Wales and my electorate. It is an ambitious program but one which again demonstrates that the Government is leading the reform agenda across Australia.

Mr IRWIN (Fairfield) [12.28]: I shall address the bulk of my comments in this debate to an early section of the Governor's Speech dealing with the payment of dividends to the Government and the importance of that to the revenues of the State. The Governor said:

The Government's objective is to ensure that citizens benefit in tangible ways from the greater efficiency of the public service.

Reforms so far have meant that instead of being a net drain on the State budget, Government Trading Enterprises have become significant contributors to the funding of social and community services within the budget sector.

For example, the improved capacity of Government Trading Enterprises to pay tax and dividends has meant that the State has been able to constrain its budget deficit and release funds to employ some 800 additional teachers, put more police on the beat and build new hospitals.

The Government remains committed to making government businesses commercial and competitive, that is, exposed to market disciplines for the benefit of consumers.

Dividends and tax contributions to the Consolidated Fund from these enterprises have increased from just over \$100 million in 1987-88 to almost \$1 billion in 1992-93. Dividend payments have enabled the NSW Government to continue to provide services to the citizens of New South Wales despite the significant decline of financial assistance from the Commonwealth. It is also the case that prices have not grown faster than the CPI.

The NSW Government is totally committed to further commercialisation and corporatisation of Government Trading Enterprises where there are tangible benefits to the people of New South Wales.

The issue of the payment of dividends by government trading enterprises is certainly not new, nor is it the exclusive preserve of the present Government. Indeed, the legislative basis for the payment of dividends was

introduced by the previous Government and is to be found in section 59B of the Public Finance and Audit Act. Subsection (2) of section 59B provides:

Notwithstanding any other Act, the Treasurer may at any time require a prescribed statutory authority to pay to the credit of the Consolidated Fund, at such times and in such manner as the Treasurer directs, such amount by way of dividend as the Treasurer may determine and notify to the statutory authority.

Section 59B of the Public Finance and Audit Act in no way provides how that dividend is to be levied or paid by the authority. That anomaly should be addressed by the Parliament. Dividend payments, in their present form, commenced in 1981 with the payment of a dividend by the State Bank. From that time also, until its privatisation last year, the Government Insurance Office was subject to a dividend requirement. There was a significant change in July 1986 when the Premier at that time, Mr Unsworth, made the first official announcement that dividends were to be paid by statutory authorities on a broader basis than previously, and the Electricity Commission - as it was then known - the Water Board and the Hunter District Water Board had to pay dividends in the 1986-87 financial year. Since 1988, the list of dividend-paying authorities has been expanded by successive governments. The payment of dividends by statutory authorities to Consolidated Fund has been a long-standing policy adopted by all major parties. The process began in the early 1980s and picked up steam in the mid-1980s and the early 1990s. Dividends have developed into a fully fledged and major contributor to Consolidated Fund, as His Excellency expressed in his Speech.

I shall detail for honourable members some of the increased payments paid into the Consolidated Fund over that period. In 1986-87, \$103 million was paid in dividends. Under the previous Government, in 1987-88, \$128 million was paid, an increase of 25 per cent. During those years as a percentage of the receipts into Consolidated Fund dividends represented 0.8 and 0.9 per cent respectively. From then the amounts demanded in dividends have increased significantly. In 1988-89 the amount demanded was \$261 million, a 100 per cent increase, taking the percentage to 1.7 per cent of receipts. In 1989-90, \$344 million was paid, a 31 per cent increase, bringing the dividend percentage to 2.2 per cent. In 1990-91 the amount was \$590 million, a 71 per cent increase bringing that dividend percentage figure to 3.4 per cent. The payment in 1991-92 was \$857

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million, 4.4 per cent of receipts. As the Governor said, the amount is now in excess of \$1 billion a year. In other words, almost 5 per cent of the total receipts into the Consolidated Fund. Dividends have in fact become a major source of revenue, ahead of many of the traditional revenue sources to which the Government has had access. I shall return to refer to that important matter later in my contribution. In April last year the Public Accounts Committee examined the issue of dividend payments. In its report to the Parliament the committee stated:

A major reason why the entire process gathered pace in the 1980s is that by then the inefficiencies apparent in some statutory authorities had become undeniable. Principal among these was a marked excess of capital resources. Underutilised plant, equipment and buildings, inherited facilities now redundant and lying idle, were not "earning their keep", and the authorities responsible for them required a continuing flow of subsidies if only to cover maintenance costs. The drain on Consolidated Fund represented by these subsidies made it imperative that some form of discipline be applied. The payment of dividends was felt to be one such discipline.

Certainly in the view of the Public Accounts Committee the most important purpose of the dividend payments was to ensure the efficiency of government trading enterprises. By making them more responsible for their capital asset management it was assumed that that discipline would contribute greatly to ensuring the continued efficiency of those government trading enterprises. What is clear, however, is that any objectives in that regard have since been completely subsumed by the revenue requirements of the Government. Government trading enterprises have become nothing more than a milch cow for government revenue. Indeed, the levying of those dividends may well create inefficiencies in themselves by depriving government trading enterprises of essential capital to provide new infrastructure, to provide the necessary capital for the growth in the services required of those government trading enterprises. It may well lead in the future to considerable inefficiencies in those organisations. The Public Accounts Committee resolved that a number of guidelines which had applied until that date were not necessarily consistent, nor were they widely known. The committee recommended:

That Treasury articulate and implement its dividend policy with greater openness and transparency.

That Treasury prepare for public discussion an understandable, non-technical document clearly articulating:

its dividend policy;
the basis for its calculation of dividend levels.

The committee recommended further:

That in any future reworking of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, Treasury include a provision requiring the Treasurer to consult with authorities on their future liquidity and capital requirements when determining the amount of the dividend.

That the Chief Executive of the statutory authority pay a dividend and the Secretary of the Treasury participate at an early stage in the financial year in negotiations on the level of the authority's dividend target.

That thorough cost-benefit analyses be prepared for all large capital investment projects proposed by dividend-paying GTEs.

Prior to that time the policy with regard to dividend distributions to government had been set out in a Treasury circular G1991/22 dated 25th June, 1991, in which distributions are described in the following terms:

In addition to interest on borrowings and income tax equivalents, there are three distinct types of distributions to the Government by trading enterprises. They are:

- a) normal dividend; a return the Government expects from the profits of an agency;
- b) special dividend; an additional return, which may exceed available profits but is not an "other capital return", and
- c) other capital return: a reduction in the amount invested in an agency, ie a return of all or part of the original capital contributed.

It is worth noting that in the normal course of events one would expect a reduction in the future flow of dividend payments should a distribution be made by way of a capital return. The circular goes on to point out:

Dividends, both normal and special, are ordinarily paid from the retained profits/accumulated surplus of an agency. However, the Government may on some occasions require a special dividend in circumstances where there are insufficient retained profits/accumulated surplus. There is therefore a need to identify other reserves which may be used for paying dividends.

The Government takes the view that, whilst accounting rules must be observed, cash management is the key issue in the determination of dividend distributions. In other words, the availability of cash to meet both operational and dividend needs is of more importance than the availability of a suitable accounting reserve to use in paying a dividend.

Consequently - and to some extent, I would expect, influenced by the report of the Public Accounts Committee - the New South Wales Government issued a financial distribution policy in August 1992, which stated:

The financial distributions made by GTEs comprise the following: payment of a credit-rating-based fee on outstanding debt guaranteed by the Government, dividend payments and, where applicable, Commonwealth taxation equivalent payments (the latter two comprise what is termed the pre-tax profit distribution).

In addition, GTEs make interest payments on outstanding debt.

It further articulated that government trading enterprises are subject to the following:

- (1) a target return on equity (i.e. total assets less total liabilities), calculated on a nominal before-company-tax basis, equal to the prevailing return on a 10 year Commonwealth bond plus a unique risk premium for each GTE;

- (2) a target return on total assets, calculated on a nominal before-company-tax basis, equal to the GTE's prevailing weighted average cost of capital;
- (3) a target pre-tax profit distribution to the Government of at least 50% of pre-tax, i.e. net operating, profit; the pre-tax profit distribution would be calculated on the basis of dividend only if the GTE is not in the taxation equivalent payments regime and taxation equivalent payments plus dividend if the GTE is in the taxation equivalent payments regime.

The document referred also to a credit rating based fee on outstanding debt guaranteed by the Government

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and interest payments on outstanding debt. I return for a moment to the question of the target pre-tax profit distribution to the Government, as set out in this guideline of financial distribution policy issued in August 1992, which set the target pre-tax profit of at least 50 per cent of the pre-tax - that is, net operating profit. As I will show in a moment, for many government trading enterprises that figure can only be regarded as excessive and one which will have dire consequences downstream as it will mean that those government trading enterprises which would otherwise rely on profits to invest in new infrastructure and to replace existing infrastructure will face great difficulty and, as I suggested earlier, their efficiency will be significantly reduced.

The policy sets out the guidelines for which the target rates are to be fixed but essentially the guidelines leave little scope for government trading enterprises to effectively plan their capital requirements. As I shall detail now, the implementation of that policy leaves a great deal to be desired. I remind honourable members of the recent requirement placed on the Sydney Water Board for a special dividend. In an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 23rd February, Professor Bob Walker of the University of New South Wales dealt with this issue of special dividend and, in particular, the special dividend requirement on the Sydney Water Board. He considered the background to dividend payments by government business enterprises and reflected on what is apparently a new approach by the Government. He said:

The approach of the Premier and Treasurer, Mr Fahey, to GBEs is even drier than Greiner's. Last August, they announced that GBEs are to aim at a target rate of return on their "shareholders' funds", and to pay 50 per cent of their profits as dividends.

That regime may seem very harsh for those GBEs which need to invest in new infrastructure, but at least it provides some certainty.

Yet, additionally, the Fahey Government is making unheralded demands for "special dividends". This is unsettling for Government-appointed boards of GBEs, and disruptive of business plans. The Sydney Water Board's chairman, David Harley, resigned last year when the SWB's payment of \$100 million to Treasury during 1991-92 (which the board believed was in exchange for assets held by the Department of Public Works) was retrospectively described as a "special dividend".

[*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The article continued:

Harley's resignation letter (obtained under Freedom of Information legislation by the ABC's *7.30 Report*) expressed concern that the \$100 million approximated the funds raised by the SWB's Special Environment Levy.

What has been largely overlooked is that the Fahey Government has demanded and received a second \$100 million from the SWB. In other words, the SWB has been stripped of \$200 million in special dividends over two years.

The article posed the question whether, based on last year's experience, the faith of the Water Board is justified in expecting its plans to have been taken into account. The article continued:

Even if some assets were transferred, it remains to be seen whether \$100 million is a fair price.

An examination of the transfer of assets and reference to the inquiry by the Public Accounts Committee into dividends reveals apparent inefficiencies in relation to some statutory authorities. Principal among these

inefficiencies was the marked excess of capital resources, underutilised plant, equipment and buildings, and inherited facilities now redundant and lying idle and not earning their keep. An article that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 23rd February stated that the assets included in the \$100 million included the Botany water reservoir and catchment land and Bonnie Doon golf course, which were together valued at \$50 million, and the Alexandra Canal at Gardeners Road, valued at \$25 million. I do not suggest that I am expert enough to know the exact value of the assets or the return they may provide to the Water Board, but honourable members may well be sceptical that assets such as those would be fully utilised and provide a return to the Water Board, or even provide service to its customers. I for one would suggest that this represented a sham transaction. It was one way of the Government selling off assets, but in this case to the Water Board - in fact, selling them to the water consumers of Sydney - in order to balance the books. I will refer to that issue again in a moment. That it is a sham is made patently clear by the article in its reference to matters said by the State Minister for Planning, Mr Webster. The article stated that on 22nd February the Minister announced the transfer of assets to the Water Board for which the second special dividend of \$100 million was paid. However, this was reported in another article:

The Fahey Government has denied suggestions that the former Premier, Mr Greiner, had agreed to transfer assets to the Water Board in exchange for the \$100 million special dividend payments.

However, the Minister's announcement on Monday night revealed that there has, presumably, been a transfer of assets. The newspaper article continued:

A letter from Mr Fahey to Mr Webster, dated September 10, 1992, shows that the Premier ordered the board to amend its accounts to ensure that the \$100 million payments not be linked with any purchase of assets.

"The \$100 million paid by the Sydney Water Board . . . is to be regarded as special dividend and will not be linked to any purchase of assets," the letter stated. "The accounts of SWB and the Government should reflect the nature of this transaction accordingly."

The payment of the second \$100 million special dividend also appears to contradict statements by Mr Webster in an ABC radio interview last Thursday.

Asked whether the board would be forced to pay another special dividend this year, he said: "That is a matter between Treasury and the Water Board but I can say that this year's budget has not yet been framed."

The payment of the dividend is clearly a sham exercise. The recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee highlight the need for close consultation between the chief executives of government trading enterprises and the Treasury when the level of dividend to be paid into the Consolidated Fund is being established. The committee recommended that the ongoing capital needs of government trading enterprises should be taken into

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consideration, as well as greater efficiencies and better services to the clients of those enterprises, which may, indeed, result in higher dividends at a later time. Anyone who has studied investment knows that shareholders are not as much concerned about the profits that may flow in any given year as they are about the projected profit stream. The Government is clearly jumping in and getting its hands on what is available now to use for its own purposes without considering the future needs of government trading enterprises. That was dramatically underlined by the resignation last year of David Harley. Clearly that was the only way he could state that he believed the Government was not acting in the best interests of the Sydney Water Board by demanding the special dividends. Mr Harley drew attention also to the more politically sensitive aspect that the amount taken as a special dividend equated roughly with the amount collected under the \$80 special environment levy.

The Government has adopted a shameful approach to the payment of dividends by government trading enterprises. That approach warrants close consideration by the Parliament. I note that the Public Accounts Committee has suggested that 12 months after the publication of its report, the committee should conduct an

inquiry following up on its recommendations. I will certainly be urging the committee to move in that direction. The matter is one which should be of great concern to the Parliament. Because of the importance of special dividend payments to the revenues of the State, and because of the way the existing provisions have been manipulated, the matter requires much closer investigation. I have restricted my comments in this debate to that single issue. It is of such importance that the detail of it warrants a great deal more scrutiny. I hope that the Public Accounts Committee will undertake the follow-up inquiry into the payment of special dividends.

[Madam Deputy-Speaker left the chair at 12.54 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Graeme Page, Speaker of the House of Assembly in Tasmania.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

Mr CARR: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Treasurer. Has the Premier received an Ombudsman's report which describes the actions of the Department of Housing as a litany of bureaucratic ineptitude, incompetence and delay? Did the report describe the department's conduct as unreasonable, unjust, oppressive and improper?

[Interruption]

Mr CARR: The former Minister's legacy.

Mr FAHEY: As the Leader of the Opposition knows, I received that report two days ago. It is in my papers for tabling immediately following question time today, and it will be available for all to read. I would merely add that the report made it abundantly clear that officers of the department frequently did not inform the Minister and kept information from the Minister. When honourable members read the report they will see that. Information was kept also from senior executives of the Department of Housing. Honourable members will be able to draw their conclusions from the report when they read it after it has been tabled. Honourable members know that in the period after I became Premier I indicated that there was a need for a comprehensive review of the Department of Housing. That comprehensive review was undertaken. The report from Mr Mant was released late last year. The implementation program is in place.

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

Mr FAHEY: The Department of Housing now has and will continue to have as its focus service delivery to the people for whom it has responsibility.

FEDERAL DEFICIT

Mr GLACHAN: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Treasurer. Is the Premier aware of a promise by the Prime Minister to eliminate the Federal deficit by 1996-97? What impact might that have on New South Wales?

Mr FAHEY: I noted with some interest in that rather boring formal debate that took place on Sunday, 14th February, telecast live across the nation, that the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, promised to bring the

Federal Budget back to balance by 1996-97. That intrigued me because I thought back to the events of the past 12 months. It started with Fightback on 26th February last year, when there was a prediction of a deficit of \$10 billion - sorry, not Fightback, One Nation on 26th February.

[Interruption]

Fightback has got substance; One Nation is in tatters. By the time we got the continuing visions throughout 1992 from Paul Keating, that deficit continued to blow out. There was the usual economic statement in May; there was a Budget that referred to around \$13 billion in August; and, ultimately, recent statements show that the deficit is now very close to \$16 billion.

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

Mr FAHEY: Notwithstanding all of that, on national television, the Prime Minister said, "We will have the deficit brought back to square by 1996-97". I started to think a little bit about that, in the context of just how could this man of vision ultimately deliver something as his deficit blew out? I asked State Treasury to give me some advice on the question of how Paul Keating would get the deficit back to

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square. If one wants to be generous and rely upon the assumptions that the Prime Minister obviously was putting forward, I was advised what might occur. To balance the budget by 1996-97, Treasury said that Mr Keating would have to slash Federal funding grants to New South Wales by \$1.4 billion - that is, \$1.4 billion a year by 1996. That represents a cut in Federal funding to New South Wales of 14.6 per cent. That is the equivalent of slashing this year's State Budget by \$1.2 billion; it is the equivalent of taking all of the GIO benefits, and it would have doubled this year's deficit.

Presuming that the Prime Minister approaches this in equal steps, he will have to cut the distribution of Federal tax revenues by \$350 million next year, \$700 million the following year and so on until 1996, by which time he would have slashed a total of \$3.5 billion over the next four years. When one compares that with what he has already done over the past five years, one realises that the bloke who was formerly the world's greatest Treasurer has slashed \$830 million from Federal funding to New South Wales alone. That is what has happened. New South Wales has lost \$830 million from Paul Keating in the past five years. The bottom line is that Mr Keating cannot deliver his election promises unless he slashes \$1.4 billion from State funding or he reneges on every promise he has ever made. Of course, we know what the likelihood of that is. He has a funding hole that is big enough to swallow Tasmania. It is as simple as that. The only answer to Keating's \$5 billion funding hole is that he is secretly planning to raise Federal taxes substantially by introducing a consumption tax.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Smithfield to order. I call the honourable member for Ashfield to order for interjecting while I was on my feet. I ask all honourable members to co-operate in the interests of getting through question time in an orderly fashion and to maintain more decorum than they have to date. The Premier is the only member who has the call.

Mr FAHEY: If anyone has any doubts about a consumption tax -

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

Mr FAHEY: - Paul Keating is already on record as wanting one. In trying to gather support for a consumption tax in June 1985 Mr Keating exposed the hypocrisy of his present argument. When speaking at a luncheon hosted by the former Labor Premier John Bannon, he said:

Few people are aware that they are paying the sales tax when they buy their car, their washing machines, their bottles of lemonade or dish-washing liquid. It is politically a quite attractive tax. In scrapping it we would obviously have to provide significant alternative revenue, and a retail tax on both goods and services is the only tax that could do this.

Two weeks later, when appearing on the "Sunday" program, the world's greatest Treasurer was still determined to get the consumption tax through, even though by that time he had been rolled by the former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke. I quote again:

I would never say that a consumption tax is no longer appropriate. I believe a consumption tax is appropriate for Australia now, this very day.

That is the only way that Labor's numbers will add up. The alternative is to rip off more than \$1.4 billion a year from the New South Wales people, and that would have a devastating impact on the State economy. If Keating is to keep his promises, he has to be secretly planning a consumption tax. Those are the facts. The goods and services tax is an alternative to the existing sales taxes, which at present raise approximately \$9.4 billion. So Labor's GST will have to raise \$14.4 billion to fill the funding hole. That is the equivalent of a GST of 7.5 per cent on all items, including food -

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

Mr FAHEY: - or a 10 per cent GST levied on all items, exempting basic food, which is of course what the coalition proposes. But the nation would still be paying \$7 billion in payroll tax and \$6 billion in petrol tax. In short, Labor has a funding hole of \$1.4 billion in New South Wales and \$5 billion nationally if the promise of balancing the books -

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

Mr FAHEY: - getting the deficit right back by 1996-97 is to be believed. After the election the only choices available to Mr Keating will be to increase existing taxes by \$5 billion or to renege on his promises and slash State funding grants; otherwise he must impose his own GST. He has already said that is what he really wants to do.

GARBAGE COLLECTION CHARGES

Mr THOMPSON: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Treasurer. Did he state recently that the Government intended to slug ratepayers with a \$500 a year charge for garbage collection? When will this new tax be introduced?

Mr FAHEY: After a three-month layoff and a little bit of relaxation I would have expected better from the Opposition than a question such as that. In the course of the many addresses that I have made over the past several months I have made it abundantly clear that one of the bigger challenges facing the Parliament and the people of the State is to deal with waste management. The Minister for the Environment has put together a green paper, which is being examined by a parliamentary committee. That involves the input of local government and the community. The simple fact is that there are not enough holes left in this city in which it is possible to continue to put landfill waste. That question must be addressed for the future, the next decade. We have to deal with it in a sensible way.

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

Mr FAHEY: In that regard numerous options are available and are discussed in that green paper. I am sure that in due course, when the Minister for

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the Environment has examined all the submissions that have been made, he will bring forward a sensible suggestion that will ultimately address the issue and arrive at a solution to the problem. That may mean that there will have to be an increase in the cost of garbage disposal to householders and businesses; it may mean that we will have to ensure that a recycling process is introduced that is far better than the present one; it may mean that we will have to ensure that composting and separation of individual types of garbage occur for those

purposes. All of those matters will have to be put in place. Whatever the outcome, it seems abundantly clear that individuals will have to pay for garbage disposal as a disincentive. The payments made at present are heavily subsidised in many local government areas.

The honourable member for Kiama will be aware of that from his role in local government in the Shoalhaven area. There is a constant problem in trying to deal with garbage. I found it staggering only a few years ago that the council in my own area decided that people should have the huge Otto bins - an encouragement to put more material into garbage bins and create more waste - instead of having a more sensible policy, as I am sure that council and other councils will co-operate in achieving. I do not know whether that will involve a charge of \$500 a year or \$50 a year. But I do know that the problem must be addressed. I should like to think that can be done in a bipartisan way. It is a problem that requires the attention of the Parliament. We must take an objective view to ensure that those areas that cannot dispose of garbage locally will be able to have garbage disposed of in other areas sensibly and in an environmentally sensitive way.

METAL INDUSTRY WORKERS PROPOSED STRIKE

Mr MORRIS: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Arts. Is the Minister aware of a threatened national strike by metal industry workers? What impact will this strike have on New South Wales industry?

Mr COLLINS: I thank the honourable member for Blue Mountains for his extremely important question.

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

Mr COLLINS: I think it reflects growing concern in the community at the proposed strike that metal unions have suggested for 1st March. These unions are proposing something which, in the current economic climate, anyone in this House or in the community would find utterly unbelievable. The unions are pursuing a 6 per cent wage increase across the industry. This, in the middle of a recession, is sheer absurdity. It is one of the most destructive things that has been done industrially in this State for some time. The unions seek four 1.5 per cent pay rises over the next two years. Obviously, New South Wales manufacturing industries cannot afford that sort of increase and cannot afford a national strike at this time. The last thing we need at the moment, the last message we want to send out to the world - of course, the world is looking at us in the middle of a national election campaign - is this sort of unrealistic pie in the sky demand by unions who are completely out of touch with the country's economy and with the capacity of business to pay.

The Metal Trades Industry Association obviously opposes the claim, saying that any claims of this nature should be made on a business by business basis. In other words, if the productivity rate of a particular enterprise is going through the roof, a claim might be made. The unions have targeted about 17 large manufacturing companies to try to force the payment of the wage rise. To date they have achieved limited success. Only three or four companies have agreed. There has already been an extended 48-hour stoppage at Comsteel in Newcastle as well as an extended strike by 1,000 metalworkers in the Illawarra. Monday's strike has the potential to take out 124,000 metal industry workers in New South Wales alone. This figure is based on a workplace survey conducted last year by the Department of Industrial Relations.

The only hope of preventing a crippling effect on this State's manufacturing sector rests on a hearing in the Industrial Relations Commission this afternoon. The metal trades unions have chosen Monday for the strike to coincide with the abolition of Victoria's award system under new industrial legislation and to provide a co-ordinated attack on the Federal coalition's industrial relations policies. However, there is a big gulf between the enthusiasm of the union delegates and what employees want. The employees - the members of those unions - understand that they must fight and work to hang on to their jobs in this climate. What the union delegates are about will probably only make their situation worse. The last thing they want to do is lose time and work at the

moment. They want to get on with the job; not so the unions. The dispute is senseless. It is another by-product of the Keating Government's much vaunted accord with the Australian Council of Trade Unions. It is another indication that the enterprise bargaining system advocated by the current Government in Canberra is not working.

The Business Council of Australia has questioned the integrity of Federal enterprise bargaining agreements. It has said that there is widespread concern about enterprise bargaining as it operates under the current Federal Government. Its paper, issued in 1991, was generally critical of Federal agreements for not being able to deliver genuine agreement for a variety of reasons, including a lack of effective compliance arrangements. By contrast, this State's legislation has resulted in the filing of 172 applications, 82 of which have been registered and a further eight of which are in the 14-day cooling-off period. Under this State's legislation we have genuine agreements that work. Under the Federal legislation

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they do not work. It should be understood - even by the clown from Kogarah - that the metal trades and associated industries are at the very heart of New South Wales manufacturing capacity.

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

Mr COLLINS: Manufacturing accounts for over 15 per cent of the New South Wales gross State product and contributes one-third of the national manufacturing output - the highest of any State. That is what this character from Kogarah is prepared to laugh at. I regard it as a vital piece of the industrial infrastructure of this State. Honourable members opposite can laugh about the fact that 124,000 metal workers will go out on strike on 1st March if their mates have their way.

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

Mr COLLINS: We do not laugh about it and the union members certainly do not laugh about it; only the mob opposite and the union delegates put up this sort of industrial insanity. In conclusion, New South Wales alone stands to lose somewhere between \$20 million and \$27 million if this strike is not stopped before 1st March. That is \$20 million to \$27 million in the middle of a recession that Keating said we had to have. The Metal Trades Industry Association has said that, nationally, the figure could run to \$80 million. That is the kind of message we do not want to send the world at this time when the world is looking at this country and the fundamental choice it will make on 13th March. So what do the unions propose to do? On 1st March they will say, "We can write off \$80 million worth of production". The unions are saying that they can write off the jobs of many of the people who have traditionally supported the rag-tag bunch opposite. This strike must be stopped. Let us hope that some sense prevails this afternoon in the Industrial Relations Commission. I thank the honourable member for Blue Mountains for his interest in a very important industrial issue.

MOTOR VEHICLE WINDOW TINTING

Mr LANGTON: Is the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads aware that, as a result of his decision to enforce new window tinting rules, more than 500 jobs will be lost in New South Wales, including nine in Newcastle tomorrow? Is he also aware that the Premier's official car had its windows tinted last Monday, which tinting was removed on Tuesday?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Bulli to order for the second time. The House will come to order. The Deputy Premier will answer the question.

Mr W. T. J. MURRAY: I thank the honourable member for Kogarah for his question, which proves beyond doubt that the honourable member has been dimmed for a long while. It was interesting to hear the honourable member for Kogarah talking about the loss of 500 jobs because earlier in the week the number was at least 1,500. We need a little consistency in the story somewhere down the track. I am unaware of the situation with regard to the tinted windows in the Premier's car. However, I am aware that the windows in my

car were tinted prior to my taking it over. I am aware also that I did not ask for tinting that was illegal. Many people who ask for their windows to be tinted do not ask for it to be done legally. The end result is a vehicle with illegal window tinting. It is not illegal to tint the windows of motor vehicles, but consumers who drive vehicles with tinted windows could be in breach of the law.

[Interruption]

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is shocked and horrified. It is a shame that he did not express his horror on behalf of the consumers of New South Wales. They would be delighted if he did do that. Unsuspecting consumers have paid about \$450 to have the windows of their cars tinted but they now find that if they drive those vehicles they will be in breach of the law. The activities of some window tinters are to be deplored, and the process is being fully considered by the Government.

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMONWEALTH FUNDING

Mr SCHULTZ: I address my question without notice to the Minister for Community Services and Assistant Minister for Health. Will the Minister inform the House whether delays in Commonwealth funding are hindering the delivery of community services to the people of this State?

Mr LONGLEY: At a time when Australia is in the deepest recession for 60 years, with the highest level of unemployment - more than one million people are unemployed - one would think that the Federal Labor Government, which has been in office for 10 years, would allocate appropriate funding to the States so that services for those families affected by the recession could be delivered rapidly.

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

Mr LONGLEY: In the 1990 election the Federal Labor Government promised an impressive 6,000 additional child care places, but in reality barely half of that target has been achieved because the Federal Labor Government cannot be bothered to get its act into gear and allocate the money so that those child care places in this State can be achieved. Honourable members well remember the former Prime Minister's promise that no child would live in poverty. The credibility of the Labor Party at the Federal level -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable
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member for Port Stephens to order. There is far too much interjection and banter across the Chamber, which makes it extremely difficult for anyone to hear the Minister's answer. This is most discourteous to the Minister. I am sure that all honourable members would expect courteous attention when they have the call and they should reciprocate by extending the Minister the same courtesy.

Mr LONGLEY: Just as that promise was false, so have the other promises of the Federal Labor Government been false. In its desperate bid to try to lay the blame elsewhere, the Federal Government tried to use the States as a scapegoat, but without success. Even the honourable member for Bulli is reported as saying that the whole situation is a disgrace.

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

Mr LONGLEY: The honourable member for Bulli was referring to before and after school care funding, which has no State component whatsoever. Before and after school care is 100 per cent federally funded, and the reason there has been a delay in that funding being provided is that the Federal Labor Government cannot get its act together. It alone is responsible for the delay in that area. In October last year I wrote to the Federal Government in the following terms, "As outside school hours care is a Commonwealth only funded service, you

could release the 9,840 outside school hours care places immediately"; but I have not received a reply to that letter. The Federal Labor Government does not care about child care places.

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

Mr LONGLEY: The Federal Government merely wants to grandstand and continue its rhetoric, but there is no substance in it.

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

Mr LONGLEY: In reality the Federal Labor Government could fund those places immediately. The promises of the Federal Government are unbelievable and they are repeated across all its programs.

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

Mr LONGLEY: In home and community care services there are in total more bureaucrats at the Federal level than people working on the ground in the State. There are more bureaucrats than workers.

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

Mr LONGLEY: That story is repeated over and over at a time when more than ever we have greater numbers of homeless people as a result of the Federal Labor Government's recession. Last year there was a six-month delay in the transfer of millions of dollars from the Federal Government. Likewise, the Commonwealth was not meeting its targets in providing residential care for elderly people because its land and construction requirements for this State were unrealistic, the result being that our hostel and care program had to meet the requirement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There may be times when members of this House consider that certain actions are outside the normal tenets of order. Though I do not think the Chair could construe a basically solicitous act by one member towards another as being out of order, I do ask that all members treat proceedings seriously. I am not sure that the honourable member for Kogarah by his actions was doing that and I ask him to bear that in mind in future. I am concerned at the length of the Minister's answer and I ask him to conclude it as quickly as possible.

Mr LONGLEY: The truth is that the Federal Labor Government has been wasting the time and money of the people of this State. Its promises cannot be believed. The Federal Government has an appalling record, and members of the Opposition ought to be ashamed of their Federal counterparts, as indeed the honourable member for Bulli has already substantiated.

HIV AND AIDS DISCRIMINATION

Ms MOORE: When will the Premier and Treasurer make a statement in this House supporting the recommendations contained in the report of the inquiry into HIV and AIDS related discrimination?

Mr FAHEY: The honourable member for Bligh is fully aware that, following the inquiry that was undertaken, the Government established a community committee. That committee, which has on it a very good cross-section of the community, has had a number of discussions and meetings and has brought forward a number of suggestions, but not in concrete form. As the honourable member for Bligh would also appreciate, it was announced by the Governor in yesterday's address to the Parliament that the Government will move to outlaw discrimination in relation to HIV and AIDS. The Government intends to introduce that legislation in this session.

I am not sure on what the honourable member for Bligh wants me to make a statement. I have yet to see

any substantial suggestions on this issue, for the benefit of the honourable member for Kogarah. I am very conscious of this problem and I believe it requires all the sensitivities of all honourable members because of the impact it has had on the community. I have often said that anybody who treats this matter lightly should visit the St Vincent's hospice for the dying; I think it will change their outlook for ever on a problem for which there is no cure. It is not going away; it is being contained. I would be happy to hold discussions on any aspect of the inquiry that the honourable member for Bligh believes ought to be the subject of a public statement from the Government and if, after those discussions, it is appropriate to make such statement, I will most certainly do so.

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PRISON SUICIDES

Mr RIXON: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Justice and Minister for Emergency Services. What action has the Government taken in response to the suicides and attempted suicides in New South Wales prisons late last year?

Mr MERTON: I thank the honourable member for his question on this very important issue. Earlier today I released details of a comprehensive suicide prevention package which will be adopted throughout the New South Wales prison system. Before I go into the details of that package - which I might add is the result of three months work by the Department of Corrective Services - I want to put the issue of suicides in prison into a proper perspective. Most sensible commentators - and I exclude Opposition spokesmen from that group - have made the point that suicide is a complex social problem which cuts across all levels of our community, not just the prison system. Last year the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that in 1991 more Australians died through suicide than in motor vehicle accidents. A recent report from the New South Wales Coroners Court stated that suicide in the general community in New South Wales has increased by approximately 13 per cent.

In contrast, the suicide rate in the New South Wales prison system has fallen since this Government took office. For the record, there were seven suicides in New South Wales prisons in 1992; in 1987, Labor's last calendar year in office, there were 10. From 1987 to 1992 the prison population increased from about 4,000 to about 6,000, a 50 per cent increase. The bottom line is that under this Government the number of suicides has fallen despite a significant increase in the prison population. When I speak about those cold, hard figures, I do not want the House to think that I accept any death as being a situation that should occur. The Government is well aware that any suicide is a tragic situation. That is why today I announced these innovative policies. The Opposition's trivialisation of suicides forces the regrettable conclusion that there would be some political gain in relishing suicides - a situation which would be contemptible.

While the Opposition has been playing politics with the tragedy of prison suicides, the Fahey Government has been working towards real solutions to the problem. The package I released today represents a genuine attempt to prevent suicides in prison by identifying and helping inmates who are at risk. It also focuses on raising the awareness of staff in correctional centres, improving their training and their understanding of this complex issue. I do not want to take up too much time outlining this package. However, I would like to touch on some of the more important aspects. As the Department of Corrective Services reviewed this issue over the past three months, it has implemented strategies immediately on identifying deficiencies in the system. As a result, the following are some of the initiatives already in place. Crisis support units for suicidal and self-mutilating inmates have been established at Long Bay, Goulburn and Kirkconnell, and one is planned for Cessnock prison. Following recent discussions with the New South Wales police, the Department of Corrective Services now obtains information collected by the police about the health-suicide status of arrested offenders. The Department of Corrective Services has established a new full-time position of police liaison officer at the Sydney Police Centre. This officer co-operates with police to identify and help offenders with suicidal tendencies.

The reception hours for receiving inmates from the police have been extended to 7 p.m. in metropolitan gaols - this will soon be extended to country gaols - to reduce the number of offenders left overnight in police cells. Open planning, the establishment of gardens in all correctional centres, the wider introduction of pets,

and the extension of time out of inmates' cells to a minimum of 12 hours per day will help reduce the stress of being in prison. A range of suicide prevention training programs is conducted at the Corrective Services Academy for all new trainee officers, and other follow-up programs are run for more experienced officers. A major conference on the broad subject of suicides, organised jointly by the Department of Corrective Services and the Department of Health, will be held shortly in Sydney.

The following are some of the measures which will be implemented within the next 12 months. The reception centre at Long Bay will be reorganised by 30th June to upgrade current procedures for the identification, induction, observation, management and classification of potentially suicidal inmates. A special placement committee will be established by 1st April at the Long Bay hospital to ensure that inmates discharged from the hospital are sent to suitable institutions. A package of new procedures will be instituted by 1st April to improve the standard operating procedures for the identification and management of potentially suicidal inmates. This includes the introduction of a new inmates questionnaire to screen all inmates for suicidal indications on reception; a new form to inform wing officers of an inmate with any disclosed health-suicide risk indicators and the need for any special supervision requirements; and a formal system to ensure that the senior officer in charge of an institution at night is informed of any inmate with a health-suicide risk.

To support this package, a system of ongoing monitoring of identified inmates will be introduced by 1st May. Inmates who have been reported as suicidal or self-mutilating will be listed on a special module of the computerised offender record system by 1st June. Existing facilities at the Mulawa Correctional Centre will be refurbished and reorganised by 1st December to improve the management of suicidal and self-mutilating female inmates. The crisis support unit will provide a special suicide intervention service at night to the Long Bay complex by 1st May whereby its trained staff will respond to any act of suicide or self-harm.

[Interruption]

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Opposition members find this boring; that is the measure of their concern. The Government has implemented constructive proposals to help people and all that members of the Opposition can say is, "It is boring". The Government does not regard it as boring; it is fair dinkum. The Government is not out to score cheap political points. The Opposition may well make a lot of noise, because it is all hollow rhetoric, no substance - and a bit of religion would not do too much harm either. At a very opportune time, when the honourable member for Londonderry has raised his pathetic interjection, I am pleased to announce that I have established an independent three-person committee headed by the former New South Wales Coroner, Mr Kevin Waller, a representative from the Salvation Army nominated by Commissioner Bath, as well as a prominent Sydney psychiatrist, to review the strategies which I have outlined today. The committee will be charged to report back to me on any shortcomings it finds in this suicide prevention package. I believe this is the most far reaching anti-suicide package ever introduced in the New South Wales prison system. However, I see it as only a beginning. The Department of Corrective Services and the Waller committee will continue to refine this package over time. The Government has a commitment to save lives in custody, and is prepared to implement that commitment with constructive positive proposals, and I believe the Waller committee will be a necessary ingredient in those proposals.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX AND THE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr FACE: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing. Is the Minister aware of statements by leading racehorse trainer, Dr Chapman, that the GST will cripple the racing industry? Will the Minister call upon Dr Hewson to remove the GST from horseracing and protect the jobs of the third largest industry in New South Wales and Australia?

Mr SCHIPP: There is no doubt that this is a very important question and one that needs to be addressed.

There are serious concerns within the racing industry but they relate to today, not to two years down the track. Why do they relate to today? Because the recession has had an impact upon the racing industry and on the ability of people to engage in a great Australian pastime.

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

Mr SCHIPP: The turnover of the Totalizator Agency Board is down today - not two years or four years down the track. Why is that so? Because 1,017,600 people are unemployed, 11.6 per cent of the work force. There are 340,000 people who are long-term unemployed. In a number of families no member is employed - over a million. And more than 700,000 children live in families where no member is working - that is an increase of 80,000 in one year. More than 160,000 families have no main breadwinner.

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

Mr SCHIPP: Is it any wonder that the people are grasping for change and that they will accept change, whatever it is - whether there is a goods and services tax or not. People want change. They know what the fellow the Labor Party has on a pedestal has done to this country for the past 10 years. There is no doubt that this is an issue for today and not the future. To the credit of the racing industry, it has heard the message of the downturn in TAB turnovers and is making adjustments. Astute business people throughout the industry are operating budgets to take effect of the fact that they will lose money out of the TAB distributions directly as a result of the recession.

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

Mr SCHIPP: The criticism which is surfacing in the climate of the election campaign is long coming. I have had discussions with the racing industry on numerous occasions, as has the honourable member for Charlestown. He has sought comment from it in the past and it has not come to the fore because the industry did not seem to take much interest. I can understand Dr Geoff Chapman's frustration. I believe that he is sincere but I think he is misguided on this issue, so far as I see it. As I said in the House last year, in New Zealand the GST did not have the impact which is feared at the present time.

I inform those who have concerns that there is a meeting in Sydney today between the people who are belatedly making these statements, Peter Reith and Michael Baume. A faxed statement from both sides will be released this afternoon. I am prepared to make that statement available. As soon as I get it I will give it to the honourable member for Charlestown. I gave him the whole of the sport and recreation proposals on GST and I have not heard anything back on that. I will make this afternoon's statement available. If there are concerns, they ought to be sorted out before the election - I believe they can be because everything I have read seems to counter the statements being made. Senator Michael Baume has said that the Federal Opposition will not do anything to damage this very important industry. If that is the case, we should get it set in concrete beforehand. The industry has a lot of weather to go through under the present circumstances, which cannot be blamed on Dr Hewson. This afternoon we will know what has come out of the meeting which is being held in Sydney today.

POLLUTION PREVENTION

Mr PHOTIOS: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for the Environment. Since the Environment Protection Authority was launched a year ago, have there been any significant improvements in measures to prevent pollution and protect the environment?

Mr HARTCHER: I thank the honourable member for Ermington for his answer -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection in the House. I ask the Minister for the Environment to give us the benefit of his answer.

Mr HARTCHER: I will start again. I thank the honourable member for Ermington for his question and his continuing interest in matters relating to the environment. On 1st March we will see the first anniversary of the establishment of the Environment Protection Authority in this State, which has been a great step forward for the environment in New South Wales. It was a result of the vision of the previous Minister for the Environment, Mr Tim Moore, and the previous Premier, Mr Greiner - two people who worked hard for environmental protection. Their record contrasts very much with the record of the Minister for the Environment, the current Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bob Carr, when those opposite were in government.

As Minister for the Environment, Mr Carr slashed the State Pollution Control Commission budget so that it was \$12 million in 1988, the lowest figure ever. It was he who slashed the staff to 200 - it now stands at 500. Under the administration of which he was a part, the SPCC in this State had become a joke. The SPCC was widely regarded throughout New South Wales by the environmental movement, by business and everyone as a joke, a toothless tiger, as its budget was slashed, its staff was slashed and its morale was low under a Minister who cared nothing about it. Mr Carr was completely disinterested in the environment except when it suited his political point-scoring tactics.

Under former Minister Moore and under the Fahey Government the staff and expenditure of the authority have increased - the staff now stands at 500 and is increasing to 600 - and the budget has increased to \$60 million a year, five times what it was under Mr Carr when he was the Minister responsible. There are more programs to protect the environment on air quality, water quality and noise control than were ever advanced by the previous Government. It is significant that the Environment Protection Authority of New South Wales is widely regarded as a model for other EPAs across Australia. Even the Federal Government, in its declining days, looks to New South Wales for its fine record of environmental protection.

There have been a number of significant achievements over the past 12 months. A number of measures have been taken in relation to air quality - we now have 16 air monitoring stations measuring metropolitan air quality in this State; there has been a 50 per cent increase in regional staffing levels and the establishment of six new offices to implement legislation and environmental improvement programs; and there has been extensive progress on pollution reduction programs, which will result in a 90 per cent reduction in the amount of pollution entering the Shoalhaven River from the Associated Pulp and Paper Mill Pty Limited plant by 1995.

We have improved protection of water quality through catchment management, with 11 senior catchment officers appointed across the State. Four community consultation forums have been established to facilitate public participation in the development of environmental programs. The EPA negotiated extensively through the State Government on the intergovernmental agreement on the environment, which will strengthen the environment on a national basis through a co-operative approach which will be undertaken by this Government and the future Federal coalition government, as from 14th March. Another significant development is the statutory mandated requirement that there be a review of environmental regulation in this State. That review has been completed and is now being developed into draft legislation which will be prepared by Parliamentary Counsel and finally submitted to Cabinet for approval. There will be a long and involved process of consultation with the community, business and environmental groups. The end result will be the Protection of the Environment Operations Bill, which will consolidate the five core pieces of legislation. This will enable the environment to be treated as a whole, rather than simply trying to divide it into separate mediums of air, water and other components.

The change will enable the necessary regulatory controls to be comprehensive. The review of regulations in New South Wales, as mandated by the original Protection of the Environment Administration Act, has considered the five major environment protection Acts, which span more than 30 years. The review has already been subject to careful consideration by the Government. The Environment Protection Authority is about encouraging conformity to our environmental laws and, while negotiation is preferred, prosecution is always an option. In fact, prosecutions have doubled since the days when the Leader of the Opposition was

Minister for the Environment, because rather than the toothless tiger over which he presided, we now have an Environment Protection Authority that is actually interested in looking after the environment.

In addition, the Government, as the Premier said earlier today in answer to a question from the honourable member for Rockdale, has launched a green paper to analyse future waste management strategies for New South Wales. The State Government, through the Environment Protection Authority, is working towards better laws to protect our air, water and land, laws which meet the needs of the 1990s and the increased environmental expectations of the community. I look forward to reporting further to the House on progress to implement and develop the bill to protect environment operations, and shall do so as soon as that information becomes available.

PETITIONS

Eastern Distributor

Petition praying that the House, because of the impending opening of the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, implement stages 2 and 3 of the Eastern Distributor, received from **Ms Moore**.

F6 Freeway Emergency Telephones

Petition praying that the House will consider the installation of emergency telephones on the F6 Freeway from Yallah to the north of Wollongong, received from **Mr Rumble**.

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Schofields Roadworks

Petition praying that the intersection of Richmond Road and Grange Avenue, Schofields, be upgraded, received from **Mr J. J. Aquilina**.

Holy Cross College School Transport

Petition praying that the House will provide a school special bus from Five Dock to Ryde for the students of Holy Cross College, Ryde, received from **Mr J. H. Murray**.

Capital Punishment

Petitions praying that the House will enact legislation to reintroduce capital punishment in extreme cases of murder where there is absolutely no doubt that the offender committed the crime, received from **Mr Face, Mr Hartcher and Mr West**.

Serious Traffic Offence Penalties

Petition praying that laws relating to road accident fatality or injury be re-evaluated, received from **Mr Newman**.

Brothels

Petitions praying that the Government will not take steps to legalise brothels but will close all existing brothels by enforcing the Disorderly Houses Act, received from **Mr Hatton, Mr W. T. J. Murray and Mr West**.

Far North Coast Beach Netting

Petition praying that coastal netting cease within four kilometres of beaches and rivers during the months of May, June and July for three years, received from **Mr D. L. Page**.

Port Macquarie Hospital

Petition praying that the Government will reverse its decision to privatise Port Macquarie hospital and build a new public hospital at Port Macquarie, received from **Mr Martin**.

Lidcombe Hospital

Petition praying that the services and staffing at Lidcombe Hospital not be cut, that the hospital not be closed down and the site sold for commercial development but rather that its service and staff levels be increased, received from **Mr Nagle**.

North-West Mobile Mammography Unit

Petition praying that the North-West Mobile Mammography Unit will visit Gunnedah, received from **Mr W. T. J. Murray**.

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**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Precedence of Business

Mr WEST (Orange - Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy) [3.22], by leave: I move:

That consideration of General Business (for Bills) take precedence from 9 a.m. until 6.15 p.m. of the Order of the Day for the Address-in-Reply and the taking of Private Members' Statements on Thursday 4th March 1993 and Thursday 11th March 1993.

By way of brief comment I indicate that obviously concern has been expressed to me in my capacity as Leader of the House, to the Government, and to the Parliament generally that in the previous session of Parliament an insufficient number of private members' bills and motions were dealt with in this Parliament. Clearly, honourable members were signalling that more time was necessary to deal with those matters. In my capacity as Leader of the House, and in trying to assist all honourable members in getting matters on to the business paper, I have held discussions with honourable members and arranged for a change to the normal practice during the Address-in-Reply debate. The proposal is that on Thursdays of the next two sitting weeks private members' bills take precedence of the Address-in-Reply debate. I make the distinction that this motion specifically provides for private members' bills, not motions, to be dealt with from 9 a.m. through to 6.15 p.m., except for when formal and routine business has precedence.

The motion would result in private members' statements not being noted on those days, recognising that private members would be debating their bills. This change may be somewhat unprecedented, but in the spirit of what I am putting to the House on behalf of the Government, this change is important. As part of its commitment to the people of New South Wales and to the Parliament in general, the Government introduced private members' day. If honourable members believe that more time should be set aside, I shall consult with the Premier with a view to making alternative arrangements within the present timetable, to be notified shortly;

or perhaps additional sitting weeks, at a time suitable to the business of the Government and the Parliament, may be added to the timetable.

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [3.26]: It is only proper that the Government has the right to govern and to set the program. It has never been, nor is it now, the intention that the Independents seek to interfere with that right. That is every government's right. I have said clearly to the Leader of the Opposition that if he were Premier and we were in the same position, it would be wrong and unfair of us to behave in any other way. As Premier he would expect that we would acknowledge the right of Government to govern and to set the business paper. We were approached first by the Opposition and then had discussions with the Government, and I merely expressed concern that only one private member's bill has been passed. It is important that private members be given an opportunity not only to raise matters in the House but to have matters dealt with and decided upon by the Parliament. I acknowledge the remarks made by the Leader of the House that this Government has done more than any other government for 20 years - and probably 50 years - to facilitate the rights of private members, particularly in putting private members' bills before the House.

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I am aware that an extra one or two sitting weeks would have provided the Leader of the Opposition with six additional question times and the potential to debate six matters of public importance and six urgency motions. If they are divided by half, allowing the Opposition and non-Government members to move such matters, they would have three each, and if those options were exercised, the time between lunch and dinner time would be fully utilised. If in those two extra sitting weeks the House sat at 2.15 p.m. on the Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the only opportunity for private members' matters on those two days would be after dinner. On Thursday morning the same procedure would be adopted. This proposal should be accommodated within the Government business program, if possible. However, I emphasise that an undertaking has been given on behalf of the Government that the situation will be reassessed. I do not speak only on behalf of Independent members; I express a view as a private member - which may well represent the view of private members on both sides of the Chamber - that during this session there may need to be a reassessment of how private members' bills are progressing. This will enable honourable members to monitor whether extra time needs to be allocated - and I take it that it will be allocated if there is considered to be the need - to deal with private members' bills within a reasonable time. I thank the Government for its understanding in this matter.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [3.30]: The Opposition will not divide on this matter but I want to set the record straight. I stated that the Opposition would move that the Parliament sit an additional week on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 5th, 6th and 7th April. The Government had not set down those dates for the Parliament to sit. It is inaccurate therefore to say that the Opposition was effectively proposing to take over the Government program. Likewise, the reserve date I suggested had not been set down by the Government as a sitting day. So in relation to that date the Government cannot accurately state that the Opposition is attempting to take over the Government program. Historically, the Address-in-Reply debate has provided members with an opportunity to address the House on a variety of issues, particularly matters arising from the Governor's Speech. Many members speak on matters concerning their electorates. It is now proposed that on Thursdays private members' bills will be dealt with. But currently that is what happens anyhow. So, with great respect to the honourable member for South Coast, the Government is not being overgenerous in allowing private members between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. to deal with private members' bills. That is the time devoted to them now.

The sitting program shows that there will be only five days for dealing with private members' bills. Therefore, until 20th May there will be 20 hours - five times four - for deliberation on private members' bills. The Independents should seek an undertaking from the Minister - I would not be able to get it from the Government; perhaps the Minister would be good enough to give it to me - that halfway through the program he will give the House an assessment of the likelihood of Parliament dealing with the bills that the 47 Labor members and the Independent members want the House to deal with. I do not expect him to be a fortune-teller in being able to say which private members' bills that may be proposed in future will be dealt with. The 20 hours for private members' bills on Thursdays will not be adequate. The Minister could try to make a point that I am trifling with the fact that after question time some time is available. But if a matter of public importance is

proposed for discussion, the maximum time available is an hour and a half. That is an important time and I do not want to mislead anyone by not mentioning it. Parliament does not sit enough. The Government will use the tactic of having private members' bills proposed by Government members. Government members have access to Ministers, and if their proposals are of sufficient worth, the Government could initiate legislation. That is the advantage of being in government. I look forward to the Minister giving the undertaking I have sought. It might take a lot of heat out of the argument about private members' bills. I also seek an undertaking in relation to matters that are outstanding in the upper House. The honourable member for Mount Druitt has a bill which was passed by this House and which is now log-jammed in the upper House. We would like to see that bill returned to this House. It is one thing for a bill to pass through this House; it is a separate issue for it to be passed by the upper House and returned.

Ms MOORE (Bligh) [3.34]: I support what the Leader of the House has said and what the honourable member for South Coast has said. There is no doubt that this Chamber is much more democratic and provides many more opportunities for members to participate in the parliamentary process than ever in its history. We are now looking at how the charter of reform has been implemented and how the opportunities for private members are working. It has been identified that more time needs to be allocated for private members' matters to operate more successfully. Traditionally, private members' matters have not been dealt with during the period in which the Address in Reply has been debated. So what the honourable member for Ashfield said is not correct. If we find halfway through the session that adequate time has not been allocated to private members, the Government has agreed that the matter will be open to negotiation. I am confident that, if necessary, extra time will be allocated to us. This is what the Premier and the Leader of the House have undertaken today. We will watch how the situation develops to ensure that adequate time is provided for members to participate. I commend the Leader of the House for his approach.

Dr MACDONALD (Manly) [3.36]: I wish to raise a couple of minor points as I believe the matter has been well covered in the debate. When the Opposition raised this matter some days ago it initially called for one or two weeks to be set aside to deal

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with private members' matters. Obviously, the Government was concerned in relation to who was in charge of the program. The Government felt that it should determine the sitting days. What has occurred characterises the sort of push and shove that happens in Parliament now. Out of it comes discussion, debate and consultation - and perhaps a situation in which everyone can be happy. The proposal for two Thursdays with six hours each, a total of 12 hours, involves probably as many hours as we would have got on 5th, 6th and 7th April, which is what was contemplated by the Opposition. So it is a bit of a win-win situation. We also have a clear indication from the Government that it will assess the passage of the bills at the halfway stage. I am uncertain what it means by assess. Does it mean that it is committed to seeing a number or a percentage of the bills passed? That is something we will deal with at the time.

The development of private members' days and private members' bills, the empowering of backbenchers, is the result of a partnership that has been forged between the Independents and the coalition. The Independents have also signed a document with the Australian Labor Party. It would have been a hollow victory had sufficient time not been allocated for private members' matters to be dealt with. There are now 20 or 30 private members' bills on the notice paper. Most of them are Opposition ones, so the Opposition stands to gain from this procedure. But that is not the point: the point is that in the charter of reform and the memorandum of understanding there is an empowerment of the Parliament and an empowerment of backbenchers. I challenge the Opposition to give a clear undertaking that if in future it attains government it will provide the same opportunities for dealing with private members' bills. In the years prior to 1988 - certainly before my arrival here - private members' bills were treated with total disdain. Let us hope that we see a clear signal from the Opposition that it has a genuine commitment to allowing private members' bills to be dealt with if it is in government in future.

Mr WEST (Orange - Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy) [3.39], in reply: I thank honourable members for their comments on this motion. For the record I state that it is not correct to say that only one private member's bill has passed through this Parliament. I think three notices of

motion were given today by members wanting their bills which had passed through this House to be reinstated on to the Legislative Council notice paper. There are at least those three, and just off the top of my head I know of at least a couple of others. While that may not be a large number in the scheme of things, it is a gross exaggeration on the downside to say that only one has been passed. However, I do not want to take away from the spirit of co-operation generally in the resolving of this matter. The honourable member for Ashfield said that his proposal that the House sit on three days - 5th, 6th and 7th April - that the Parliament was not scheduled to sit would not interfere with the Government's right to govern.

The honourable member for Ashfield spent a short time as a Minister and he has been in Parliament a long time. I take this opportunity to help him understand that for a Minister Parliament is not the total picture. Quite a deal of the time of a Minister is spent dealing with matters on behalf of the Government outside the scheduled sitting time of the Parliament. One week of the two weeks that the Parliament is scheduled not to sit will be devoted to Senior Citizens Week. Consideration must be given to such matters when sitting times are programmed. School holidays, Easter, and ministerial councils occupy the time of Ministers and are an important part of government. There would be no point scheduling Parliament to sit if as many as six Ministers were attending ministerial council meetings. Members opposite may want to ask questions of Ministers who are absent. The Parliament would become unworkable. Clearly those particular functions of the Government have to be taken into account.

The honourable member for Ashfield also seems concerned about whether the Government will get through the program. Unlike the Opposition, the Government does not introduce more and more legislation seeking to impose more and more conditions on the people of this State. The Government would prefer less legislation because that means less imposition of the Government - of big brother - on the activities of citizens of the State. There are other ways in which to govern, and I do not mean that the Government wants to wind down Parliament so that it does not sit at all. It is a matter of obtaining and maintaining the balance. Members of the Opposition said that none of this happened when the Labor Party was in government. Twelve of my 17 years in this place were spent sitting on the benches opposite, during which time not one private member's bill was considered. In that time only on two occasions was a private member's motion considered. It is important that should Labor ever regain government - and I am sure that that is so long away that I will no longer be a member of this House - its members retain and maintain private members' rights in this Parliament.

I concur with the honourable member for Manly. I have not actually done the sums but I agree with the comment of the honourable member for Manly with regard to the number of hours that would be available for private members' bills if the House were to sit on 5th, 6th and 7th April. Remember: the honourable member for Ashfield had signalled the intention that the House commence each day at 2.15 p.m. When question time, private members' statements, and matters of urgency and the like are taken into account, possibly only one hour would be left of the afternoon sitting which, together with the evening period from 7.30 p.m. through to 11 p.m., could be devoted to private members' bills. The Government's proposal comes close to providing an equal number of hours. I give the undertaking that any assessment on my behalf will be made after discussion with honourable members to establish the priorities of their legislation. It will not be a matter of members approaching me

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saying they want to get everything through; the Government does not get through everything it wants to get through. If all members are honest and rational in their approach to the assessment, I will be honest in my response. I thank honourable members for their contributions.

Motion agreed to.

SESSIONAL ORDER

Days and Hours of Sitting

Mr WEST (Orange - Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy) [3.43]: I

move:

That unless otherwise ordered the House shall meet for the dispatch of business during the autumn sittings as follows:

Tuesday, 2nd March, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 3rd March, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Thursday, 4th March, 1993, at 9 a.m.

Tuesday, 9th March, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 10th March, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Thursday, 11th March, 1993, at 9 a.m.

Tuesday, 30th March, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 31st March, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Thursday, 1st April, 1993, at 9 a.m.

Tuesday, 20th April, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 21st April, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Thursday, 22nd April, 1993, at 9 a.m.

Tuesday, 27th April, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 28th April, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Thursday, 29th April, 1993, at 9 a.m.

Tuesday, 11th May, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 12th May, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Thursday, 13th May, 1993, at 9 a.m.

Tuesday, 18th May, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Wednesday, 19th May, 1993, at 2.15 p.m.
Thursday, 20th May, 1993, at 9 a.m.

Members may mark in their diaries the three reserve dates - and these will be confirmed as soon as possible - Tuesday, 25th May, at 2.15 p.m.; Wednesday 26th May, at 2.15 p.m.; and Thursday, 27th May, at 9 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

First Day's Debate.

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr HUMPHERSON (Davidson) [3.45]: I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Governor's Speech. His Excellency in opening the third session of the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales canvassed a wide range of issues important to all people of the State. The Speech identified programs and initiatives designed to improve the quality of life for all citizens of New South Wales. The Government has always been motivated by a desire to work in the interests of all people without favour. There have been difficult decisions made, there have been compassionate decisions made, but above all the decisions have been right. There are several key matters the Governor mentioned which I would like to respond to. First, he identified early in his Speech that there are structural weaknesses in our economy. He also noted shortly thereafter that unemployment is an issue which is primarily a Federal Government issue and it is at that level that constructive progress needs to be made and initiated. Indeed, in noting that there is a Federal election to be

held on 13th March we do have an opportunity as a country, as a nation, as a people to choose change. We have an opportunity to change for the better; we have an opportunity to undertake tax reform, to restructure our economy and our industry, and more importantly to provide incentive for individuals and businesses to prosper into the 1990s and into the next century.

It is my view that the Federal coalition has substantial solutions. It has a 20-point plan which includes a broad-based consumption tax. There are benefits allied to that plan including the removal of seven other taxes - petroleum excise, payroll tax, the coal export levy, the training guarantee levy, lump sum superannuation tax, customs duty and, indeed, I think somewhat critically, the removal of what is effectively a goods and services tax, the greater sales tax commonly known as the wholesale sales tax, which most people would not realise imposes an 18.5 per cent average tax on the value of goods to which it is applied. In addition to all of that, what is proposed is a 25 per cent reduction in personal income tax. We will also see an increase in pensions of approximately 8 per cent; an increase of approximately 100 per cent in the family allowance; and Medicare will be retained and enhanced. It is worth noting it is proposed by the coalition that the Medicare levy will remain at 1.25 per cent of income rather than being increased to 1.4 per cent. We will also see effectively as a result of a broad-based consumption tax, a tax on the \$40 billion black economy. That is approximately \$6 million in income the Federal Government could expect to receive which is not currently obtained today. What the coalition is proposing on a national level is to provide incentive -

Mr Price: On a point of order. Though I agree that this debate should be wide ranging, I submit that to deliver what seems to be a policy speech for the Federal coalition is unreasonable. I would ask that the honourable member be directed to confine his remarks to the Speech of the Governor of New South Wales and not present Federal coalition policy.

Mr Humpherson: On the point of order. I am aware of rulings that have been made in the past in this regard. I did particularly note that the Governor referred to the economy and structural weaknesses in it, and also that unemployment is primarily a Federal issue. In that context I was making my comments and I did intend to move on to other issues shortly. I believe I was making fairly broad-based comments on policy.

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Mr West: On the point of order. Obviously the honourable member for Waratah has not sat through the entirety of the debate. Had he been listening, he would have heard a number of his colleagues raising matters in the Federal area as well, in particular their concerns about the proposed goods and services tax. The honourable member, within the framework of the standing orders, is well within his rights to mention those also.

Mr Price: Further to the point of order. I draw your attention to the comments made by Madam Deputy-Speaker during the contribution by the honourable member for Bathurst. I wonder whether the same restrictions should be applied on this occasion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have looked briefly at the matters referred to by the honourable member for Waratah. The two matters are in a different category and each must be assessed on its merit. There are in the Governor's Speech references to the current Federal election campaign and the problems for the State in regard to the deficit in the Australian balance of payments and structural weaknesses in the economy. I consider the member is within the leave of the question at the moment, but I shall listen carefully to his contribution from this point.

Mr HUMPHERSON: The coalition is saying, I believe, that its policy will provide incentives for individuals and business to invest and prosper, which will result in an improved standard of living for all Australians. Incentives for individuals would come from a lower marginal tax rate. Those who work longer hours and work overtime and contribute substantially to our gross domestic product would benefit by paying lower marginal tax at the higher level. These strategies and policies will also encourage savings, which will assist in addressing our overseas debt. The more that is saved locally within this country, the less businesses here have to borrow from overseas and the lower our \$162 billion debt will be. The options, by comparison,

are really 10 years of what has been widely judged as poor management. We have a recession and the recently announced 1,017,600 unemployed, yet the Labor Government under the Prime Minister has asked to be judged on its record. With that I can agree. I hope sincerely that the Government is judged on its record and that there will be a change.

The grab bag of policies unleashed by the Prime Minister can only be described as unsustainable, unrealistic and indeed farcical. In the context of the Labor Government's strategy and solution - the one nation policy released some 12 months ago, subsequently amended four times, and eventually buried - it has no solutions. The sun is setting on the existing Federal Government. It will try to do anything that will turn night into day, but I hope the people of Australia will see through that. On 14th March we will wake up to a new day, the air will be fresher, the flowers will be sweeter and indeed the people of Australia will have hope and a chance for the future. New South Wales must consider the effect the Prime Minister and former Treasurer has had on State funding. Under his Treasurership this State lost \$830 million worth of State funding. He can take sole responsibility for that. More specifically, as was pointed out earlier in this House, funding of the \$14 billion worth of promises the Prime Minister made in his campaign launch yesterday would require a 10 per cent GST on all products excluding food. That is in addition to keeping the seven taxes that the Federal coalition is proposing to abolish. The only alternative would be to increase other taxes - primarily personal income tax - or slash State grants, which would leave all States in an impossible position.

I was pleased that the Governor referred to the imminent release of the integrated transport study undertaken by this Government, which should identify throughout Sydney priority areas for improving transport links. I would hope and expect one of the high priorities of that study will be the need for the Manly-Warringah peninsula, of which the Davidson electorate forms a large part, to have a better means of transport connection to the rest of Sydney. It is worth noting that the Manly-Warringah area, which has a population of quarter of a million people, has only seven road lanes leading out of it along three main arteries and apart from that is totally isolated from the rest of Sydney. Some form of mass transit - either light rail or heavy rail - is needed to address that problem. I hope the integrated transport study will identify that as a priority. I will be interested to learn whether the report recommends a route mooted last year via Mosman to North Sydney linking up with the North Shore rail line. Alternatively a route could link the Manly-Warringah peninsula more closely with the rest of Sydney. It may be an alternative to connect the peninsula to St Leonards, Chatswood or even Pymble with future links towards Epping and Parramatta, some time later this century.

I hope that expressions of interest will be called for in the very near future to seek private interest, which has been expressed previously, in investment in a transport link to connect Manly-Warringah to the rest of Sydney. Our roads today are clogged and congested in peak hours. Any further urban development in the Manly-Warringah area should be contingent upon these added transport links to Sydney. Contrary to the views of some I am also firmly of the belief that any light rail system or heavy rail system should be totally independent of any transport corridor or route and should run in isolation and independently from other forms of transport. The Governor referred to the Sydney Olympic 2000 bid. Of course, a decision will be made in September on which city will host the year 2000 Olympics. The Olympic Games would provide a significant catalyst for the economic recovery of New South Wales, and much needed infrastructure for Sydney in particular. Under this Government we could expect acceleration of the development of Badgerys Creek airport and improvement of road transport and rail links, particularly to the geographic centre of Sydney.

Between September and the year 2000 an additional two million tourists are expected to visit Australia. Combined with the generation of jobs in other areas, the Olympics would generate \$13 billion.

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That is no small amount. It would go a long way towards addressing not only the balance of payments but producing some recovery in the local economy. I was pleased to see that \$492 million was included in the Budget - which I know is a balanced budget - for Olympics infrastructure. That \$492 million would provide for an 80,000-seat stadium, a velodrome, a colosseum, a sports hall, and equestrian, shooting, tennis and baseball facilities, all of which would be available not only for the year 2000 Olympics but also for the citizens of Sydney well into the next century. I note, too, that among Sydneysiders the bid has greater than 90 per cent

support, which is obviously of considerable satisfaction to the Olympic bid. It is indeed a great opportunity for New South Wales.

His Excellency mentioned the environment several times in his Speech yesterday. I said in my maiden speech in September last year that I would like to introduce a private member's bill to extend Garigal National Park. I propose to do that this session and to continue the theme initiated by the previous member for Davidson, Dr Terry Metherell. The area I propose to identify would be smaller and different from that proposed by him, but it would include areas most naturally sensitive in the Manly-Warringah area. The area proposed includes Aboriginal title lands and areas where there are claims of Aboriginal title. I propose that this be a consultative process with the Aboriginal community to ensure that all parties with a direct interest in this issue are satisfied with the bill. I hope and expect that Warringah Shire Council and other local interest groups will participate in the formulation of the bill.

Recently there has been media coverage of high blood lead levels in children, and I was pleased to note from the Governor's Speech that the Government plans to consult widely with the community in the development of a strategy to combat lead contamination. I also noted that a metropolitan air quality study will determine the most effective strategy to address other air quality problems in the Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle areas. I understand that the primary source of air quality problems is the motor vehicle, with more than 90 per cent of lead emissions coming from that source. About 87 per cent of carbon monoxide emissions come from motor vehicles as well as 80 per cent of nitrous oxides and the majority of hydrocarbon emissions. A great number of improvements have been made in this regard with the introduction in 1985 of unleaded petrol, improvements in emission standards and improvements in technology. However, we may need to accelerate these improvements if we are to achieve improved air quality in our cities, not to mention improvements to health.

I was pleased that His Excellency mentioned plans for a trial program to reduce vehicle emissions. Older vehicles - not the new vehicles as they get older - have greater emissions of these substances. In the United States vehicles are on average about seven years old, in other words, almost half the average age of vehicles in Australia. We have a long way to go before we have more newer vehicles and therefore significant improvements in the level of emissions. A significant contribution to emission improvements can only come about by having more new vehicles on the road. In turn, that can come about only if vehicles are cheaper and if there is more competition in the production and sale of vehicles. Going back to the Federal election, cheaper vehicles can come only through tariff reductions, increased competition and industrial relations reform in that industry. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

Moving on to other environmental matters, I was pleased to note that this financial year the environment received a great deal of focus with a 25 per cent increase in overall funding. My electorate of Davidson has benefited from that additional funding, particularly with the completion of the Belrose transfer station and the allocation of \$163,000 for improvements to Garigal National Park. In my electorate and in the Manly-Warringah area generally there is substantial interest in our beaches and the ocean outfalls. They are areas of environmental significance. I note that in the past three years there have been improvements to solids capture at North Head and decreases in the amount of sludge going into the ocean. I am pleased to note that trials and changes continue in that area. I note that the Governor made the comment that environmental values should not be sacrificed for short-term gain.

I had the privilege and opportunity to visit Tasmania in early January and spent several days travelling in the southwest of Tasmania, in the wilderness areas. I made two notable observations. I had the opportunity to travel up the Gordon River, to observe that very scenic and impressive area of Tasmania, and to realise what the impact would have been if the Gordon below Franklin dam had been developed about a decade ago. A significant wilderness area would have been lost, notably its extremely impressive valleys and gorges. On the other side of the coin the benefit would have been a somewhat nominal amount of electricity generation, for there was no other reason for the development of that dam. To put it in context, the amount of electricity that would have been generated by the dam and the associated hydroelectric scheme, had it proceeded, would equate to about 5 per cent of a modern power station.

The other interesting observation I made was of Queenstown which has been much mooted for its interesting scenery. It is an example of what happens when we are not aware of the impact we have on the environment. In the early 1800s Queenstown was a copper sulphide mining area. Many trees were cut down to fire the furnaces to make the copper ore. Sulphur dioxide and other acidic gases were given off and in turn they ruined the remaining vegetation. The effect of the gases was compounded by rainfall and fire, so that now the Queenstown area is entirely desolate. What used to be heavily wooded and extremely beautiful natural countryside is now totally devoid of any vegetation. It is a perfect example of what should not happen when natural resource industries are established. In that case environmental values were sacrificed for short-term gain, and we must learn the lessons of the past.

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I am pleased to note the intention to reintroduce a natural resources package this session. I was fortunate enough to be a member of the legislation committee that reviewed the legislation late last year, and I believe that the objectives of that package, and I hope of the intended package also, were sound. We must reduce the conflict and emotion involved in striking a balance between protecting the environment and developing and retaining resource industries. There must be increased understanding and awareness of the issues, as well as encouragement for objective decision-making and the striking of a proper balance. Competing interests should be able to come together in a forum to seek common ground and, if possible, consensus on issues, on the one hand recognising and protecting valuable environment areas and on the other recognising the need for confidence in industry and investment and job security. Another important part of the original package that I hope will be reintroduced in some form is the principle of government agencies not being the determinants of their own development applications. This matter involves public confidence in the process, and I believe that the roles of applicant and determinant should be separated. I believe, as was proposed in the original legislation, that the Department of Planning and the Minister for Planning should assess and determine applications from other agencies.

I am pleased that the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives is in the Chamber during this debate as I want to make some brief comments about reform in local government. I had the opportunity to serve for several years on the local council in my area. It has been my perception, not necessarily locally but throughout local government in this State, that reform is more than overdue. The proposed bill is the first comprehensive review in 70 years of local government and will lead to local government in New South Wales that is more open, accountable, efficient and effective in delivering services to ratepayers. All that is contained in the draft bill before the Parliament has been achieved through consultation with all parties, and I understand that more than 10,000 submissions were received on the draft bill.

Quality in local government and elected members is needed. I am strongly of the view that the fewer members of a council, the better. If a council has fewer members, the members work better as a team in the interests of the local government area. Competition for fewer positions on a council is likely to result in higher quality individuals being elected. A local government council comprising a keen, enthusiastic and small group will result in more emphasis being placed on major decisions. I have witnessed endless hours of debate about developments focusing on the pitches of roofs, the location of windows, trees and the like. In the past councils with too many councillors or aldermen have been unable to take a proper interest in planning for future customer service strategies and have become bogged down in the minutiae of council operations, which, in the main, should be left to staff or informal meetings.

I support the proposed change to the local government rating system. This change will allow councils to obtain as much as 50 per cent of their rating base through property-based rating. That is a much more equitable, fair and balanced approach than the existing system, which is based proportionally on the value of properties as established by the Valuer-General. The existing system disadvantages those who are asset rich but revenue poor. More importantly, it does not reflect the access to and usage of services provided to individuals in the community. The option will remain with the council to determine to what degree it applies that percentage property-based rating source. Although I have made comments that may have been considered

critical of local government, the proposed Act and the Government recognise that local government has an extremely important role to play in our society. It is important that local government understands and responds to the community's needs and delivers necessary services.

I was pleased to note that the Governor referred to the reintroduction this year of the fixed term Parliament legislation. Fixed four-year terms are a good thing. They have widespread public support and will give the people of New South Wales greater confidence in the political process of this State. Fixed four-year terms will give certainty to governments, members of Parliament, business and individuals. The discretion for calling elections should not rest solely with the government; it should lie with the people. The certainty of four-year terms will result in better planning by the government in office. The decision as to whether that government has done its job properly and the elected members have represented the interests of their constituents properly can be made by the people at the end of the government's term. Fixed four-year terms will result in fewer elections.

As I reflect on His Excellency's Speech, I feel assured and confident that this State is being well served by his Government. The Government has a comprehensive program for New South Wales which identifies and addresses issues of concern. It has a program for improving the efficiency of all areas of the public sector, including customer service. It is encouraging private sector investment in infrastructure. It is managing State debt in the interests of everyone and is listening to and responding to the concerns of the public. It is providing hope and opportunity for the future. There is no doubt that 1993 will be a year of change. I am sure all members of this House will work to make that change positive and constructive so that at the end of this year we will have ensured, individually and collectively, that New South Wales has become a better State for all its citizens to live in.

Mr DAVOREN (Lakemba) [4.15]: I should like to give the House the benefit of my thoughts on the Government's legislative program for the forthcoming year as outlined by His Excellency the Governor yesterday. Frankly, I am disappointed. The program will not give too much help - or, indeed, hindrance -
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to the State of New South Wales. It seems to me that the Government has decided, in a public service way, that if it does nothing, it cannot do anything wrong. The program does not give the citizens of New South Wales much hope for reform or, indeed, a great deal of legislative action. If a government does not do anything, how can it do anything wrong? In one of the opening paragraphs of His Excellency's Speech he referred to legislation which will be introduced to provide a system for dealing speedily with complaints and clients' needs. That was a reference to consumer claims. On one or two occasions in the past I have spoken in this House about the Consumer Claims Tribunal. I hope the Government will do something to ensure that justice is not only done speedily but is seen to be done.

It seems to me that the referees at the tribunal do not investigate complaints fully. They seem to veer alarmingly to the side of the consumer. That is perfectly in order if the supplier or the retailer is at fault, but the consumer is not 100 per cent right in all circumstances. As honourable members know, some consumers are hopeless in their demands. They make terrific demands which are not granted or, indeed, are not within the ability of the respondent to fulfil. I hope the legislation to be introduced by the Government in relation to consumer claims resolves some of the problems that have emanated from decisions made by the tribunal. His Excellency referred also to the great contribution that is made to government funds through government trading enterprises, which are sometimes referred to as government business enterprises. It is claimed that it is in order for these enterprises to be run like public companies.

I do not suppose the Opposition has any argument with that, but I am not aware of too many companies where a dividend is declared by the directors and, some time shortly after, the shareholders not only demand a special dividend but nominate the amount of that dividend. I refer specifically, of course, to the dividend of \$100 million paid by the Sydney Water Board. It is probably only a coincidence that that is approximately the amount that was collected under the special environmental levy. An amount of \$100 million was transferred and there was then a special dividend of \$100 million. The Government then magnanimously transferred certain assets to the Water Board. I do not know whether other members noticed the photographs in the *Sydney*

Morning Herald earlier this week, but one of those assets was the Alexandra Canal, which was loaded up with all sorts of rubbish. It would probably cost \$100 million to clean it up.

I am sure the Sydney Water Board would be highly delighted that assets such as that have been transferred to it. The other dividend to which I wish to refer is the \$400 million from Pacific Power. It looks good; it is great sleight-of-hand. The receipt of \$400 million is slipped into the books of the State, but there is no corresponding debit; a credit of \$400 million just arrives. However, it is debited to Pacific Power and, somehow or other, Pacific Power has to pay the money back. Pacific Power has either borrowed the money to give to the State or taken it from reserves which are intended to be used for updating plant or to pay for other capital works. The interest on that amount must be paid. How is that done? In the case of Pacific Power, which produces and sells electricity, there is probably only one way: the cost of electricity to its customers is increased. I am sure industry in New South Wales would be delighted about that.

His Excellency said that prices have not grown faster than the CPI. I assume he was talking about prices generally, because it is fact that prices have not grown faster than the CPI. We know that from the shopping basket. The CPI is calculated by the Federal Government statistician. Prices have not risen because of the fact that inflation is at its lowest level for many years. That does not apply to government charges. Formerly it cost \$10 to lodge an application with the Consumer Claims Tribunal; now it costs \$40. That is a substantial increase. That charge has certainly grown much faster than the CPI. Generally, government charges are quite exorbitant. They have increased at a constant rate, although a reading of that paragraph of the Governor's Speech tends to give the impression that it does include government charges.

His Excellency also said that the Government will streamline the Legal Aid Commission and make it more efficient and accountable and ensure that it operates within its means. My esteemed colleague the honourable member for Ashfield spoke at some length, and quite volubly, on the subject of legal aid. I do not intend to traverse the same ground as he did during his contribution to this Address-in-Reply debate. I am sure that every member of this House has had the experience of constituents complaining bitterly about the fact that legal aid is difficult, if not impossible, to get. Indeed, I assume the only way one can effectively obtain legal aid, and be sure of obtaining legal aid, is if the person seeking it has been charged with a very serious criminal offence.

I have no objection to the restrictions that are placed upon the provision of legal aid. Recipients must not exceed the income threshold; and also that there should be some probability of success. I have no problem with that. Indeed, there are excellent reasons for such restrictions. When the responsibility for and finances of the Legal Aid Commission were transferred from the Commonwealth to State responsibility, all sorts of things were said by the then Labor Government. Mr Terry Sheahan, who was the Attorney General of the day, made certain commitments which were accepted by the Commonwealth Government in good faith. The New South Wales Government has breached that agreement, as it has done in respect of so many other matters. It is a crying shame that legal aid is so difficult, and as I say almost impossible, to get for people who are deserving of legal aid.

There was mention of the fact that, following consideration of the report of the parliamentary Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Government will introduce appropriate legislation. That commission was set up with the sole aim of establishing that members of the

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Labor Party were at the centre of any corrupt activities. The Government found that that was not so, that the Labor Party and previous Labor governments had been whiter than the driven snow. In fact, the only people who have been seriously mentioned in reports of the ICAC are members of other political parties, and their supporters and friends. The people of New South Wales are frightened that changes will be made that will be to the detriment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I believe that should not occur, that if legislation is introduced it should be to make it easier for the commission to operate.

The Governor in his Speech referred to the 18,000 jobs that will be created in New South Wales this year with the assistance of the Government. Honourable members have heard about these mythical 18,000 jobs for some time. The Premier spoke about them in his Budget Speech. He said that the Government would

establish some 6,000 jobs and, because of the multiplier effect that would result, those 6,000 government jobs would provide another 12,000 supplementary jobs in the private sector. When the Leader of the Opposition suggested that if that principle were to be applied in that way, the reverse should also apply: the elimination of 20,000 government funded jobs would therefore mean a net loss of 60,000 jobs, the Premier refused to accept that suggestion. He said the multiplier effect moves only in one direction and not in the other.

What a hide this Government has to talk about jobs when it has sliced jobs everywhere. I can recall a time when the New South Wales railways trained apprentices to be employed not only in that particular service but in industry generally. Most people would accept the fact that apprentices of all trades who were trained by the railways were trained in an excellent manner. Those workers have virtually disappeared. New South Wales is no longer training apprentices. Eventually the present recession will end and we will reach the top of that crest that economists like to talk about, although at present we are in the hollow. The economy is starting to turn around and is on the upward move.

When the recession ends the Government will find that there are no craftsmen and tradesmen to do those jobs because they are not being trained. Surely that is a task of government. The Government cannot just sit back and allow everybody else to do the things that it should be doing. My concern is not just that jobs have disappeared. Recently I visited the rod and bar division of BHP at Newcastle. Some 10 years ago 7,800 people were employed there; at present 3,400 people are employed there. Productivity is better than it was 10 years ago. I suppose the average person would say that that is because when 7,800 people were employed they were loafing. That is not so. From the time the iron ore arrives until it rolls out the other side as ingots or billets or rod or bar it is almost untouched by human hands. Everything is done automatically by computerisation, and done very well. It was explained to us that it is a very important aspect of industrial relations that the company be able to persuade the workers to produce more and to bring forward ideas that will result in increased productivity, knowing full well that automation also means the loss of jobs. We should take our hats off to those people for being willing to work harder and for continuing to do so. Do not let us hear too much about the quality of work and the level of responsibility of the average Australian worker. The Australian workers are marvellous.

His Excellency spoke at length about tourism. It is important to recall, as has been established publicly in a report prepared by the New South Wales Government, that the NSWOW advertising campaign was a complete and utter farce and a failure. Honourable members on this side of the House always knew that it would be. The Minister at that time was more interested in preparing for the re-election of the Government than in assisting the tourist industry. It is scandalous that though New South Wales has so much to offer for tourists it is lagging behind Queensland in that field. What does Queensland have that New South Wales does not have? Its big advantage is that it has a Labor government after many years of stagnation under the administration of a National Party government. At least things in Queensland are on a decent footing and it can be given some marks out of 10 for that.

I am sure all honourable members will agree that New South Wales has a tremendous amount to offer tourists. The Workers Education Association of New South Wales conducts walking tours around Sydney. Only last year my wife went on one of its walks. I cannot wait until I have the time to go on one with her. She said it was marvellous to walk around the eastern suburbs with a guide and that she had a most enjoyable day. That is only one example of the tourist attractions in New South Wales. The Hunter Valley offers magnificent opportunities for tourists. However, the New South Wales Government has sat back and done nothing to promote it. The New South Wales Government spends the least amount on tourism of any government in the Commonwealth. It spends about one-tenth of the amount spent by Queensland. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I shall speak further about Queensland. It is scandalous to think that the tourism capabilities of this State are being ignored and that New South Wales spends only one-tenth of what is spent by the Queensland Government on tourism. It is little wonder that Queensland is doing better than New South Wales in that area. I appeal to the Government to redress the imbalance and pay attention to what the Governor said about tourism and its importance to this State. It has been said often - though people frequently only pay lip-service to it - that tourism offers the opportunity to earn more money than any other industry. I read with interest the

comment by the Governor that all governments have acknowledged the need to renovate and renew older urban areas and make better use of existing infrastructure. I agree with that comment. I thought urban consolidation was to be the panacea for all of our problems. We have been told that it costs a great deal to develop a block

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of land and provide the necessary infrastructure. It was said that urban consolidation would solve all of those difficulties.

An officer of the Water Board told me that Salt Pan Creek, which runs principally through the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for East Hills but services his area and then runs through my electorate, transports effluent from the region through two of the biggest pipes I have ever seen - about 2 metres in diameter. He said that those pipes are used to their optimum and cannot handle any additional effluent. If more urban development occurs in that locality, the capacity of the drainage will have to be doubled to handle the additional sewage and prevent it from bubbling up through the manholes. It is no answer to say simply that urban consolidation will solve the problem. It would cost many millions of dollars to update those services. In my electorate flooding occurs from the Water Board drainage canals and channels simply because they are not big enough to cope with the volume of effluent. They were built in the 1930s and nothing much has been done to enlarge them to date. Some people suggest that one should wash one's car on the grass. However, nothing has been done to prevent construction of large concrete areas that allow more runoff; they have been accepted but the drainage canals and channels have not been enlarged.

I suggested foolishly that some of my constituents were not much interested in the \$80 environmental levy being spent on the beaches and would prefer that a large proportion of that levy be spent on solving the flooding problems. The Water Board has suggested all kinds of airy-fairy ways of overcoming the difficulty, but they have amounted to nothing. I understand that when my correspondence reaches the Water Board the officers who deal with it say, "That is not this fellow going crook about this again, is it?" The Government should be concentrating on these issues. Much has been said about the redevelopment of Ultimo, Pyrmont and the Eveleigh railway yards. That area, especially in the vicinity of Paddy's Markets, would be an ideal location for town houses and medium density houses to overcome some of the housing problems, for it is handy to the city. However, it is not simply a matter of putting buildings there. Improvements must be made to the drainage and sewerage infrastructure, which in the past has been simply accepted because most of it is underground.

In this debate a couple of Government supporters talked about the great strides being made in solving many of the environmental problems. What has the Government done in an effort to extend the use of lead-free petrol? I read recently in a newspaper that a learned scientist suggested that it was dangerous for young people to live near busy highways because the amount of lead in the air from leaded petrol was detrimental to their health. The Government has done nothing to encourage the use of lead-free petrol. A representative from one of the oil companies told me that the amount of lead-free petrol used is below the estimates of its use when the Labor Government decided to introduce it. The Government should encourage further use of lead-free petrol, in an endeavour to reduce the amount of lead in the atmosphere emanating from leaded petrol. For some years I have had a motor vehicle powered by lead-free petrol and have had no difficulties. Petrol consumption is far less than was the case with my previous motor vehicles. I have never experienced any problem with acceleration. Lead-free petrol is the answer to some of the problems related to the presence of lead in the atmosphere.

I wish to speak briefly about the hospital problems in my area and in associated areas. It appears as though either Canterbury Hospital or the Western Suburbs Hospital will close and a new hospital will be built. We are told that it will probably take four to five years for this plan to come to fruition. I do not think anyone would object to a new, modern hospital replacing either of those hospitals provided the number of beds is not reduced. But the hospital must be close to public transport and equidistant from the two existing hospitals. The two hospitals should not be closed to allow the building of the new one, or adequate and suitable arrangements should be made if it is decided to close one of them. We cannot close the two hospitals and wait four to five years while the new one is being built. I am sure that is a matter to which the Government will give due consideration. I do not know whether it will do anything, but it should give due consideration to it.

The Governor spoke about the great moves the Government has made and is making in providing suitable highways in this State. It certainly has. We are paying for them by means of our petrol tax and, when new roads are built, a not inconsiderable toll is placed on them. Anyone living at Liverpool and using the new tollway to travel to work each day pays \$4 a day. It costs that person \$20 a week to travel on the tollway. It is certainly quicker and it could be that people use less petrol, but I do not know whether they would save \$20 worth of petrol in a week. Nevertheless, these roads are being provided. If people want them and they are prepared to pay for them that is okay. I draw to the attention of the Government - I have drawn this to the attention of a number of Ministers for roads and highways on many occasions - the terrible situation at Punchbowl Road. That road has been half finished for ages. For heaven's sake, can we not complete the roads that were started so long ago? Many things are connected with roads. The footpath on the Canterbury municipal side of Punchbowl Road is in a terrible state. Canterbury council has said that it cannot put in a footpath when it does not really know from the Roads and Traffic Authority what the final outcome will be. I agree with that. What is the good of putting in a nice concrete footpath, grassing the area and then finding that the RTA has decided to do something else with the road? If we are to spend money on roads at least we should complete the half-finished ones. If Punchbowl Road is completed it would please me and my colleague the honourable member for Canterbury. I suggest to the Government that its motto "Putting

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People First by Managing Better" is back to front. Surely it should be, "Managing Better by Putting People First". Surely that is what it is all about. We are not here to serve ourselves but to serve the citizens of New South Wales. I will even give away the copyright if the Government adopts my suggested slogan.

Mr Cochran: You are all heart.

Mr DAVOREN: I am all heart. The Government should give away this silly slogan which it does not follow anyway. It does not put people first by managing better. I throw that into the arena and assure the Government that, if it adopts my slogan, I will not claim copyright.

Mr COCHRAN (Monaro) [4.45]: I am delighted to see the honourable member for Smithfield in the Chamber. I hope he does not leave as there are a couple of matters I need to raise concerning statements he made about Australia becoming a republic. I take this opportunity to compliment His Excellency, Rear Admiral Peter Ross Sinclair, A.C., Governor, on the Speech he delivered yesterday in the other place. There is little question that the decision to appoint him Governor was a wise one. He conducted himself in a dignified and disciplined manner and carried out his duties as one would expect of a person in his position. He did credit to the Crown and to those he represents in this State. There is no doubt in the minds of those who observed the traditions and protocol yesterday that the Governor understands formality, self-discipline, protocol and tradition. His conduct was reminiscent of one of the most courageous people in this State who has represented the Queen - the late David Martin. In my time in this Parliament he is one person I will remember fondly. He represented Her Majesty with the greatest reverence and a great deal of dignity. He displayed eminent courage to the point of his death.

The Governor's behaviour was in stark contrast with the most undignified and undisciplined rabble opposite. Yesterday in the other place members of the Opposition behaved in a most unreasonable manner and did themselves no favour in the eyes of the public. I could not help but draw comparisons between the stature of people on the Opposition benches and the Governor. I refer to people such as the honourable member for Smithfield and the Hon. P. F. O'Grady, who looks as though he has contracted some form of myxomatosis. The Governor bore a resemblance to our ancestors in Britain, Ireland and Scotland. I was greatly amused by the remarks of the honourable member for Smithfield in his earlier contribution. At one stage he referred to the prospect of a republic and a change of flag. He represents the loony left in general. The only comment I can make is: why fix it if it is not broken?

A proposition has been put forward by the current Prime Minister - I say current because he will not be there for long - that Australia should become a republic. If we look at the history of every republic in the world - we have done this before in this place and it would be an education for honourable members opposite to do it as well - we find that each and every one has been involved in some form of civil war or revolution or their

president or leader has been assassinated. Honourable members opposite want to present our children with the prospect of that sort of future. We have had in excess of 200 years of peace in this country. That is something some of us treasure. I do not know whether honourable members opposite treasure it. All I ask them to do is to give a lot more thought to what they are suggesting Australia should become.

Our constitutional monarchy is not infallible by any means but it is certainly better than the system in the United States of America and any other republics. The honourable member for Smithfield, being a lawyer, should give serious consideration to what he is about to give away on behalf of his children. He should consider what his children might have to live with in the future. The Governor, in his Speech, made some direct references to the situation Australia finds itself in. He made reference to the Federal election campaign and to the fact that Australia was facing an increasing deficit and one of the highest unemployment levels we have seen in this country since the Great Depression. Our current level of foreign debt is reported as being \$163 billion. I am reliably informed that that equates to about \$12,000 for every man, woman and child in this country.

If Australians believe that the Federal Labor Government's management of the country's economy is responsible, they will cast their votes accordingly on 13th March. However, there will be no doubt in the minds of the more than one million people currently unemployed and the number of people whose businesses have gone bankrupt that, as a direct result of the unfortunate economic mismanagement by Paul Keating and the Federal Labor Party, Australia finds itself in its current economic abyss. There is little doubt also that comparisons can be drawn between the economic management of New South Wales and that of other States under the administration of former Labor governments. In fact to quote the Governor's Speech, "New South Wales will continue to lead the way in responsible financial management". Again, there will be no doubt in the minds of the public that we, as a Government, are managing responsibly. We are leading the way towards the resolution of Australia's economic problems. We are providing New South Wales with an opportunity to prosper which has not been seen at least for the past 14 years. Our business houses need greater opportunities to assist them to employ the young people of Australia who are at present unemployed.

To draw comparisons between the situation of New South Wales and the regrettable results in Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia Inc., one needs to look no further than the desperate prospects faced by Jeff Kennett and his Government in trying to restore Victoria to some level of prosperity. Likewise, South Australia has found itself having to be bailed out of its mess by the Federal Government, to the tune of some \$600 million - an

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unprecedented move in the history of this nation where a Federal Government has had to bail out yet another Labor Government that has managed to get itself into strife. I wonder who will come to the rescue of Australia as a nation when an audit is carried out of our books after the Federal election on 13th March. No doubt there will be an audit, and it will show that Australia is not in debt to the tune of \$163 billion, but well in excess of \$200 billion.

The other interesting statistic, which will no doubt prove there are inconsistencies in the figures being provided to us, is the level of unemployment. I would be willing to take a punt that the unemployment figures in this country are more likely to be in the vicinity of 12 per cent to 12.5 per cent rather than the 11-odd per cent that the current Federal Government claims. We have record unemployment, record debt and record bankruptcies yet Paul Keating claims that he wants to lead the country for another three years. I recall the cruel statement made by Bob Hawke in 1988 that no child shall live in poverty by the year 1990. It was shameful of him to try to deceive the people of Australia into believing that the almighty J curve, which began in 1984, was about to happen. Honourable members know what happened to the J curve. It is now referred to as the S bend and there is little doubt in the minds of business people that they have been shafted by the J curve.

I turn now to matters raised by the Governor in his Speech. On behalf of my constituents I express some concern about a commitment given by the Government to making government business enterprises commercially competitive, and I refer in particular to the Department of Conservation and Land Management. I understand the principles behind the changes in conservation and land management and the need to be more

competitive and act on a commercial basis, but in my electorate that department is acting in direct competition with private bulldozer operators in the construction of dams and roads. Unquestionably the department is operating on an uneven playing field. It is able to purchase its equipment at far cheaper prices than can be obtained by the private operators. Private operators in my electorate are disadvantaged by some of the principles that are being applied by the Government, and I will certainly be taking the matter up with the respective Minister.

The Governor made some interesting and relevant remarks about law and justice in his Speech. In particular he said that there has been a great deal of public debate about accountability, accessibility and the variety of affordable legal services in Australia. I was pleased to hear the honourable member for Davidson raise this matter in his contribution. I sympathise with the issues he raised with regard to legal services, and in particular legal aid. I concur with his remarks that it is almost impossible for average people, particularly those who have the misfortune to find themselves bankrupt. Some of these people may have been relatively affluent in the past, but they now have no money and are unable to obtain the services of a professional legal person. When they seek legal aid they are denied it on the basis that their assets exceed the criteria. I am sure that most people in Australia would agree that the legal fraternity must accept their part in reducing the cost of justice for those who are less fortunate.

Speaking of those who are less fortunate, doubtless the record number of bankruptcies in this country is a direct result of the Keating mismanagement. In the present economic climate, people faced with those regrettable circumstances should have greater access to the Legal Aid Commission. I welcome the note in the Governor's Speech that a domestic violence advisory council will be established to co-ordinate government initiatives to reduce domestic violence. Clearly, this demonstrates to people in those circumstances that this Government is compassionate, and understands the hardships, poverty and the many unfortunate and regrettable domestic violence circumstances in which married people find themselves from time to time. I feel sure that this initiative will do a great deal to alleviate those problems.

In addition, I was pleased to note that the Government intends continuing its fight against the illicit drug trade. Honourable members who have had the misfortune at some time to come into contact with this problem, either through their families or through close friends of the juveniles in the towns that they represent, would recognise that in the minds of the people of New South Wales, and probably across Australia, the dealers in particular are the scum of the earth. They are ruining the health of our youth and they should be taken to task. I believe that the introduction of the Drug Trafficking (Civil Proceedings) Act will provide the vehicle to put those people where they belong - certainly remove them from their operations and provide some protection in particular for our youth.

I was also pleased to note that the Government is committed to the elimination of official corruption and has sought public response to a discussion paper draft exposure dealing with bribery and extortion by public officials. Following the Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation into the Department of Motor Transport, it was acknowledged generally by the public that unfair, unreasonable and corrupt use of information databases of the department was an invasion of the rights of individual citizens of this State. Therefore, I welcome the introduction this year of the Data Protection Bill, which will address issues raised by the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the privacy committee. I was particularly disturbed during early debate today to hear the remarks of the honourable member for Bathurst. He made a personal attack on the future Prime Minister of Australia, John Hewson. It is regrettable that a member of this House, with the status of the honourable member for Bathurst, a man for whom I have had high regard, would stoop to such a low tactic and raise the matter of Mr Hewson's former marriage. His holier than thou attitude demonstrates shades of puritanism that no one would

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like to see in this House or elsewhere. I came from a single parent family; my mother was a divorcee - in those days, back in 1946 or whenever it was, a circumstance that was considered shameful. The honourable member for Bathurst should at some stage withdraw his remarks and place himself back on the pedestal by the billiard table where I will fondly remember him in years to come.

For the first time the Government will sponsor what will become known as Family Week. This is an acknowledgment of the United Nations declaration of 1994 as the International Year of the Family. There is little doubt that this is a very important initiative not only for the Government but for the status of the family in New South Wales. There is much to be gained by giving greater recognition to the status of the family; by recognising the qualities of the family unit and the benefits to be gained by young families being brought up with the knowledge that the family is part and parcel - in fact the benchmark - of our society. Therefore, I welcome this initiative above all in the Governor's Speech. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I refer now to a matter that greatly concerns me - Australia's general economic circumstances and the problem of unemployment. It disturbs me that the current Federal Government has no understanding of the problems and the way in which they should be addressed. I particularly refer to unemployment because the solution that the current Federal Government has proposed to problems that have occurred during the 10 years that it has been in office is to create a summit. The first summit I recall was the Economic Summit in 1983, with such illustrious characters as Sir Peter Abeles, Laurie Carmichael and John Halfpenny being invited. The then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, saw this as being the way to lead Australia - by consensus and by the accord. The Economic Summit in 1983 was an unequivocal failure in that Australia has a massive debt with in excess of one million people unemployed. So the economic summit was an absolute failure and one of the Prime Minister's solutions to the problems failed.

The Economic Summit was followed by a number of other summits. The Farm Summit, mark I, in 1985 was a failure, and was followed by the Farm Summit, mark II. Then followed a series of other summits to address problems which were perceived by the Labor Government to be matters which had to be addressed: the AIDS Summit, the Drugs Summit, the Housing Summit, the Environment Summit - it was a secret environment summit - and the pièce de résistance, the One Nation statement 12 months ago. This One Nation statement was to provide \$1 billion or \$2 billion - a splash of money - from the Prime Minister to overcome the woes of our unemployment and our overseas debt and to generate prosperity in the business sector. Nobody has been able to find where the \$1 billion or \$2 billion has gone, because there has been no program, no benefit to the community, no benefit to anybody as a result of the One Nation statement. People from everywhere, including the media, are wandering around the countryside trying to find out where all this money has gone. One can only wonder where Paul Keating would manage to get rid of \$1 billion in 12 months. Looking at the current account deficit, it is easy to understand how the money can be frittered away. There is no doubt that Keating has created the problems we have in Australia, and regrettably John Hewson is forced to find the solutions.

The Youth Summit was introduced by the Keating Government, with various cruel promises made to the youth of Australia. Those promises resulted in a nil result, as did all the other promises made by Hawke and Keating. In considering the bankruptcies and the loss of jobs, I cannot understand why members opposite have not asked this question in the past, or even in the public arena during this Federal election: what on earth has happened to the jobs. Many of the million people who are now unemployed were employed six or eight years ago, so if one asks where the jobs have gone, the answer should be obvious and should lead to the conclusion that the jobs have gone with the bankruptcies. The Government realises that 60 per cent of people in Australia are employed by small business. If that is equated with the number of bankruptcies over the past five to six years in particular, it does not take long to work out exactly where a million or so jobs have gone.

I turn now to the agricultural matters raised by the Governor in his address. I take the opportunity to commend the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Ian Armstrong, for his efforts in promoting Australian products overseas, particularly in Russia and Asia through Agsell. He has certainly promoted New South Wales products with a great deal of vigour. I encourage him to continue, because there is no greater paucity of professionalism in this country than in our marketing strategies. The most professional people should be employed when markets are identified, to give primary producers the opportunity to dispense their product for the best possible price. Another controversial matter in the rural sector at the moment is the use of hormone growth promotants in livestock. This matter is currently being considered by the Minister and by many other professional and scientific people across the country. I refer them to a program which has been conducted by the Khancoban and Corryong beef producers. Though my information is sketchy, I understand they promote and market their cattle as HGP-free mountain bred chemical-free beef. The beef is very popular and attracts a

premium price simply because it is advertised as HGP free and chemical free and is therefore more attractive to those who are concerned about the consumption of chemicals in some passive manner. I commend the marketing program to all who might consider the matter at some later stage.

The policy of the Government with regard to Crown land and the control of noxious weeds on public lands needs to be closely scrutinised. I believe the situation which currently exists is totally out of

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control. During the Christmas period I travelled through the Kosciusko National Park and I was horrified to find the proliferation of St John's wort, a weed that can cause considerable damage to grazing cattle. On my estimation, the level of infestation of this weed in the Kosciusko National Park would put control work almost beyond the financial resources of not only the National Parks and Wildlife Service but probably the State budget. Some form of control needs to be undertaken immediately to arrest the problem as we found, in surrounding areas, that as soon as it spreads to private land it causes untold trouble. I encourage the Minister to proceed with his program of recognising the responsibility of Government in the control of noxious weeds on public land to bring the matter under control.

With regard to rural assistance the Minister has proved that he is compassionate and that he understands the problems of the people in the western districts. Last winter I took the opportunity to travel to Wilcannia, Cobar, Ivanhoe and those areas where many people live on the brink of poverty and in dire circumstances - I am sure that the honourable member for Broken Hill can relate to this. They need the assistance of government in their time of need. I particularly commend the efforts of Diedre Beishmann and the Western Action Movement in bringing these matters to the attention of government, both at the Federal and State level. At a later stage of this sitting, I look forward to assisting the Minister in giving further consideration to the slaughter of goats for game export. I have brought this matter to his attention on several occasions on behalf of the people of the west. It is something we need to give serious consideration to, given that a market exists in Asia for slaughtered goat meat.

The phrase "sustainable development" is sweeping industry at the moment. I support this philosophy. I believe that the timber industry needs some form of resource security to provide a future for the workers of the industry. A number of environmental issues have not taken precedence in the past and need to be given serious consideration. Given the high profile of timber industry issues, regrettably, insufficient attention has been paid to soil conservation, water quality and rising salinity, all of which are well known to those of us who represent country areas. I have raised matters in this House before with respect to the Snowy River, the Murrumbidgee corridor and the higher profile issue of the Darling River and the problem with the blue-green algae.

The Governor's Speech referred to the protection of endangered species. While I encourage the protecting of endangered species, but not at the expense of the jobs of thousands of timber workers and others across the State. Serious and compassionate thought needs to be given to the structure of that legislation. There are endangered species in this State other than the creepy-crawlies and furry things which wander around the bush - I refer to the timber workers, recreational fishermen and those who live in the Snowy Mountains area and like to ride in the Kosciusko National Park without fear of being arrested. Finally, I refer to a matter of great concern to the people of Braidwood; that is, the Welcome Reef Dam. This matter will become a significant political issue over the next few years, particularly as the intention of the Government to construct this dam proceeds. To date, I have objected to the proposition of a dam being built at Braidwood on the grounds that it is Sydney's problem and something it has to face up to.

Sydney has a problem with water consumption and it has no concern for the future reserves of water supplies in the surrounding area. If the Sydney metropolitan area continues to expand north and south, there will be a great deal of resistance from rural people. Sydney has to seriously consider its level of water consumption. I am reliably informed that if each cistern in the city had a brick placed in it to displace the volume of the brick we would not need to build another dam to supply water for another 10 years. That is something which needs to be taken into consideration in the future. I again commend the Governor on his address. I look forward to a bright and prosperous future under the Government in New South Wales and a brighter and more prosperous future under Dr John Hewson and Tim Fisher when they are in government.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! It being 5.15 p.m., pursuant to sessional orders the debate is interrupted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE CRIME

Mr NEWMAN (Cabramatta) [5.15]: I rise on a matter of grave concern to my constituents in the electorate of Cabramatta. I was hoping that the Minister for Police would be present in the Chamber, as I advised him yesterday that I would be raising this subject today. However, the Minister at the table, the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education, will do because part of what I have to say concerns her department. Cabramatta is a recognised tourist resort with terrific potential for the future and it is a hard-working community. Unfortunately, it is marred with street crime and with drug trading reaching alarming proportions. On 2nd February I appealed to the Minister for Police and the Commissioner of Police to consider an article which appeared on the front page of our local newspaper. Our chief law officer, Chief Inspector Leek, was quoted as saying:

... drug users were "coming from everywhere" to buy heroin in Cabramatta because it was freely available. He said police were doing their best but could not eradicate drugs from the area.

That is a sad statement for a chief law officer of any district to make. I think Chief Inspector Leek had no option because he always toed the police policy line in saying that there were adequate police in Cabramatta. I think it was his way of saying that there was a problem with respect to drugs. On 10th February I read in the local paper that five extra police had been

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allocated to Cabramatta, I take it as a result of my representations, but only for a temporary period of six weeks. This is a deplorable situation.

There have been public statements that drugs are freely available in this suburban town centre, that it has suddenly been inundated with pure heroin, pure to the degree of about 86 per cent. Last year we had seven deaths as a result of overdoses and there has been one death this year and the police are arresting about 10 people a day for selling drugs. In the three months to the end of February, 27 per cent of the people arrested were minors - drug people are using minors because of the lenient laws and because minors can quickly return to the streets and to selling drugs. I would like the Minister for Police to undertake an inquiry into the allocation of management of police resources in New South Wales. I would like to know why Cabramatta is designated "high risk" by insurance companies.

I am pleased that the Minister for Consumer Affairs is at the table. I point out to her that residents in my area who, for example, want to insure a 1990 model Commodore pay \$414 more than comparative suburbs and they pay \$162 more than comparative suburbs for household goods insurance because Cabramatta is designated "high risk". I do not understand why, with the designation of "high risk" and residents paying something like \$576 more for their combined insurance, the police do not take notice of the "high risk" designation. Apart from the problems of the drug trade, car theft and household break-ins, they have to pay out money above and beyond what other people do because they do not have adequate police resources to man the streets. I would also like to see an inquiry into insurance rates. Frankly, they discriminate against the western suburbs in the main. I would also like to see a correlation between those high risk insurance premium areas and police numbers in the various patrols, particularly in the western suburbs. They do not compare. It is ridiculous that police numbers are not commensurate with high risk designations. [*Time expired.*]

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.20]: I assure the honourable member for Cabramatta that the Government shares his concerns about the drug

trade, both in that area and generally throughout New South Wales, and is committed to allocating resources to address that problem. I shall pass on his concerns about the Cabramatta area, which I know quite well, having stood as a candidate for the Liberal Party there in 1981 - and I assure him that I have been back there since. I will make sure that his concern about the allocation of resources is passed on to the Minister for Police. In relation to the honourable member's question about insurance premiums, he would be aware that I responded to a previous question on notice about that matter. Insurance companies assess the areas in which there is a high risk, and determine their premiums accordingly. This Government is not into price control or interference in the rating systems of private insurance companies.

BUSHWALKER RESCUES

Mr MORRIS (Blue Mountains) [5.22]: I wish to draw to the attention of the House a matter of great concern to those who live in the beautiful Blue Mountains, the area that I represent. I am concerned about the cost and time involved in searching for people who go on bushwalks without appropriate preparation and care and become lost. Recently students and a teacher from Sydney Grammar school were lost in the Blue Mountains region. I understand that that was the third separate occasion on which that particular teacher had been lost. A week before that happened people became lost in the Grose Valley. A helicopter used to look for them crashed after refuelling at a National Parks and Wildlife Service depot. The helicopter was worth about \$2 million, and five or six people on board could have lost their lives. Bush rescues have been a perennial problem in the Blue Mountains. Many people in this area, including Sergeant Phil Tunchon, who is in charge of the cliff rescue squad, those in the Quota Club and Rotary, of which I am a member, and others have worked very hard to raise money for an excellent service, which is being abused by the continual incidence of bushwalkers becoming lost.

In this electronic age it should be mandatory for people going bushwalking to go to a police station and register on a simple form where their car is parked, where they intend to go and who should be contacted if they fail to return. I hope the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education will refer my concerns to the Minister for Justice and Minister for Emergency Services and to the Minister for Police and ask them to introduce such legislation. I have obtained the following costings of providing the search and recovery service in respect of bushwalkers who were recently lost. Police manpower of five people and a police helicopter for 27 hours cost the taxpayers and the community \$4,400. The National Parks and Wildlife Service provided one person for five hours with a further nine staff on standby for some hours, a total of 40 hours, at an approximate cost of \$2,000. The Channel 9 helicopter assisted, at a further cost of \$6,500. I am aware that some private companies are talking about warning devices for bushwalkers, and mobile phones are available. I would like to see a search and recovery fee introduced for organisations and persons who inconvenience the community and go on bushwalks without proper preparation. These people often set out without food or warm clothing and do not carry emergency transmitting devices to alert the authorities of their location in case of trouble.

The Blue Mountains is a dangerous region. Easterly winds, carrying rain, meet warm winds from the west, creating a fog which can come up in minutes, penetrating valleys and cliff tops. In those conditions searchers often cannot see their hands in front of them and may spend days looking for lost bushwalkers, running the risk of breaking legs and machinery. Volunteers give up their time on searches which are a great impost on the community. The Blue Mountains area is probably the equal of the

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seven wonders of the world and should be open to everyone; but those who visit the area should use a little commonsense when enjoying its natural beauties. The Minister should be aware that the Blue Mountains community, local bushwalking clubs, Rotary clubs, Quota clubs, hospital staff, police, bush fire organisations and staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, who have to go out to look for lost bush walkers, are not happy. Their patience is wearing very thin. I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education to refer my request to the relevant Ministers. I would like something to be done about this problem as a matter of urgency.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education)

[5.25]: I congratulate the honourable member for Blue Mountains on his obvious concern about what is an issue in his electorate. I assure him that I will take his suggestions to the two relevant Ministers promptly.

RESERVED JUDGMENTS

Mr GIBSON (Londonderry) [5.26]: I wish to speak on behalf of Mrs Filiz Porter, a constituent at Mount Pleasant. On 3rd April, 1984, Mrs Porter was involved as a passenger in a motor car accident on the Newell Highway at Narrabri. In the accident she suffered severe head, neck and back injuries. As a result she had to be hospitalised for quite some time and is still receiving treatment nine years after the event. She took proper action seeking compensation and finally had a chance for her court case to be heard. She went to the Sydney District Court on 21st September, 1991, before Judge Barbour. After a five-day hearing the judge reserved his decision. Mrs Porter thought, as most people would, that the judge would deliver his judgment one, two or even three months after the hearing. But 15 months later the judge still has not delivered it. If that is justice, it is a strange way for the court system to show it. On investigation I discovered that Judge Barbour has quite a number of cases still before him, some more than two years old, in which he has not made a decision. It is an utter disgrace that litigants have suffered such delays. Judge Barbour either is too old to perform his duties, or his workload as a judge is too great for him.

On further investigation I found that Judge Lloyd-Jones, who unfortunately passed away last year, had 30 judgments that he had not attended to. Taxpayers met the cost of these hearings, and if cases have to be re-heard the litigants may have to wait a further three, four or five years to again have their turn at receiving justice from the system. Justice has to be done and it has to be seen to be done. In this case justice has not been done. I urge the Attorney General and the Government to look at this problem and correct it, for it was never intended that justice be done in that way in this State. I can understand a judge reserving a decision for one, two or even three months after a hearing, but it would be impossible for any judge, irrespective of his note-taking ability, to recall and reflect upon evidence given years before about what happened on a particular day to a particular person. That is not justice. The community and the legal profession are very concerned. The Attorney General and the Government should also be concerned. The justice system is not good enough if litigants have to wait so long for judgments. Judge Barbour may be getting too old, and the legal profession may be concerned that the judge is getting too old. If that is so, something should be done. It is a disgrace to the legal system that a judge should be able to hear a case but not deliver judgment until two years after the hearing. I urge the Attorney General and the Government to do something about this immediately.

URUNGA RAILWAY STATION TOILET FACILITIES

Mr JEFFERY (Oxley) [5.30]: I wish to speak on a matter of great importance to my constituents in Urunga and surrounding districts on the wonderful mid North Coast. Though I congratulate the State Rail Authority for upgrading the railway station, I cannot support the view that the installation of a toilet at the station is not justified. The new railway station was built and for safety reasons consists of a concrete platform, wheelchair access and a covered waiting area, with suitable lighting about to be installed. The new station is further north of the original building, and the platform is 55 metres long. This allows passengers on four carriages of the XPT to enter and disembark with safety. Prior to this work being carried out I received many representations, particularly from the elderly, about the height of this platform, and it has now been raised to allow easy wheelchair access.

The railway station is in a pretty area and from time to time honourable members may travel by train to visit a former colleague, Joe Thompson, who is now a resident of the wonderful Urunga area. On 26th August, 1992, the Bellingen *Courier-Sun* said that the railway station was a disgrace because toilet facilities have not been provided. I have since made representations. A Bellingen Shire councillor stated, "I received a complaint from a woman ratepayer who had to go into the bushes to relieve herself". That prompted the Bellingen *Courier-Sun* to publish a cartoon depicting me standing on the station and commuters pleading with me to try to have a toilet built on the station - and that is what I am doing. Though some people may think the cartoon

amusing, I assure honourable members that this situation is not humorous.

I make a plea to the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education to ask the Minister for Transport to have toilet facilities built at Urunga railway station. Many passengers travel long distances from Coffs Harbour, Ebor, Dorrigo and Bellingen. Occasionally trains do not run to schedule, as was the case last December when the train was almost two hours late. The State Rail Authority argue that the train has toilet facilities, but that is not good enough. Country areas should have facilities similar to those in the city. The key to the problem is to be

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found in a letter dated 15th February that I received from Mr Doyle, Shire Clerk of the Bellingen Shire Council, saying that council had resolved that:

... the SRA be informed that Council will carry out cleaning of the toilets if they are installed at the Station.

I thank the council for its support on behalf of the ratepayers because at present the community is being denied a basic facility that would not be denied to people in the city. I have received representations from the Country Women's Association, pensioners, the Senior Citizens' Club and many others throughout the Bellingen Valley. Those people would be grateful if the Government could see fit to provide toilet facilities, which would be maintained by the Bellingen Shire Council. The cost of this installation will not be great but will be of immense benefit to my electorate and the Coffs Harbour electorate.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.34]: The Minister for Transport has received, through the honourable member for Oxley, many representations from local residents requesting that CountryLink provide toilet facilities at Urunga railway station. Discussions have been held with the Bellingen Shire Council, which has agreed to carry out maintenance if facilities are installed. I am advised by the Minister for Transport that before the Government can allocate funds and construct an amenities block at the station, council would be required to enter into a written agreement with CountryLink to clean and service, at council's expense, the toilet on an ongoing basis. I am sure the honourable member for Oxley will take this matter up with the council and the Minister for Transport.

MAIN ROAD 223

Mr HUNTER (Lake Macquarie) [5.35]: I raise a matter of great concern to the people of Lake Macquarie: the poor condition of Main Road 223, better known as George Booth Drive. The section I am speaking of is a narrow, two-lane section which runs from Northville Drive, Edgeworth, in the Wallsend electorate, out to Seahampton in the Lake Macquarie electorate. George Booth Drive is the boundary between the electorates of Wallsend and Lake Macquarie and is, therefore, of equal concern to the honourable member for Wallsend and me. The Sydney-Newcastle Freeway, the F3, is due to be completed in December 1993 and will bring great benefits to the Lake Macquarie area and the whole Hunter region. However, the honourable member for Wallsend supports my concern that when that happens and additional traffic flows onto George Booth Drive it will become inadequate and dangerous. The constituents of Lake Macquarie greatly appreciate the Federal Government's commitment to road improvements, demonstrated by the pouring of many millions of dollars into this freeway development. Unfortunately, the State Government has not been as generous, as is highlighted by the lack of roadworks being carried out on George Booth Drive.

When the F3 is opened there will be half an interchange at Seahampton, allowing people travelling north from Sydney to exit the freeway at Seahampton and people from Lake Macquarie to gain access to the freeway heading south. There will only be one exit to the north and one entrance to the south. This will cater for the densely populated northern areas of Lake Macquarie, enabling people who live in the northwest, north and northeast areas of Lake Macquarie to travel along the narrow, two-lane section of George Booth Drive to gain access to the F3. Unfortunately, though, the traffic volume will be very heavy. That section of roadway is in an unsafe condition and could be described as a goat track. The Government has admitted that approximate by

\$11 million is required to upgrade the road. In fact, on page 72 of Budget Paper No. 4, State Capital Projects, the figure of \$11.6 million is quoted for the project, of which only \$1 million is being allocated this year.

If the road is to be upgraded to a safe condition, \$8 million needs to be spent between now and December. Unless money is spent on the project, heavy freeway traffic will pour on to a narrow, two-lane road and I am afraid that there will be serious accidents, if not death. The Lake Macquarie council has spent approximately \$1 million on this road. Two weeks ago the Deputy Premier announced an allocation of \$2 million for the construction of a large roundabout at an intersection along George Booth Drive, but this still leaves a shortfall of \$8 million, as even the Budget Papers testify. Council requires notice to enable it to plan for construction of roads and capital works improvements. I ask the Deputy Premier today to make an announcement and a commitment as to when that money will be available. This request is supported by the honourable member for Wallsend. The honourable member for Wallsend and I have written to the Deputy Premier asking that he receive a delegation from Lake Macquarie City Council to allow it to put forward its proposals for road improvements. As yet, neither Mr Mills nor I have received a reply. Perhaps today the Deputy Premier could ease fears that my constituents will be shortchanged.

HATCHBACK MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS

Mr SMILES (North Shore) [5.40]: I raise a concern I have with regard to hatchback motor vehicles. A number of my constituents who are couriers have chosen to purchase hatchbacks to assist them in providing services to their clients. People using hatchbacks for commercial purposes in New South Wales cannot register them as commercial vehicles and therefore are precluded from legally using loading zones. Hatchback vehicles are many and varied but examples of frequently purchased cars of this type include the Mazda 323, the Ford Laser and the Nissan Pulsar. They are commonly used by couriers and delivery people because they are small, cheap to run, efficient and capable of carrying a reasonably large payload in proportion to their overall

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size. Unfortunately, New South Wales police allow no leeway to hatchback drivers, who are constantly issued with parking infringement notices, to their considerable cost. Yet people who privately register station wagons are able to park in loading zones for 15 minutes without fear of receiving a parking infringement notice. It has been official policy that "vehicles commonly referred to as hatchbacks or liftbacks were never intended to be used as goods carrying vehicles and therefore are not entitled to use loading zones despite being used for business purposes". I cannot agree with the official policy. The publicity literature for hatchback vehicles clearly identifies for a potential purchaser the opportunity to use the vehicles for business purposes and for deliveries.

There are some solutions. A number of jurisdictions in the United States offer pending verification tickets. Hatchback vehicles may be issued with a pro forma fine notice and before final implementation the ticket is checked against the registration to see whether the car is registered for business purposes. I believe that a better solution would be simply to specify on registration labels whether a vehicle has been registered for private, non-commercial, or commercial purposes. A number of drivers have challenged such parking infringement notices in the courts. A number of my constituents have been successful in arguing that the nature of their trade demands that they be able to use loading zones for business purposes.

Magistrates are not supporting the strict definition of the law as it applies at the moment. I have no criticism of that; it is my view that the present law or regulations are wrong and the magistrates are right. It is crazy that people using hatchbacks for commercial purposes are subject to a fine but that people who have station wagons that are not commercially registered may use loading zones for parking while they enjoy a cup of coffee at a nearby coffee shop or tea house. I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education to bring this anomaly to the attention of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads. I ask her to plead on behalf of the many couriers who are struggling to make a living in these hard times that the regulations be amended to provide a fair go for couriers using such vehicles.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education)

[5.45]: I assure the honourable member for North Shore that I will pass on his concerns to the relevant Minister.

DAMAGES PAYMENT TO Mr RAY HAMMOND

Mr GAUDRY (Newcastle) [5.45]: I speak about a very unfortunate case involving Mr Ray Hammond of unit 12/65-67 Dawson Street, Cooks Hill, and his long tale of misfortune with our legal and judicial system. I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education to convey my concerns to the Minister for Justice and to seek his intervention and assistance to enable Mr Hammond to receive recompense as soon as possible. Mr Hammond, who was 70 in 1986, was knocked down by a bus at a pedestrian crossing, and that was the start of a whole train of unfortunate circumstances. He was conveyed to the Royal Newcastle Hospital and spent six weeks there. In a letter from his doctor of 16th December, 1992, his injuries were listed as a broken tibia and a broken femur, an infected leg, persisting pains in his left knee, lumbar back pain arising from a shortening of the leg, and permanent foot damage. His right leg is still sore. He is very frustrated by his inability. He has had bouts of depression and has suffered a heart attack since the accident.

When he left hospital and took his case to a solicitor he depended, like many aged people, on his solicitor to pursue the case. It was not until two and a half years later that he found that the solicitor had not proceeded with the case, that it was not listed. He consulted another solicitor and the case was listed in September 1989. He won his case against the State Transit Authority in November 1991, and was awarded \$33,000.45. The State Transit Authority appealed against the decision, and the case, listed in the Supreme Court as No. 40726 of 1991, has not yet made it to the Supreme Court. I have made representations on behalf of Mr Hammond, as did the former member for Newcastle. I have discussed the case with the former Minister for Justice, Mr Griffiths, who was quite sympathetic.

The matter needs to be raised with the present Minister for Justice, because it is not being dealt with quickly enough. The matter is of great concern to Mr Hammond. He is now approaching 77 and in very poor health. As I said, as a consequence of the stress and the constant difficulty of having the matter attended to, he has already suffered a heart attack. I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education to see that this matter is brought to the attention of the Minister for Justice as a matter of urgency. The matter has been dealt with through legal aid and Mr Hammond firmly believes that that is the cause of the problem, although that is probably not testable. Apart from feeling that the matter should be processed much more quickly, he is concerned at the cost, not only to him but also to the public purse because of the matter going on for such a long time. He would like to have it settled. If there is any way that the hearing can be accelerated, I would be most happy for that to be done.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.49]: I assure the honourable member for Newcastle I will take his concerns and also those of the honourable member for Londonderry to the Minister for Justice.

NATIONAL PARK FOOD VENDORS

Mr TURNER (Myall Lakes) [5.50]: I draw to the attention of the House a matter concerning the vending of food items in the national parks in my electorate. Two milk vendors trading in separate

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partnerships have approached me concerning a contractual and tendering arrangement to enter the national parks to supply milk and bread. The current procedure is that for specific periods tenders are called for to supply those items. A fee suggested by the National Parks and Wildlife Service is paid for the tender to that service - a process I should have thought which did not require a fee. I will pursue that matter at another time. At present milk vendors have a tied area for which no other person can tender because only that vendor is entitled to sell milk in that area. Another concern is that the restrictions imposed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service are quite impractical and bureaucratic. A consent authority or document - the legal validity of which I am not

quite sure - which must be signed states that the activity the vendor will undertake will be that of a mobile kiosk. Clause 8 of the document states:

The operator will not sell, cause to be sold, attempt to sell, expose for sale or cause to be exposed for sale any commodity other than milk & bread.

Quite frankly, in this modern day and age, such restriction is absolutely ludicrous and ridiculous. Thousands of people visit the Myall Lakes National Park and the Booti Booti National Park. The contract relates to the September-October and Christmas holiday periods. Officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service expect vendors to enter the parks and sell only milk and bread, and if visitors to the parks want any other food items they must uproot themselves, leave the parks and drive along dirt roads to purchase those goods. The National Parks and Wildlife Service in my electorate is constantly complaining about insufficient funds to upgrade roads. Is it any wonder! By restricting the activity of vendors many people are forced to travel on the roads. This could be overcome by allowing one person to sell items other than bread and milk to users of the parks. I do not suggest a wholesale fruit and vegetable operation or set up of that nature. One vendor could make available such consumables as eggs and butter. Visitors to the parks are being denied that service.

Vendor operators have been advised by the National Parks and Wildlife Service that when they go into the parks they must hide food items other than milk and bread. It is quite impractical and stupid to suggest that a milk vendor should have to hide such items as yoghurt, custard and orange juice upon their entry to the parks. The National Parks and Wildlife Service should provide service to those using the parks and not require them to traipse up and down dirt roads in search of food items other than bread and milk. To illustrate just how silly the restriction is I shall inform honourable members of the plight facing the Pacific Palms surf lifesaving club. The club, which is one of five located in the national park, has been prohibited under its lease over the past four years from selling ice creams, lollipops and drinks from its canteen. If one were to walk 50 metres from the canteen, one would no longer be in the national park, if one were to jump in the water and swim out 50 metres, one would no longer be in the national park, yet one cannot purchase ice creams or soft drinks from that canteen. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is being bureaucratic in relation to its attitude requiring vendors to sign formal documents which provide that produce other than milk and bread must be hidden by vendors when they enter national parks. If free enterprise operators want to enter national parks and provide a service to those entitled to use the parks, they should be encouraged to do so and not hampered. It is time the National Parks and Wildlife Service began administering its parks rather than attempting to run a bureaucracy.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.54]: I am advised by the Minister for the Environment that as a new initiative tenders this year were called for the rights to sell milk, bread and ice in the Myall Lakes and Booti Booti national parks for a period of 12 months. I am further advised by the Minister for the Environment there is no instruction for licensees to hide any products they may carry with them into the respective parks. However, only those goods they are licensed to sell may be offered. As the concerns raised by the honourable member for Myall Lakes are obviously of great concern to the people involved in these tendering arrangements I will ensure they are raised with the Minister for the Environment.

ILLAWARRA DENTAL SERVICES

Mr HARRISON (Kiama) [5.55]: I draw the attention of the House to the continuing decline in the level of dental services provided to the people of the Illawarra region by the Illawarra Area Health Service. Since the coalition came to office the dental therapist training clinic in Shellharbour has been closed and two lists have been prepared containing the names of people awaiting dental care. People who give an assurance they are in pain are dealt with within a few days; those who are not suffering pain are placed on an infinitely long waiting list, and I am informed that they can never expect to receive any form of treatment. An illustration of the lack of treatment - indeed the poor treatment - handed out to the people of the Illawarra is the advice received about the circumstances leading to the resignation of Dr Grusd, the orthodontist employed by the Illawarra Area Health Service. I was somewhat sceptical of the circumstances surrounding his resignation when they were

brought to my attention.

Dr Grusd does not enjoy good health and I am led to believe his health has deteriorated as a consequence of the treatment to which he has been subjected by the area health service and the administrators within that organisation. A number of residents in the Illawarra region who were most upset that the doctor had tendered his resignation invited me to attend a meeting last Monday night in the Shellharbour area. At that meeting I advised them that I had written to the chief executive officer of the area health service advising that the resignation was known to me and that the position should be advertised immediately as five-day-a-week employment rather than employment for two or three

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days, as had been hinted will be the case. As a consequence of that suggestion I have today received a letter from Mr B. A. Lewis, acting chief executive officer of the area health service, which states, in part:

The Illawarra Area Health Service Plan for Dental Services (currently in draft form) is in accordance with the proposed Plan state-wide and indicates that although Orthodontic services will be provided, they will not be expanded.

The services have not been expanded in the Illawarra region - they have been abolished, as the contents of the next paragraph confirm. It states:

At this point there are no plans to advertise the full time staff position vacated by Dr Grusd's resignation. It is probable that a Visiting Orthodontist will be employed part-time to cater for those children who are in greatest need i.e. whose dental situation is causing damage to gums or bone and those whose function is severely compromised.

In other words, children with disfigured faces from damage to gums or bone structure probably - not definitely - might expect some form of assistance, but other people with disfigured faces and personalities affected by protruding teeth, or in some instances having been born with two and three sets of teeth, can expect no relief whatsoever. I consider it nothing less than callous. As well as the effect that misshapen teeth can have on one's appearance, often the personalities of young people are affected also. We all know that sometimes children can be cruel; they torment children whose teeth protrude. I have been informed that the health service has no intention of re-employing this person full time. It is shameful that citizens do not get any satisfaction from the chief executive officer of the area health service. I ask that the Minister for Health intervene directly to issue an instruction that the position which had been occupied by Dr Grusd up until very recently be advertised immediately as a full-time position. I ask further that the children of Illawarra, a region that suffers from more than its share of unemployment, be correctly cared for.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! The question is that private members' statements be noted. The honourable member for Vacluse.

Mr Harrison: Do I not get any response from the Minister?

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! It is entirely a matter for the Minister whether or not to respond to private members' statements.

Mr Harrison: I consider it an insult -

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! You may consider it as you wish. It is a matter entirely for the Minister.

Mrs Chikarovski: Mr Acting-Speaker?

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! If the Minister wishes to seek the call, I shall give it to her.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [6.1]: I apologise to the honourable member for Kiama. I was collecting my papers to allow the Minister for

Police to take up a position at the table. I assure the honourable member that I will inform the relevant Minister of his concerns.

BAIL APPLICATION OF Mr ILAN SCHNITZLER

Mr YABSLEY (Vaucluse) [6.2]: I wish to raise a matter that has caused me, and a constituent of mine, most serious concern. I refer to a matter involving Mr Ilan Schnitzler. I am sensitive to the fact that in relation to it there are matters outstanding before the court; therefore, I will not seek to discuss or raise those matters in any way other than to refer to the basic facts. Some time ago Mr Schnitzler was charged with extortion under the provisions of section 100A of the Crimes Act. That matter has not yet been heard, although on one occasion Mr Schnitzler failed to appear in court while on bail. The core concern that I raise tonight is that last week Mr Schnitzler was granted bail after having entered the office of a Mr Harry Triguboff, the managing director of Meriton Apartments Pty Limited, while armed with a rifle which contained 15 rounds of live ammunition. It should be borne in mind that it was in relation to Mr Triguboff that the alleged extortion attempt occurred and that there have been other incidents where Mr Schnitzler had threatened or attempted to threaten Mr Triguboff.

As luck would have it - Mr Triguboff presumably having taken various precautions - before the gun could be pointed at Mr Triguboff, Mr Schnitzler was tackled and disarmed by a member of Meriton's staff and restrained until police arrived, at which time he was arrested. At approximately 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 18th February, Mr Schnitzler appeared at the Downing Centre. Notwithstanding the fact that the police opposed bail the presiding magistrate saw fit to grant bail. The circumstances are that the same man against whom extortion charges had been laid, who had made a number of threats and who subsequently appeared as an uninvited guest in the office of Mr Triguboff with a sawn-off shotgun loaded with 15 rounds of live ammunition, was granted bail by the magistrate. In support of Mr Triguboff, who has been on the receiving end of this behaviour, I submit that any reasonable person would be thoroughly alarmed that bail was granted to Mr Schnitzler. In dealing with this matter I have had contact with the Minister for Police and the office of the Minister for Police and had the greatest co-operation, and for that I am very grateful. But that, in my opinion, does not diminish the fact that bail was granted in the first place. It was not until midday yesterday that I received final advice that the Director of Public Prosecutions had decided to contest in the Supreme Court the grant of bail by the magistrate.

That raises another related matter about the nature of our bail laws and the delays that are experienced while a law-abiding citizen is exposed to threats similar to those made by Mr Schnitzler. Many
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complexities are involved but basically speaking two matters of profound concern are raised. First, bail can be granted despite serious and demonstrable behaviour; and, second, there are so many hoops and hurdles to get through and over when it comes to challenging the granting of bail. The police have been co-operative and understanding in offering protection to Mr Triguboff. But the fact remains that a person is at large today and Mr Triguboff's life is still under threat. We should have a structure that is better able to protect innocent citizens.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Georges River - Minister for Police) [6.7]: I thank the honourable member for bringing to my attention personally the situation of Mr Triguboff. The plight of Mr Triguboff is one which genuinely concerns me. When the matter was first raised by the honourable member I called for a report from the Commissioner of Police. I was subsequently advised that the police prosecutor had made a spirited objection to bail on the grounds of the improbability of the defendant appearing; the strength of the prosecution case; the probability of a custodial penalty; the circumstances and seriousness of the offences; the protection and well-being of the victim; and the likelihood of further offences. However, the presiding magistrate saw fit to grant bail on strenuous conditions: that the accused and one surety deposit security in an amount of \$10,000; that the accused report daily to the officer-in-charge of police at Bondi; that the accused not approach Mr Triguboff in any way or approach any Meriton building.

Following further representations from the honourable member for Vaucluse I asked that the police consider their position in relation to the bail decision and also asked what steps had been taken to protect the safety of Mr Triguboff. I was subsequently advised that the police had contacted the victim and, as a result, arrangements were made for local police to make regular patrols of his home as well as the business premises in the central business district. At the time of the arrest the firearm held by the alleged offender was seized and action was taken to search for further firearms. There was, at that time, an indication that the victim was satisfied with those security arrangements. However, it is clear that both the honourable member and his constituent remain genuinely concerned. The matter was taken up with my colleague the Attorney General. Current legislation, of course, provides a right to review bail to a limited number of persons, principally the accused person, the police officer in charge of the case, and the Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In this case it is apparent that the particular officer did not feel that a review application to the Supreme Court was appropriate. I understand that this view was arrived at only after advice from the police legal services branch. Nonetheless, I share the honourable member's concern that not everything that could be done by the police in this case has been done. I have, therefore, asked the Acting Commissioner of Police to review the procedures by which these decisions are made and reviewed. After all, the safety of the community is, and will remain, of paramount importance to this Government. The public comments by the shadow attorney general were not particularly instructive and should cause considerable concern for anyone who has regard for the freedom of the individual. Last Tuesday on the Alan Jones radio program the member for Ashfield suggested that a Minister of the Crown have some undefined power to veto the bail decisions of a magistrate. In fact, he suggested that this power should reside in the Minister for Corrective Services. I should have thought after the disgrace of the early release scheme and its corrupt manipulation by the former Labor Minister, Rex "Buckets" Jackson, that the Opposition would have learnt its lesson. Obviously it has not, and this raises the very reasonable fear that the Opposition would again revert to the revolving door approach to corrections if ever it was returned to government. This also represents a serious threat to the independence of our judiciary. In the past, I have had occasion to remind the member for Ashfield of those principles and would do so again. In stark contrast to that careless approach this Government has adopted a very reasonable and responsible approach to reform of the bail legislation.

Mr Shedden: On a point of order. Has the Minister's time for speaking not expired?

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): I ask the Minister to quickly bring his answer to a conclusion.

Mr GRIFFITHS: My colleague in another place the Hon. J. P. Hannaford, the Attorney General and Minister for Industrial Relations, is in the process of comprehensively reviewing our bail legislation. It may well be that the question of the current right of victims of domestic violence to seek a review of bail will be extended to victims of crime generally. After having the limitations of the current law brought so clearly and forcibly - [*Time expired.*]

Private members' statements noted.

[*Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Chappell) left the chair at 6.9 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.*]

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

First Day's Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms NORI (Port Jackson) [7.30]: Yesterday the Governor in his Speech referred a number of times to the Government's intention to improve public transport and transport generally within New South Wales. I was

pleased to hear of that commitment but I want to draw the attention of the Government to the very real need to improve public transport in the inner city. There is a great myth in government circles that the inner city is well served by public transport. I would like to disabuse the Government of that. Not a week would go by that I do not receive several complaints about the lack of public transport and the manner in which it is conducted, particularly in the

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electorate of Port Jackson. Public transport in my electorate has failed to such an extent that late last year I was prompted to distribute a survey on public transport to every household in Port Jackson. I had a very good response to the survey. Unfortunately, to date the Government has been extremely slow to respond to the public transport needs of the inner city, and I hope that when I present the Minister with the results of the survey the Government at last will begin to listen and respond to our needs.

The survey turned up some interesting results. Of the respondents, 59 per cent stated that buses were often overcrowded to the point that passengers were unable to board them, while 62 per cent of respondents said that buses often do not run to time or according to the timetables. Of those who responded, 45 per cent stated they had been adversely affected by changes in bus timetables, and 65 per cent stated they had been adversely affected by cuts in bus services to their areas. A staggering 80 per cent of respondents stated they would benefit from the introduction or the reinstatement of extra bus services to their localities. The cuts to services have created much distress in the electorate. Of those who responded to the survey, 48 per cent said they are often late for work because of bus overcrowding and buses running late. The introduction or extension of an express bus service within the Port Jackson area was supported by 56 per cent of the respondents, and 30 per cent said they were forced to use a car to travel to work, at least sometimes because of the condition of bus services to the area.

These last two points are of great concern to me because an express bus service is something the Government could implement quite easily. We are seeking an express bus service with the first set-down point at Glebe Point Road. That would enable the residents of Glebe who need to go into the heart of Glebe, as well as those travelling further on to Balmain, to have a bus service that actually works for them. At present all the buses running from Circular Quay along George Street, up to Broadway and turning into Glebe Point Road are filled with people who could get any number of buses to take them from the Quay on to Town Hall or to Central railway station. Those who need to travel to the heart of Glebe or further on to Balmain are often left stranded at Town Hall or Central. An express bus service would assist them. I imagine that it would cost all of about \$20 to place a couple of cardboard signs in the front of the bus stating that the first set-down was Glebe Point Road. I have raised this matter in the House on another occasion but unfortunately the Minister for Transport has not seen fit to apply even this quite easy remedy.

Mr Phillips: Why does the honourable member not talk with those at the bus depot; I am sure they will fix it.

Ms NORI: I will not interrupt the Minister in future; I would appreciate it if he did not interrupt me. I shall speak about health matters very soon. Of the respondents to the survey, 30 per cent stated that they are forced to use a car to travel to work because of the poor bus services in the electorate. If we cannot get public transport right in the inner city, goodness knows how we will get it right in the western suburbs where people have to travel much further. It seems to me that if we are to have further urban consolidation of the inner city the least we can do is provide some decent public transport so that people can leave their cars at home, thereby reducing congestion on the roads. I am also concerned that the cuts in bus services result in many elderly people, particularly in the Balmain area and those living in public housing, becoming literally stranded. They simply cannot make it up the hill on to the main road to catch the buses, particularly now that route 445 has been changed. People complain continually that they want the 445 returned to its former route so that they can travel off the peninsula to do such simple things as the shopping. Passengers complain that the 445 fails to meet with its connection at Gladstone Park. Often they see the connecting service leaving before they have alighted from the 445. It seems to me that this matter also could be solved easily with a slight change to the timetable. I have been talking about this for two years and I wish the Government would implement some of these very

simple remedies.

It is interesting to note that 76 per cent of the respondents to the transport survey indicated support for the introduction of a light rail service in the Port Jackson area. Of course I am referring to the light rail that commences at Lilyfield-Leichhardt and goes all the way through to Central. The Government has planned that the light rail extend from the city through to the fish markets at Pyrmont, but I believe it should be extended to Lilyfield. This would improve public transport and get cars off the road, which would help with the urban consolidation of the inner city. The introduction or extension of ferry services was supported by 58 per cent of the respondents to the survey. Such a service would also reduce motor vehicle congestion on the roads. I am especially concerned about the elderly and those without cars in my electorate. The inner city still has large pockets of population comprising those who have never owned a car and who certainly do not own or drive a car now. These people find it very difficult to do such simple things as shopping. Indeed, 63 per cent of those who responded to the survey indicated that they had problems in getting to the shops.

I shall now refer to public health and hospitals. The Minister will not be surprised to hear that I will talk about the future of Balmain Hospital and I want to make some comments also about the nature of the consultation process that has been instituted to discuss the future of Balmain Hospital and Eversleigh hospital. I do not blame the consultant or the mediator who was asked to conduct these consultations but I find it unfair that the community has not had access to the same amount of information that the health planners have had in reaching their decisions about the future of the two hospitals. If we are to have a consultation process that has any meaning, surely the community should be entitled to access to the same information that the health planners

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had. In fact, it was only in the last 10 days that the community has been able to access that information, even though I had been trying to get it for at least the past six to nine months. I am not entirely happy with the way the consultation process has been conducted. I am not happy about the fact that the community has been presented with a fait accompli in terms of the four options that have been offered; all four options say the same thing. They all envisage the closure of Eversleigh hospital and changing Balmain Hospital into a virtual fancy nursing home. I do not believe the community feels it has been consulted properly with regard to the four options.

Mr Phillips: They can come up with another idea.

Ms NORI: We are coming up with another idea, and I hope the Minister will implement it.

Mr Phillips: If it is a good one, I will.

Ms NORI: I will believe that when I see it. Part of the problem has been that we have not been given enough information. Two of the options put forward suggest that a casualty section could be retained at Balmain Hospital, but the nature of such a casualty section has not been defined. It is important that, if people are asked to accept a change in the role of their local hospital, they at least have defined for them the nature of the casualty section. Concern has been expressed also about the timetable for the proposal. Concord hospital is due to come on to the system on 1st July, but I am not at all confident that if the role of Balmain Hospital is to change by 1st July Royal Prince Alfred Hospital will be able to pick up the additional workload. I am not convinced that the timetable will work. I am concerned that a shemozzle will result, that if the casualty department at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital has not been refurbished, and if changes in referral practices are not well under way by 1st July, there will be an awful mess in the inner city. I point out that casualty traffic moves from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital to Balmain Hospital because Royal Prince Alfred is not able to cope. The timetable must be implemented in such a way that ensures all the services are properly in place and no one is disadvantaged.

It was clear from the public meeting last week that the local community does not want Balmain Hospital to be changed. The local residents want a local district hospital on which they can depend. They want the same hospital they have been able to depend on for the past 50 or 60 years. They want a casualty ward that is more than a bandaid station; they want the type of casualty ward where lives are saved. They want to ensure the

hospital has high dependency beds to back up the casualty ward. They want a full range of pathology and X-ray services. They want guarantees that when the children's hospital is moved to Westmead, their children will not have to wait for hours at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital for paediatric attention. These are reasonable requests. The local residents also want guarantees about the future of Royal Prince Alfred. They want some guarantees that they will be protected from its debt or possible future budget overruns. It seems to me that every part of the budget of the Central Sydney Area Health Service is being cut and slashed because Prince Alfred has gone into debt and everyone else is being made to pay. I shall talk a little more about that in a moment.

The community made it clear that it wants guarantees about all these matters and that no decision should be made until a number of issues have been clarified and further consultation has taken place. I am concerned that perhaps the Government has made up its mind about the future of Balmain Hospital. I understand that an important position within the pathology and microbiology section at Balmain Hospital will not be filled in the near future. That indicates to me that decisions have already been made as to the future of the hospital, and that goes against the spirit of the consultation. I want to talk about Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as well because what is happening there ties in with what is happening at Balmain Hospital. It is a disgrace that Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is in its present position.

Mr Phillips: It sure is.

Ms NORI: But not for the reasons the Minister puts forward. I do not believe Royal Prince Alfred Hospital has ever been properly funded for the tertiary referral service it provides. Unlike the Minister, I believe that hospital is the jewel in the crown of the New South Wales hospital system, perhaps even the Australian hospital system. I must criticise the Minister for the comments he made recently when launching Campus 2010. He claimed that Prince Alfred has received increased budgetary allocations. I am in possession of a document from the annual report which makes it clear that Prince Alfred has not received funding increases. It certainly has not received funding increases which would allow it to meet its obligations to the public. For example, in the 1990-91 budget year, the hospital received a 4 per cent increase but was still \$3.1 million short of what it needed. In 1991-92, it received a zero budgetary increase. That was \$3 million short of what it needed. In 1992-93 it again received a zero increase and that was \$4.2 million short of what it needed.

An analysis of Prince Alfred's budgetary requirements during the past decade shows that an annual budgetary increase from 9 per cent to 14 per cent has been necessary. A most inadequate 4 per cent was allocated in 1990-91, but there was no increase in 1991-92 or 1992-93. Since 1988-89 the State Government has inflicted an annual 1.5 per cent budget cut on Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The justifications offered for this imposition are not acceptable. This financial year the cut was increased to 2 per cent, regardless of the difficulties. The total cost to Prince Alfred of this exercise is now \$15 million, a figure which is far in excess of projected overspending. Despite all these cuts Prince Alfred has actually put through increasing numbers of patients. In 1984-85 it dealt with 42,854 patients and, in 1990-91, 51,627 patients.

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The problem for poor old Prince Alfred is that the hospital is so efficient in putting through patients that it actually causes budget overruns. All honourable members know that day one in hospital is the most expensive. The quicker patients are put through, the quicker the next lot of day one patients can be admitted, and so the costs increase. Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is extremely cost efficient at the margins - more cost efficient, I venture to say, than other hospitals. However, it still cannot meet client demand. The reason for that is that it does not have sufficient money. I have been approached by a patient who wanted a magnetic resonance imaging diagnosis and could not wait the six to eight weeks to have the diagnosis done at Prince Alfred. The procedure had to be undertaken in a private hospital. Luckily the patient had private health insurance and received a substantial rebate. However, not everyone is in that happy position. I am still waiting for progress to be made on the candela laser. Children in New South Wales still have to go to Victoria for candela laser treatment because Prince Alfred cannot afford to provide paediatric anaesthetic facilities.

In October last year I received a guarantee in the House that a solution would be arrived at, but that has not happened. I have been approached by other constituents who require urgent post-mastectomy radiotherapy. Again the staff at Prince Alfred cannot see them for weeks at a time. The hospital simply cannot meet client demand. The reason for that is that there are unreasonable imposts on Prince Alfred. People living in the area covered by the Central Sydney Area Health Service have a very low rate of private health insurance. The percentage of people in the whole of Australia who are privately insured is 43.1 per cent; in the area covered by the Central Sydney Area Health Service, the figure is only 33.2 per cent. So Prince Alfred has to deal with many people who do not have private health insurance and, of course, that does not help the hospital's budget.

It must be remembered that the staff at Prince Alfred have many other roles. The hospital is a premier research institution. Its proximity to the University of Sydney means that it is in a good position to combine the research and resource facilities at the University of Sydney with clinical work. Some of the staff at Prince Alfred are in the happy position of being researchers and clinicians, and they are important roles. I do not believe the staff at any other hospital are able to fulfil those functions in the same way as the staff at Prince Alfred. Prince Alfred also has to deal with many out-of-area patients. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I am not suggesting that other areas should be charged when patients go out of those areas, for example, into the area covered by the Central Sydney Area Health Service from the country. However, it is a little difficult for the budget of the Central Sydney Area Health Service to cope with all the patients referred to Prince Alfred from all over New South Wales and, indeed, at times from all over Australia and overseas. Yet the Minister says Prince Alfred has to stay in budget, it is not allowed to run over budget, it has been given a certain amount of money and it has to come in on target.

Mr Phillips: All the other hospitals do.

Ms NORI: That is terrific, but they do not have the same pressure on them.

Mr Phillips: That is nonsense.

Ms NORI: But the patients do not go away; they are still there. The Minister wants the doctors at Prince Alfred to say, "No, sorry, we cannot have you coming in here". The doctors can say that until they are blue in the face, but the patients -

Mr Phillips: Which hospital does the honourable member want me to take the money from?

Ms NORI: I want the Minister to find some money for all of them.

Mr Phillips: The honourable member should talk to her Federal colleagues.

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will cease interjecting.

Ms NORI: The patients do not simply disappear into thin air; they still require treatment somewhere in the medical system. The New South Wales Government still has to find the money in its health budget to pay for them. It so happens that Prince Alfred offers the best care in many categories of medicine and people naturally want to go there. If they cannot be seen by the staff at Prince Alfred, probably no one would see them. Patient care must receive some priority. Prince Alfred prides itself on not turning people away. That is commendable. The hospital should not be penalised for that; it should be commended. I have written to both the State Minister for Health and the present Commonwealth Minister for Health asking for the slate to be wiped clean at Prince Alfred. Funds must be provided. If there have been inefficiencies in the past, they must be corrected in the future. Efficiencies must be achieved. It is not fair to punish the staff at Prince Alfred, the patients of New South Wales and other services provided by the Central Sydney Area Health Service for the budget overrun. The slate has to be wiped clean. Prince Alfred must be given the chance to start again and to function properly.

Rozelle is another hospital in my electorate about which I am concerned. The Government has proposed a \$1.5 million cut, which will be realised through amalgamation of the admission wards. At present there are 90 admission beds, and they are to be amalgamated into two wards with only 70 beds. Last year when the admission ward at Gladesville was, in effect, transferred to Rozelle it received \$1.2 million from the Northern Area Health Service and should really have had four wards. The hospital did not get the extra ward and it is now proposed that the number of wards be reduced to two. The admission wards are very important. Usually they accommodate short stay patients, the type of people at whom the Richmond report was aimed; often they are people who can function very well in the community most of the time but not all of the time. Such people need institutional backup to stabilise their condition when

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the problem becomes too great. If the admission wards are to be cut, the Government is not living up to the spirit of the Richmond report and is letting down a vulnerable section of the community. The doctors and nurses in the admission ward will be left in the unenviable position of having to decide, in the absence of adequate numbers of beds, who is the most suicidal and who is the most psychotic and will have to turn away people who desperately need medical attention.

Whether the Government likes it or not, the inner city attracts many people who are on the edge. They gravitate to the centre. It is a well-known demographic phenomenon. A hospital such as Rozelle does not merely provide for designated catchment areas; it has to deal with a lot of transient people who migrate and drift towards the inner city. At Rozelle two wards for the severely alcohol brain damaged are to be amalgamated, resulting in the loss of 10 beds and 10 staff. I find that unacceptable. I am talking about the most vulnerable people in our community. The industrial therapy unit will be closed. That unit provides employment for 40 people who would have no chance whatsoever of finding employment on the open market. I understood there was a commitment that the mental health budget would be quarantined. I cannot see that policy in place at Rozelle at present because, quite clearly, mental health budgets are being affected by the cuts at Rozelle.

Overall I am very pessimistic about the future of inner city public hospitals and medical services. I hope the Government will consider the matter once again and not merely institute cuts here, there and everywhere. Decent medical services are required. The inner city population is growing. In the next five to seven years a minimum of 20,000 people will move into the Pyrmont area and approximately 5,000 or so into Balmain - more so as the urban consolidation strategies get under way in the south Sydney area with the Eveleigh workshops and towards Alexandria and Mascot. The inner city will experience a rapid population growth and I do not have a great deal of confidence in the Department of Health.

Mr Phillips: A total of 30 beds for that extra population. That is three beds per thousand.

Ms NORI: Terrific! If the Minister knows so much, he should come to my office and tell my constituents why they cannot gain admission to hospital when they need to, because I am sick of telling them. He should come and tell them why Prince Alfred is being -

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! The Minister and the honourable member for Port Jackson will cease conversing across the table. Any remarks are to be directed through the Chair.

Ms NORI: I am being provoked, Madam Deputy-Speaker.

Mr Phillips: So am I.

Ms NORI: It is my turn to speak, not the Minister's. I hope the Minister for Health will take account of what I have said and look at the problem of health care in the inner city at inner city hospitals because I do not believe it has a very rosy future. I am concerned because not a week goes past when I do not have myriad people coming into my office concerned about the future of hospitals. The support for the retention of Balmain Hospital as it is is unprecedented. The Minister should be in no doubt from the experience of his colleagues who have turned on Balmain as to the type of fight and struggle that the people of the inner city will put up in order to defend their services.

Mr BLACKMORE (Maitland) [7.56]: I support the comments made by His Excellency the Governor, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair. I congratulate His Excellency on his role as Governor of New South Wales, so ably assisted by Mrs Sinclair. He has carried on the role and tradition of Governor. During the Federal election campaign there has again been the distraction of republicanism. If the people of New South Wales were to take notice of exactly what His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales represents, I believe they would have second thoughts. His Excellency has supreme power, all of Her Majesty's powers, in New South Wales. He treasures those powers and uses them wisely. He is doing an excellent job. I was proud yesterday to be a resident of this great State and, equally, the representative of the people of my electorate of Maitland.

The Governor mentioned in his Speech Australia's increasing deficit, its balance of payments and the structural weakness in the economy. Of course, the Government will continue to argue for just returns for the taxpayers of New South Wales. In view of the difficult conditions, the Government will continue to pursue its budget strategy to control the budget deficit, with a view to eliminating it. The New South Wales Budget reflects the fact that good financial management is not an end in itself but rather a means of improving living standards and social welfare in a sustainable manner. As honourable members know, New South Wales will continue to lead the way in responsible financial management with continued efforts to create a business environment conducive to sustainable employment, growth and economic development.

What is new to the people of New South Wales whom we represent? They know that this country is on a downhill slide through the balance of payments and the structural weakness of the economy. They know from their take home pay, from the amount of money they have left over, from their disposable income at the end of the day that things are very tough. The Government, of course, has the same problem. It is difficult. Honourable members on both sides of the House, having spent the recess period interviewing constituents in their electorates, having done their bit to try to assist their constituents with the problems that they have, surely realise those constituents are not interested in whether their representative is in Government or in Opposition. They see us as members of the New South Wales Parliament and they look upon us to do our best to assist them in their time of need. That time of need

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is now and has been brought about by the recession we had to have. We all had to have it - governments, the private sector and citizens alike.

People expect their members of Parliament to work together. When I first came into Parliament I found it rather hard to understand how honourable members when in this Chamber want to go on point scoring missions instead of working together as a Parliament with the elected Government that received the mandate to govern to improve the way of life of the people whom they represent. It is easy to throw the blame elsewhere. The work the Government has been doing since coming to office in 1988 is, after all, only revising the practices that it inherited. The Government will continue to implement policies of sound management and responsible reforms to secure a better way of life for the citizens of the State and, most importantly, for their children. The interesting comment was made yesterday that reform will build on improvements that are already in place.

The Government will build upon the guarantee of service and make sure that the focus of service is the citizen, the client, the consumer. Each agency will give a guarantee regarding standards of service, but more significantly will make a commitment to listen to and respond to consumer needs. That is especially important. I am pleased that the Minister for Health is in the House this evening. He said on a number of occasions that a recent survey of the Department of Health showed that nothing was wrong with the standard of medical attention being given or the equipment in hospitals. However, there was concern about attitudes. Recently my wife was a patient in a hospital. The staff brought around a questionnaire and made sure that the wishes of the patients were heard and responded to. That is a fundamental part of any service provided by governments. Those who receive the service should have their needs heard and heeded. Sir Winston Churchill said that bureaucrats should be on tap and not on top. It is high time the bureaucrats listened to the people. I congratulate the Minister for Health on the reforms he has made in his department.

The Government's objective is to ensure that citizens benefit in tangible ways from the greater efficiency

of the public service. Government trading enterprises have been able to make available funds to employ 800 additional teachers. After the 1991 election the Leader of the Opposition went around saying that if the Labor Party were in government it would employ immediately an additional 2,500 teachers. Where would the money come from? In recent weeks honourable members have noted with great pride the number of higher school certificate students in their electorates who received excellent marks. The education system is working. It is not perfect, but it is the best available in this country. Each and every honourable member can be justifiably proud of the education system. More police are now on the beat. In my electorate beat police have been a popular innovation. The police move among the community and mingle with the people, giving them a sense of security. They provide a presence that I am led to believe was not readily visible in previous years.

The New South Wales Government is totally committed to further commercialisation and corporatisation of government trading enterprises where tangible benefits are available for the people of New South Wales. After all, those trading enterprises belong to the people of the State, who are entitled to reap the benefits of those enterprises. In the area of law and justice the Government's main aim is to increase the accessibility, variety and affordability of legal services. I am pleased that that comment was included in the Governor's Speech. One matter about which I have not been completely happy is the affordability of legal services, especially in an electorate such as Maitland, where people do not have high incomes. Nevertheless, they have a right at law to be represented and to receive correct advice from a legal service that they can afford. The Government will streamline the Legal Aid Commission. Members from both sides who have spoken in the debate today have had reservations about the role of legal aid. A number of my constituents have raised the matter with me. One scratches one's head and wonders just who is eligible for legal aid and who is not. Sometimes it appears that the wrong people are eligible for it. However, I support the Government's proposal to streamline the Legal Aid Commission to make it more efficient and accountable and to ensure that it operates within its means.

A domestic violence advisory council is to be established. One hopes that the council will be able to reduce the incidence of domestic violence. Many honourable members will agree that in times of recession - and as a result of the recession - pressure is put on the family to a greater degree than at other times. Domestic violence certainly is on the increase. No member of Parliament wants to see society torn apart by domestic violence. In 90 per cent of the cases of domestic violence the woman is the victim, but it has a great effect on the rest of the family also. The Government proposes to introduce legislation arising from a review of the Victims Compensation Tribunal, to ensure that the system is working properly and that victims of violent crime receive compensation. That will be welcome news to a group called Vocal which is working in the Hunter Valley. That group is headed by a dynamic person, Dawn Gilbert. Mrs Gilbert has not escaped from trauma. She lost her daughter in a horrific shooting incident. The Vocal organisation consists of people who have lost a loved one by some violent means. They have been working hard behind the scenes to ensure that victims of violent crimes receive adequate compensation.

The Government is concerned that all people get fair treatment, especially under the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act, in respect of which amendments will be introduced this session, including amendments that will prohibit discrimination on the ground of ageing. I have a particular interest in this subject. Many constituents have become self-funded retirees and are being discriminated against, more so federally. However, in the State sphere they are discriminated against in regard to council rates and

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vehicle registration, because they had the foresight to ensure their future by becoming self-funded retirees and making allowances for the future. Families, in their many and diverse forms, will be given special recognition by the Government in 1993. In August this year Family Week will provide opportunities for all of us to explore the concept of family and different ways that families care for their members. I was brought up in what might be called an old-fashioned way.

I fail to see anything wrong with good old-fashioned family values. If a lot more families adopted that approach, many of the problems that occur in the community would disappear. Those values did not do us any harm when we were kids. In regard to employment and economic development, at the State level efforts can largely only ameliorate the impacts of unemployment and seek to create conditions for the sustainable growth of employment in the private sector, such as cutting red tape and delays and creating security and predictability for investment. It is farcical for members of the Opposition to go into marginal electorates and give people a sense

of false security in the hope that an early election will result and that they will be elected to government. They are compiling a wish list. Their proposal to bring forward \$1.2 billion from next year's capital works program reeks of hypocrisy. I challenge any member of the Opposition to borrow next year's salary and to see how far he or she can get. Opposition members know as well as I that that would be living in fool's paradise. The Government has provided an additional \$540 million to capital works spending in 1992-93. This will create jobs, stimulate the economy and improve community facilities.

A comprehensive regional development policy will be implemented to encourage growth in non-metropolitan New South Wales. This is not before time. A couple of weeks ago it was interesting to read in the *Sun-Herald* an article which referred to regional development. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the other place, who is head of an Opposition committee, was reported as saying, "Who would want to live in the bloody country?" A person like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the other place, who has come through a marginal electorate, has the audacity to say that the Opposition intends to do so much for rural New South Wales. The Governor referred also in his Speech to the fact that a State environmental planning policy will be prepared. There is a lot of misconception about this matter in New South Wales. This policy will speed up the development process for major employment-generating industrial developments. The value of an industrial development must be \$20 million, excluding land value, and it is a condition that the industrial development must have more than 100 employees. From my experience in local government I know that local government representatives would prefer the Minister to make decisions and relieve them of the responsibility. They could then say, "That decision was taken away from us by the Minister. Shame on him!" [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Government agencies will review the impact of their policies on small enterprises and remove unnecessary provisions which may damage the viability of small businesses. Have any honourable members ever tried to run a small business? Have they ever seen the amount of red tape and unnecessary provisions with which small businesses have to deal? The Government has moved in the right direction at the right time, when small businesses are suffering the most. They need the help of the Government. I am pleased that the Government has undertaken to review the impact of the policies of government agencies. I turn now to agriculture. New rural assistance guidelines will improve the ability of viable family farms to remain in production. In the Maitland electorate the Government has contributed \$960,000 to Tocal Agricultural College to ensure that younger farmers in our community carry on that proud tradition of farming in a viable manner - a manner which will support their families and result in the retention of their land for many years to come.

As the Governor said, balancing the environment and resource development should not be compromised for short-term gain. All too often in the past we have been guilty of wanting to ensure that development went ahead at all costs without stopping and thinking of the damage that was being done to the environment. The Governor's statement that environmental values will not be compromised for short-term gains is very true. A State algae contingency plan has been developed to minimise the problems of blue-green algae in the State's waterways. The Williams River in the electorate of Maitland - the catchment for the Hunter Water Corporation and one of the most beautiful rivers in the State - has a problem with blue-green algae. In recent times there have been a number of investigations into this problem by the Water Corporation, the Department of Water Resources and the Hunter Catchment Management Trust. This Government is developing initiatives in relation to the overall management of hazardous materials in response to a chemical inquiry. It is developing also a "Community Right-to-Know" strategy. Hazardous materials certainly concern the community, especially when an electorate is serviced by a major highway. A number of vehicles carry chemicals the nature of which is unknown to the community. Such chemicals might be covered by some technical term and the drivers of the vehicle transporting them might be told what to do in case of an accident. But I believe communities have the right to know what chemicals are being transported through their areas and whether their interests have been taken into consideration when industry is granted development approvals to transport chemicals through adjoining council areas. I strongly support that approach.

The Governor referred in his Speech to the Government's metropolitan air quality study. A program for further reducing motor vehicle emissions will also be trialed. Design rule ADR78 which applied to motor vehicles manufactured pre-1978 and post-1978 was a bit of a joke. A person living in a

country area was required to put country fuel in his tank and a person living in a metropolitan area was required to use metropolitan fuel, which had a lower lead concentrate. The big problem was that a person could fill his car with country fuel in Maitland, travel to Sydney and emit a higher level of lead concentrate in the metropolitan area. I have been concerned for a number of years about the way in which these vehicles were inspected. In 1978 and in the early 1980s mechanics made a lot of money from disconnecting pollution equipment in cars, putting ball bearings into rubber hoses and disconnecting air pumps so they would not work. One wonders how many exhaust gas recirculation valves are still working on vehicles. When was the last time honourable members had the carbon canisters checked in their motor vehicles? This is something the Government should be looking at.

Following the inquiry into the Department of Health, reform of the department will focus on service to the community. The electorate of Maitland has been well looked after. Fourteen one-bedroom age units have been built at East Maitland and another 14 will be built at Metford this year, in addition to seven cottages. An amount of \$3.2 million will be spent on the preservation of State and regional roads in the Maitland electorate. On Monday of this week I had the pleasure of going to Melbourne to inspect the rail transport system that is to be introduced in New South Wales. This Government will be spending \$125 million in introducing additional XPT services, new sleeper carriages on the North Coast line and the Endeavour and Xplorer trains in New South Wales. This represents one of the greatest steps forward in transportation in New South Wales. Government and Opposition members will be justifiably proud when they see this rolling-stock in their electorates. I think it will result in a great resurgence of people travelling by train. The XPT, when it was trialed, was recorded as travelling at 193 kilometres an hour. It has broken the train speed record. It will shorten the time taken to travel between major cities such as Melbourne and Sydney. It has been said, quite appropriately, that the sleeper carriages will be the fastest beds in Australia. This is something about which the Government can be justifiably proud.

In local government we will see the first comprehensive review for over 70 years. The Local Government Bill 1993 will place greater emphasis on openness, decision-making, accountability to residents and ratepayers, a streamlining of regulatory processes, and greater value for money for the community. Local government should open its doors. There should not be the need for a general purposes committee. The red tape terminology should go. Often it is difficult for members of the community to understand how to make a development application to council. Honourable members would be aware of the power base struggle that goes on in local government. The numbers of council members should be reduced to no more than 13 members and a minimum of nine members. The power of the mayor or president should be taken away and given to a general manager of a council. The Maitland electorate has benefited in the area of education and training. Maitland Grossmann High School received high ratings in the higher school certificate last year. Rutherford High is to become a technology high school and permanent buildings are to be constructed at Dungog, at a total cost of \$2.1 million. Construction will commence in May. A week ago the Minister announced that Telarah Primary School will receive an assembly hall and a canteen facility valued at \$700,000.

Turning to health, one thing that upset and offended me yesterday was the Opposition's sniggering at the Governor's comment, "My Government puts people first in health care". Maitland Hospital is at last a reality. After years of being promised by the previous Labor Government, work on that hospital is about to commence. This Government is putting people first in health care. The people of Maitland have waited a long time for this hospital. An amount of \$34 million will be invested to redevelop a facility that has just celebrated its one hundred and fiftieth year of active service. I am proud to boast that two hospitals in my electorate have been granted a three-year accreditation. Accreditation is not awarded by government; these hospitals have earned their accreditation. These two hospitals have been ably supported by the Maitland Hospital Auxiliary which has raised funds for the installation of air-conditioning and the construction of a private chapel. Next week Dungog Hospital will participate in rural health week, a program which runs for one week in rural areas and which will open the doors of hospitals so that the community will be able to see the level of care that is provided. That is putting people first in health care. Yesterday, as a member of the Government, I was proud to be part of the ceremony so ably conducted and to listen to His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Ross Sinclair, A.C., Governor of New South Wales, address members of Parliament, who represent the people of New South

Wales.

Dr REFSHAUGE (Marrickville - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.25]: It was a very depressing opening of Parliament with the Governor espousing the Government's limited vision for the forthcoming parliamentary year. Very little is to be done to resolve the problems that the people of New South Wales face. It is almost a clean slate with no legislation proposed. It is no wonder that the Opposition must introduce legislation in an effort to solve the major problems facing the people of New South Wales. However, there were a few gems and I shall refer to them. In his Speech the Governor said:

The current Federal election campaign has made the community aware of the increasing deficit in Australia's balance of payments and the structural weaknesses in the economy.

His next sentence is worth mulling over. He said:

This has made it very clear to my Government that the State is unlikely to obtain relief from Commonwealth sources.

Honourable members should examine some of those

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potential Commonwealth sources, one of which is the Fightback package which has been analysed by New South Wales Treasury but which the Premier, gutless as he was, was not prepared to release to the Parliament until forced to do so by the threat of numbers in this House. I can understand why he was trying to hide the truth from the people of New South Wales: the truth is horrendous. Let me quote from some of the disturbing paragraphs in the Treasury's assessment of the Fightback package. Under the heading "Federal Coalition's Fightback Package", referring to a change in payroll tax and compensation, a so-called boost for New South Wales, Treasury said:

The abolition is compensated through grants equal to the average of the last 3 years of payroll tax revenue. Thereafter this grant would be indexed to GST revenue. In the first year this is likely to cost New South Wales \$100 million to \$150 million.

In the first year alone the change to payroll tax brought about by the introduction of a goods and services tax will cost the taxpayers of New South Wales \$100 million to \$150 million. How many hospital beds would that provide? How many teachers would that employ? How many roads in disrepair will not be maintained? Let me go further. When dealing with payments to the States Treasury said:

One of the general expenditure savings in the package is a cut in financial assistance grants to the States by 5 per cent . . . which would cost New South Wales \$180 million.

Fightback, if it were ever implemented, would penalise the people of New South Wales and of every other State. It would take away their hospitals, their schools, their public transport, their road support, their legal aid support and the basic services that State governments have a responsibility to provide. No wonder the gutless Premier, the invisible Premier, tried to take this document into his cone of silence and keep it hidden from the people of New South Wales. Treasury also examined the health policy of Dr John Hewson and Dr Bob Woods. An interesting issue that has not been addressed to date, but which Treasury was able to find, is this:

The Fightback package does talk about the potential for 20% efficiency gains in the State hospitals area and does pledge to work with States to achieve better performance.

Treasury said:

While not explicitly stated, there is the danger that the Commonwealth could seek to appropriate the so-called 20% efficiency savings by cuts to payments to the States.

For New South Wales \$800 million a year would be taken out of the health budget.

Mr Phillips: How does that equal 20 per cent?

Dr REFSHAUGE: The Minister should read Treasury's document, his Government's secret paper that the Premier was forced to provide to the Parliament. In summary Treasury said:

However, there are a number of areas of policy that will have a negative impact:-

A different word may describe the impact better but "negative" will do:

Cuts to Financial Assistance Grants;

abolition of Better Cities Program funding;

abolition of payroll tax;

impact of tight macroeconomic policy on economic activity and State finances.

The Treasury says - in the paper that the Government wanted to hide - that the financial assistance grants, the better cities program and the abolition of payroll tax will have a negative impact on the State Budget of between \$300 million and \$400 million per annum. The macroeconomic reform refers to the \$800 million potentially ripped out of the heart of the health budget, about which Treasury has warned this Government. It is no surprise that the Minister for Health held off until the last moment but did sign the Medicare agreement.

Mr Phillips: Because your guys caved in.

Dr REFSHAUGE: Because he does not trust John Hewson and he does not trust Peter Reith.

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Health to order. They will not carry on in that manner in the Chamber. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair.

Dr REFSHAUGE: I do not think you trust them either, Madam Deputy-Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order.

Dr REFSHAUGE: I would think that a member of the Government who supports government policy would not trust John Hewson, Peter Reith or Bob Woods, because they have signed the Medicare agreement. They did not have to sign it; they could have waited until after the election, see who won and dealt with the matter. But this Minister is not prepared to trust his Federal colleagues. He signed at the last minute because he knows Medicare gives him a fair deal and that Fightback will rip \$800 million out of the health budget. No wonder he signed the agreement; no wonder he votes Labor. No wonder he was begging Brian Howe to bring out the agreement so that he could sign it there and then. When the people of New South Wales read this document they will realise that the Minister had the jump on the rest of the States. He knew how disastrous Fightback would be, so he voted early and put his name on the Medicare agreement. He wanted to ensure that the agreement continued in operation. He accepted that \$100 million extra a year because he needed it for the State's public hospitals - forcing it into legislation in an effort to prevent Fightback from ever having a chance to get off the ground. I do not blame the Minister for what he did. Other matters should be brought to light in the policy analysis on Fightback by Treasury. I have heard governments of both political persuasions regularly say that they want to get the dollars to the people in order to ensure that the people get the front-line service. I think probably everybody

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would agree that the bureaucracy should be cut to the front line. It is an easy statement for politicians to make but it is also a maxim, a truism and something for which we should all be aiming. In the section of the analysis in which it deals with the direct impact of the GST on non-commercial activities, Treasury says:

It should also be noted that there will be some delay between payment of tax on inputs and the refund payment by the tax office.

That will, of course, affect the State's cash flow, so some financial problems can be expected to result from that. The report says:

For State public trading enterprises (PTE) their net operating surplus will remain unchanged as operating revenue will increase with an equivalent increase in operating expenditure.

As in the case of non-commercial activities, there will be an administrative cost for all of John Hewson's tax collectors sitting around, not only in small business but in government trading enterprises, totalling up at the end of the day how much of the GST they have to send out. What a way to get the economy moving: fill it up with bureaucracy, fill it up with tax collectors working for everybody else, sending off these little bits of the GST. The honourable member for Wakehurst should not look so worried. He should read Treasury's document; it is quite illuminating. Even he, with his level of intelligence, should be able to follow Treasury's wording. It is an amazing document. No wonder the invisible Premier tried to make this document invisible. I was amazed when I heard, and checked later in the *Hansard*, that the Governor had said, "In the health area, the Government will be introducing legislation to establish the Complaints Unit". I thought most of us time had been writing to a complaints unit for a long time; I thought it actually existed. I am delighted that the Government is giving some recognition to the fact that a complaints unit is to be established. It gives the Opposition great pleasure that the Government is acknowledging that people are working in a department and doing a job. The Opposition has been using them and has been happy in general with the service they have been providing, but presumably the Government is now to acknowledge their existence. Possibly more important are some of the words said by the Governor about the health policy. It is not surprising, as was pointed out by the honourable member for Maitland, that it caused some disquiet among people who were listening. The words that were used did not seem to reflect the reality and seemed to leave out some of the exciting aspects of the policy from a government's point of view. The Governor stated:

New hospitals are being built in Penrith and Liverpool, Albury and Lismore, including the Caroline Chisholm Women's Hospital on the Liverpool campus. The new Children's Hospital is rising at Westmead and the Royal Women's Hospital is starting its move to the Prince of Wales . . .

The Opposition is waiting for a few others to be established. But there is one hospital in which the Government has put its faith. However, it is now so embarrassed about the situation that it will not even name it. I refer to Port Macquarie hospital. The Government is so embarrassed about that hospital that all of a sudden it has disappeared from the list. Last night I was at Port Macquarie. The people of Port Macquarie sent their best wishes to the Minister and to the honourable member for Port Macquarie. They told me to tell the honourable member to stay down here but that she should do some job retraining because at the next opportunity they want to ensure that she will have to find a different job. Some time ago the people of Port Macquarie voted overwhelmingly to send a message to the Government that it was doing the wrong thing. They do not want a privatised hospital. They are maintaining their rage. The civic centre was packed to overcrowding last night. Inside the hall I counted over 500 people and there were people spilling outside, all of whom are opposed to the privatisation of the Port Macquarie hospital. That message might be starting to get through. The Government is gutless and is not even prepared to mention its own pride and joy in the list of supposed improvements in the area of health. Perhaps it has now realised that what it proposes will effect no improvement in health services. In the health area, the Governor said:

Even though financial and clinical resources are scarce, they are being moved to areas of population growth in Sydney's west and south, and the north and central coast.

There is no doubt the resources are scarce. In Wallsend they are non-existent; the Government closed the hospital. In Marrickville they are non-existent; the Government closed the hospital. In Glebe they are non-existent; it closed the hospital. In Parramatta they are non-existent; it closed the hospital. The Government has been closing hospitals and hospital beds all over the place. No wonder the resources are

scarce. The Government got that bit right. What has happened about the resources going to the west? When one thinks about the west, one thinks about the Western Sydney Area Health Service; that is in the west of Sydney. Over the past year beds administered by the Western Sydney Area Health Service have been closed. Let us look at a few other areas, such as Wentworth, the Southwest Sydney Area Health Service and a few others in west and southwest areas. There have been no new beds under this Government in the greater west - it has been closing them all over the place. The Government should tell the truth, not part of it. The Government makes claims such as, "Resources are scarce because Labor governments closed them". The Government should tell the truth and do what it is supposed to do. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Mr Hazzard: What about Concord?

Dr REFSHAUGE: The Federal Government gave Concord, plus \$1.3 billion with the Concord transfer, of which \$200 million or more was for extra capital works. All of this re-jigging which has been predicated on closing hospitals because the Government needs the capital is rubbish. The Premier made statements last year about how New South Wales was doing better on its economic performance than any other State. He regularly

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turned up to press conferences when figures came out saying, "We are doing better". He became invisible when New South Wales started to go down the gurgler, even worse than elsewhere. Only one Liberal in the Federal Parliament occasionally tells the truth, and that is little Johnny Howard - Honest John. I have a transcript of a "PM" interview of Thursday, 11th February, 1993, in which Honest John told the people of Australia:

... the alarming thing to me about some of the data in recent weeks is that New South Wales, hitherto holding out against the economic slide, is in fact now falling further into recession than it was six or 12 months ago - in other words, the largest State.

That is what John Howard thinks of Premier John Fahey. John Howard was prepared to stand up for Nick Greiner but in the time frame that he is referring to he is talking about the leadership - or lack of leadership - that John Fahey has been providing for New South Wales. I welcome some honesty from the Liberal Party; it is occasionally worth while when we can find it - it is difficult to find. Honest John, with his little white picket fence, was doing a good job when he said, in effect, that John Fahey has bungled, John Fahey has got it wrong and John Fahey is showing no leadership. I refer also to some of the other proposals, or lack of proposals, which affect my electorate. A number of issues have been of significant concern to the people of Marrickville. Some of those matters have been touched on by other speakers as generic problems. One problem is the lack of teachers. The honourable member for Maitland said, "We do not need any more teachers - everything is going to be okay". I can tell the honourable member for Maitland and every member of the Government that there is a standing invitation to come out to any school in the Marrickville electorate - any one of them. Teachers are working hard in every school; kids from difficult backgrounds are not getting the learning experiences that they should be because we do not have enough teachers. It might be okay on the North Shore, Brad, and it might be okay for your rich mates, but come and see the real people out at Marrickville and see how tough they are doing it. You should come out to Auburn, Lidcombe, Swansea, Parramatta and Rockdale - come out and see where people are doing it tough and see the effect of your stinking policies.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will address his remarks through the Chair, and will not converse across the table.

Dr REFSHAUGE: You come out there too, Mr Acting-Speaker.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition reflects upon the Chair in that regard I will direct him to resume his seat.

Dr REFSHAUGE: I invite the Acting-Speaker to come out to Marrickville as well. I think it is important that every member of this House see what is happening in the schools that are finding it difficult. Kids out there are hurting because, as they and their parents know, they are not getting a fair go out of this Government. When the Government took the teachers away it started to destroy the education system.

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

Dr REFSHAUGE: The most vicious and offensive decision of your Government was to get rid of your contribution to the disadvantaged schools program. I know you believe in a totally different policy; I know you do not have a philosophy which cares about the disadvantaged; I know you do not care about them; but I think you ought to start living up to your responsibility to all people in New South Wales.

Mr O'Doherty: On a point of order. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is clearly flouting your earlier ruling that all remarks should be addressed through the Chair.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will direct his remarks through the Chair and not across the table. The honourable member for Wakehurst will cease interjecting.

Dr REFSHAUGE: I welcome your ruling, Mr Acting-Speaker, and will ensure that every speaker is reminded of it all night tonight and during every speech in the Address-in-Reply debate. You have set a precedent, which is useful for this Parliament, that if you cannot take it you ought to get out. I think that is an important precedent to set. If you start setting the rules -

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will address the Chair and will not reflect upon rulings from the Chair.

Dr REFSHAUGE: I am not reflecting on rulings of the Chair, Mr Acting-Speaker. I am saying that it is important to recognise the rulings of the Chair and make sure that those rulings are maintained throughout the whole of the debate. The Address-in-Reply debate goes on for many weeks. That ruling will be a very important ruling, I think, and will be very useful.

Mr Hazzard: Go back to the substance.

Dr REFSHAUGE: You started it. It will be a useful precedent for all of us in every part of this debate. Thank you, Mr Acting-Speaker, I think it has been a very valuable contribution - as you usually make to debates. The Government got rid of the disadvantaged schools program and it does not care about the disadvantaged. I make an exception to this because I think the Attorney General and Minister for Industrial Relations, the Hon. John Hannaford, is committed to the age discrimination legislation and I will strongly support him on that. The nice flowery words of the Governor are fine, but they mean nothing when the Government has got rid of the disadvantaged schools program. The Government is prepared to say to the disadvantaged kids, "We do not care about you". Having gone to a whole range of toffee-nosed schools and having dealt with the likes of those opposite, I know that kids out there need a better break. Mr Acting-Speaker, I draw your attention to the interjecting comments of members on the Government side and ask you to ensure that they

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follow your earlier direction.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order!

Dr REFSHAUGE: There are also health care problems in the Marrickville electorate. I refer to the "Eversleigh" Home of Peace Hospital, which provides services for the aged. The aged are not only important but they are increasing in number. Unfortunately, they require more support than many other people. The aged have been getting very good quality care from Eversleigh hospital in a whole range of services, using the teaching hospital when required. The multi-disciplinary approach has been very useful. The hospital is also able to be accessed by public transport. It is in an area which many people can reach - it has a wide reach because of its siting.

The Government wants to break up Eversleigh hospital and move part of it to Balmain. Some pensioners

in Marrickville wanted to find out how long it would take them to travel by public transport - the normal way for them - to visit relatives at Balmain. Members opposite might use a limousine or hire car to make such a journey but these Marrickville pensioners decided to use the public transport system because that is all they can afford - and with a goods and services tax they might not even be able to afford that. Their journey from Marrickville to Balmain, where the new aged care centre will be relocated, took three hours. No wonder people laugh at the Government's claim of caring for people by putting them first. The Government puts people first by making them take a three-hour bus trip to Balmain to attend part of what had been an effective aged care centre before being fragmented and dispersed to various areas. The people of Balmain will not say they are being put first. The Mayor of Liverpool, who is in the public gallery, will not say that the Government is putting people first, for his area lacks the services it desperately needs. Lidcombe Hospital's aged services must be maintained, for it is not only a teaching hospital. Bankstown Hospital needs to be built up. Mental health services, not only those of a hi-tech nature, are desperately needed.

The essence of the excellent mental health legislation, which received bi-partisan support, is the use of community treatment orders and community counselling orders as bridges between hospital and community. Though that concept was supported and actively promoted by both sides of the Parliament, it has taken months for any community health centre to be able to administer community treatment orders. No wonder people laugh when they hear those hollow words from the Government. If they did not laugh they would cry. I remind members of the wisdom of Mr Acting-Speaker's ruling that interjections not be made by either side of the House during this two-week debate. I am sure that ruling will be vigilantly observed by all members. The honourable member for Wakehurst will be remembered by Government members for having brought that requirement to the attention of the Chair. The secret document on Fightback, which was eventually produced today, carries a clear message about where New South Wales is going. Treasury has shown that Fightback will be a disaster for New South Wales and for all Australians. No wonder the New South Wales Government signed that Medicare agreement. John Fahey and his Government have voted early in this coming election. By signing that agreement they voted for Paul Keating and for Medicare.

Mr HAZZARD (Wakehurst) [8.55]: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition addressed a broad range of issues but has been somewhat discursive in digressing from the Address-in-Reply debate and challenging Mr Acting Speaker's position in the Chamber. I am sure the honourable member did not intend to be disrespectful to the Chair and will display the same sort of vigour and interest in issues that are substantive for both the Labor Party and the community. The honourable member laid blame at the feet of the Minister for Health, having recently signed the Medicare agreement, for not doing the right thing by the people of New South Wales. However, in October last year the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in his capacity as shadow minister for health, had been publicly encouraging the Minister for Health to sign the Medicare agreement. The honourable member now has the hide to say that the Minister should not have signed the agreement. The citizens of New South Wales will receive \$78 million because the Minister for Health, in what must be seen as a sensible first move by him in that portfolio, did not take the advice of the shadow minister for health last year. I am also pleased that Mr Acting-Speaker has not followed the honourable member's inappropriate advice tonight. I hope the honourable member will listen to the correct views of the Government on what should be done in New South Wales.

Last year I was privileged to hear Her Majesty the Queen speak at the opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament. Yesterday all members were privileged to see the Governor, His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Ross Sinclair, open the third session of the Fiftieth Parliament. On both occasions a degree of pomp and ceremony was evident, but that pomp and ceremony displayed a sense of our Australian heritage, our history and roots. Earlier today the honourable member for Smithfield equated that pomp and ceremony with a monarchist view of life, though I fail to understand how he could form that view. Events yesterday and on the previous occasion attended by Her Majesty reminded me of our fundamental democratic freedoms borne of our heritage. I was reminded that the seeds of the flower of our special freedom were transported here over the seas from Great Britain. When those seeds of freedom were planted in this wonderful sunburnt country it was apparent that Australia, given visionary leadership, an understanding and appreciation of the adaptation required in a new environment, and a sensitivity and willingness to learn from Australia's own indigenous population, would enjoy their blossoming. However, some evolution and adaptation will always be necessary. Over the

past 205 years democracy in this country has adapted to Australian
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conditions. One would think, on listening to the honourable member for Smithfield, that such adaptation is wholly inappropriate. But the process of adaptation is not static because life is not static. Adaptation in our fundamental democratic principles, in our reliance on Parliament and the monarchy, and in the blossoming of the principles of freedom, is an entirely normal evolutionary process. It is in that context that we need to assess the half-baked, dare I say it, juvenile pretence by leaders of the Labor Party, federally and statewide, that there is merit in driving a bulldozer through the long established flower of our democratic freedoms.

Mr Ziolkowski: That is wonderful!

Mr HAZZARD: The honourable member for Parramatta acknowledges that my comments are meaningful and wonderful. I thank the honourable member for Parramatta for that, because it shows that there is a member on the other side who is a thinking man - and that is a rarity. Honourable members opposite want to play transparent games. It is a sham; it is hollow; it is a cynical abuse of the positions that they hold - and the game is purely to disguise life as it would be under a Federal Labor government.

Mr O'Doherty: They are desperate.

Mr HAZZARD: As the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai says, they are desperate and will do absolutely anything to divert Government members from the task in hand and what we need to be thinking about. It is all a diversion. The Opposition is trying to distract the Government from focusing on the disasters that would be caused by Labor if it regains office on 13th March. The Opposition game is to focus attention away from what has typified the past 10 years of Federal Labor Government in Australia and away from rapidly escalating unemployment. At last count there were 1,017,600 unemployed. It is a pity that another 40 or 50 members from the Opposition do not join those ranks; that would at least provide some joy in the unemployment figure. Mr Keating, the honourable working man from Bankstown, is charading in Bankstown. How he found the place again is beyond me, but he turned up in the hall and said, "Here is your working boy from Bankstown". This working boy has managed to put more than one million people out of work. I worked at Bankstown for five years and I know what Bankstown is all about. Mr Keating is no more Bankstown than are the Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles. He is off with his French clocks, and that is where he should be. Most of the honourable members opposite, when you talk to them privately, are decent folk. They know the truth. They know that Paul Keating and Bob Carr are not where Labor should be. They have lost their origins, they have lost their roots, and they have lost their directions - and that is their problem. In less than 10 years the Federal Labor Government has managed to increase the foreign debt from \$35 million -

Mr A. S. Aquilina: On a point of order. Mr Acting-Speaker, you have been very patient with the honourable member, who obviously has not been speaking to the Address-in-Reply motion. I see no relevance in what he has been saying about the Federal Government or, indeed, the Prime Minister of Australia.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! Does the member for St Marys have a specific point of order?

Mr A. S. Aquilina: Yes. My specific point of order is that the honourable member ought to be replying to the Governor's Speech and not dealing with other matters.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: The member for St Marys would be aware that in the Address-in-Reply debate members may canvass a very wide range of issues in passing. I am sure that the member for Wakehurst will shortly return to the Governor's Speech.

Mr HAZZARD: For the benefit of the honourable member for St Marys I point out that the Governor's Speech dealt with the present Federal election campaign and making the community aware of the increasing deficit. I was touching on that matter entirely. I am sure that the honourable member for St Marys is totally aware of the fact but is scared witless of the truth getting out to the average worker, when the realisation is

reached that workers are no longer represented by this sham on the other side. Labor has lost its way and in less than 10 years it has increased the foreign debt from \$35 million to nearly \$200 million. That is an amazing effort, achieved by pure, utter, unadulterated incompetence; which Labor has perfected. When one looks around the country one sees bankruptcies, businesses going into liquidation and small businesses going into receivership. Yet Paul Keating stood up at Bankstown and said, "Labor is for the small man; Labor is for the worker". He really stands for the man who has lost his way, yet he is seeking to have another three years in the Lodge at the taxpayers' expense. I am sorry that some honourable members opposite - not all of them - would like to see Paul Keating remain as Prime Minister. The truth is that most honourable members opposite are hopeful that he will not be returned to office and are petrified because they want their brothers, their comrades, to be able to obtain jobs. The Federal Labor Government has also managed to increase the divorce rate and this has had a great effect on families. It has managed to impose such pressures and stresses on society that -

Mr A. S. Aquilina: On a point of order. Mr Acting-Speaker, I took it that your previous ruling had been accepted by the honourable member. However, he continues to refer to Federal Government matters, even to the point of speaking about the rate of divorce in Australia. I fail to see how that has any relevance.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr HAZZARD: I am sorry if the honourable

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member for St Marys, who is otherwise a very decent bloke, is having problems accepting what I am saying. The honourable member for St Marys is doing what one would expect from honourable members opposite: he is shoring up his position within the party by making this rather scurrilous, low attack. He is a decent family man and knows that the Federal Labor Government has been responsible for the divorce rate rising to 40 per cent. The Fahey-Murray Government seeks to re-establish the importance of the family. Yesterday the Governor made it clear that the Government will place emphasis on the family by introducing Family Week, to be held in August. The Minister for Community Services and Assistant Minister for Health is responsible for that initiative and will ensure that all people, including honourable members opposite, are introspective. Even the honourable member for Smithfield will be able to sit down and think about his family.

Mr A. S. Aquilina: That is a scurrilous attack.

Mr HAZZARD: The honourable member for St Marys has accused me of making a scurrilous attack. I do not know who he suggests I have attacked; all I am saying is that this Government will refocus on community and family values - an important initiative. The Government of New South Wales will not be distracted from the task ahead. It will ensure that New South Wales continues to enjoy economic strength and growth. It will see a different culture in New South Wales, with changes to work practices, an increase in community awareness and the elimination of the "we and us" view the Labor Party loves to espouse. Government members could just sit on their backsides and do nothing, but this Government has a sharing, caring, communal approach to the problems of our society. Notwithstanding interjections by the honourable member for St Marys, I am sure that he agrees with most of what I am saying but is unable to cope with the vision of New South Wales progressing rather than remaining static. As a local member of Parliament I am aware of the difficulties brought about by large bureaucracies in the New South Wales Government. Those bureaucracies were cultivated by honourable members opposite for many years under Neville Wran; they flourished and became stronger and entrenched.

In its four and a half years this Government has tried to change that culture. It is obvious from the directions set out in the Governor's Speech yesterday that the Government will continue to try to change the culture of the bureaucracies. We are about making the bureaucracies more accountable and reasonable so that when the average person, the small man in the street, has a problem with government departments he does not deal with just a faceless, heartless bureaucrat; he deals with someone with a name whom he can relate to, someone who actually cares about him. In the years of Labor Government the situation was not addressed. It certainly has not been addressed at the Federal level. Last year the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Maroubra, accused the then Premier of being -

Mr Packard: A boofhead.

Mr HAZZARD: The honourable member for The Hills has got that wrong; no, it was not a boofhead. He accused the Premier at that time of being a little lost in the rhetoric and the reality. The only person in this Chamber who would really have an appreciation of rhetoric versus reality is the Leader of the Opposition. He is Mr Rhetoric. That is all we have heard in the past four and a half years. It is no surprise to me that the knives are out. Peter Anderson is busy looking to his position as the leader. Opposition members know that the Leader of the Opposition is a policy chameleon, a charlatan. He is Mr Rhetoric. He is devoid of sincerity. I feel sorry for the people who sit behind him, because they know that and most of them are trying to do the right thing. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

I am grateful for the indulgence of all the members on the opposite side of the Chamber. Those present are a good bunch of blokes. The Leader of the Opposition is recognised for what he is these days. Not even the media in their wildest fantasising - and heaven only knows that the media can fantasise, with the exception of the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai, who has now gone from the pristine ranks of the media into our ranks - now dare to label the Leader of the Opposition as an alternative Premier. One can hear the whispers in the corridors that the Leader of the Opposition is hollow; he is shallow; he is empty; he is devoid of ideas; he is devoid of principle. That is what it is all about. Last year he talked about the Ministers being dopey. Have a look at the shadow ministers. None of those now in the Chamber fall into this category, but a fair few of the others are dopey shadow ministers. The one now entering the Chamber is included in that category.

What the Leader of the Opposition is really interested in doing is pursuing government, getting into power with a bunch of dopey shadow ministers who want to be in the white cars. This Government is leading the way. It has continued in its reasonable and economically responsible attitude to lead the community out of the recession. It is doing what it can for New South Wales. In due course I will come to a number of local matters I would like to address, but I want to take this opportunity of saying a few words on a matter that is very important to me. I am sure that members on the other side of the Chamber will agree with what I say. At a time when we in Government would like to find every dollar that we can to assist those in need, we have an institution that I think is out of control, rampantly ridiculous, off the deep end, heading in the wrong direction -

Mr Packard: The Opposition.

Mr HAZZARD: It is not the Opposition; what I am talking about is that little place down at Redfern called ICAC - the Independent Commission Against Corruption. When the question of legal costs arises, when people talk about reviewing the legal profession, it comes to my mind that what we really should be doing is having a look at one of the biggest drains on our economy at present, supported at least ostensibly

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by those on the opposite side but perhaps not at a quieter level. I can tell you, Mr Acting-Speaker, that I really think that the \$40-odd million that we have spent on ICAC in the last four years - and the \$104 million, I think it was, to set it up - would have been better spent helping those in our community who are in real need. Because at the end of the day, what have we got out of ICAC in the last four years? I will tell the House what we have got: next to nothing. We have got a situation where ICAC, under the auspices of Mr Temby, has managed to get a few convictions of low little criminals that would have been easily handled by the local police - mostly handled in the Local Court. But why did it come in? Why was it originally given a charter? It was given a charter to attack broad-based, large scale corruption.

Tony Fitzgerald managed to do in two years what Mr Temby has failed to do in four and a half years. He actually cleaned up Queensland. But what has Mr Temby done? It reminds me of that expression "double or nothing". In this case it is double the price and you get nothing - "and", not "or"; "and nothing". That is what has happened here in New South Wales. What we are really talking about is an institution which has failed. It is not just members on this side who perhaps think that. I will not necessarily say that all of my colleagues share my views. Not all of them have been exposed to the sumptuous luxury of the seats at the ICAC which I was given the rare privilege of being able to share in. I do not always agree with the honourable member for

Londonderry but I have to say that Paul Gibson had some telling words on 17th March, 1992. I am sure he spoke for a lot of his Labor colleagues when, at page 57 of that day's *Hansard*, he said:

I said that I believed that the ICAC was run by a bunch of naive lawyers. I have had no cause to change my opinion from that day to this.

The honourable member for Londonderry has got it right. He got it even better when, at page 59, he went on to say:

It is mind boggling that an organisation could be as stupid as ICAC . . .

That is really the substance. I have to say that he is right. Mr Temby is naive. Mr Temby and his colleagues are stupid. They have managed to waste an enormous amount of State Government funds. I do not know that I can be a lot more specific than that. But the problem with ICAC is that it is largely unaccountable. The question of who investigates ICAC when it gets it wrong has only recently come to people's attention. Mr Temby, of course, would tell us it never gets it wrong. The Supreme Court would say something different, and so would most members on both sides of the Chamber, and I suspect a lot of other people. What about that chap from the Sydney City Council who was given the bullet following Mr Temby's declaration, but shortly thereafter was reinstated? What about the Water Board worker that was given the bullet after Mr Temby's decision? He was reinstated.

Mr Temby has one consistency and that is he gets things wrong. The reality is that under Mr Temby, ICAC, which had an absolute potential to do wonderful, wonderful things for New South Wales, has failed miserably. That is because ICAC was given such an enormous amount of power it needed someone at its helm who would act in a judicious fashion, and judiciously at all times. Instead, what we have seen is a commissioner who has embarked on misguided inquiries, has had an injudicious conduct of proceedings on a number of occasions and who really would have, when you think about it, been far better off giving us some of the money back to run some legal aid for people who really needed it. And that does not include people, necessarily, who were appearing before ICAC. I am talking about Mr and Mrs Average who need it in the Local Courts, the Family Courts and so on. I am not alone in this criticism.

I point to a paper by Tim Robertson, Secretary of the Labor Lawyers. I do not need to look to my conservative colleagues to find the criticisms. I see that in a paper that he titled "The Romans were Right" - of course, that tells its own little message - Mr Robertson said on 23rd November, 1992, "Another danger is that ICAC provides a privileged forum which lends itself to the temptation of intellectual self-indulgence - often difficult for lawyers to resist". For lawyers generally it might be difficult to resist; for Mr Temby it is impossible! Mr Temby has ensured that to a considerable extent he has indulged himself in the greatest way possible. But each time he has done so he has been brought back to the watering hole, brought back to the right direction by the Supreme Court. He does not like that, of course, but the attitude of intellectual self-indulgence commented on by Mr Tim Robertson, the secretary of the Labor Lawyers, is absolutely right. His final comments in that paper are as follows:

One final observation. It is frequently argued that arbitrary powers which seriously encroach on civil rights were conferred on the ICAC because reliance can be placed upon the integrity and care of those chosen to exercise them. This is the benevolent dictator argument. It is an alluring proposition but within it lies the danger that we forget one of the great democratic principles of our society: that the law is supreme and sets its face against the arbitrary coercion of citizens by Government. Civil rights may not be endangered so much from those who would take them away for bad reasons but from those who claim to infringe them for the public good.

He has got it right. Mr Temby, under the pretence of doing things for the public good, is doing so much bad, so much wrong, that sooner or later he will have to be brought to task. That is a pity because in so doing he has diminished the standing of the ICAC in the community. Mr Justice McLelland in a paper in which he referred to the comments of Tony Fitzgerald stated:

There is the risk that any autonomous investigative body, particularly one infused by its own inevitable sense of importance and

crusading zeal, may become increasingly insensitive to the delicate balance between conflicting public and private interests, which is traditionally and best struck by judges.

The fact is that this autonomous investigative body has lost its way, and that is largely because of the crusading zeal of its commissioner and his subordinates - but certainly under the auspices of the commissioner. In directing the attention of the House

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to those comments I say that this State will be a better place when Mr Temby sees fit to acknowledge that he got it wrong with Nick Greiner and Tim Moore, that he got it wrong with the Sydney City Council, that he got it wrong with the Water Board. He has got it wrong so many times he should do the right thing and step down. In the electorate of Wakehurst life is apparently a lot better than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggests is the norm elsewhere.

My electorate has some wonderful local State schools: Beacon Hill High School; North Curl Curl Public School, where Trish Cavanagh is the principal, a name which would be well known to some of my colleagues on the other side; Narrabeen Primary School, where Phyllis Richards is in charge; Brookvale Public School, administered by Steve Richards; Dee Why Public School, where Tom Bradford is the principal; Manly High School, managed by Terry Buggy; and Beacon Hill High School, where Judy King is the principal. These schools are doing great things with our local children. I was educated at a local State primary school and high school. I am aware of their significance and importance within the local community and I acknowledge the hard work done by their teachers.

[Interruption]

The honourable member for Riverstone, the shadow minister for education, is making silly comments. His views might be different, but I was a teacher and I know what teaching is all about. It is a hard slog. I acknowledge tonight in this place, away from all the silliness the Opposition likes to throw up at us, that these teachers do a good job. My child has just started at a local State school and I have absolute faith that that school will provide an excellent education for him. The Government has given people the right to choose and an assurance of quality with regard to education. The local neighbourhood centre is performing commendably in my electorate. I acknowledge the work of Prue Skye, Jane Elliott and others leading the volunteers who deliver this important service to the local community. The cubby house toy library is providing wonderful toys for disabled children. Members on the Government side of the House understand the realities, unlike Opposition members. Many of us have achieved our positions in the community by hard work. I look forward to more of the same to show up the bunch of incompetent twits who sit on the Opposition side hoping to get into government in the near future.

Mr BOWMAN (Swansea) [9.25]: I rise not only as the honourable member for Swansea but perhaps also as one of those incompetent twits who dare to disagree with the honourable member for Wakehurst. His speech ran the full gamut in variety tonight from the soporific to the noisily unmemorable. Generally he was jurally unpersuasive but there were highlights in his speech. At times his brow furrowed, his body quivered and the words tumbled forth like a torrent. Though there was a great deal of sound and fury, I am sorry to say for a great deal of time his words did nothing much at all except to show that the honourable member - who is a very sincere gentleman indeed - is terribly confused. It is obvious that he does not like the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and I appreciated his frankness when he made it perfectly clear that he believes Nick Greiner made a terrible mistake and the Liberal Party made a terrible mistake - and I realise that the National Party always expressed reservations - in setting up ICAC, despite the fact that he, like others, abhors the corruption which not only creates suffering and injustice but imperils the satisfactory operation of democracy not only in Australia but more dramatically in many countries around the world.

I will not name individual countries but it is obviously true that corruption can never be eliminated, root and branch: it must be continually attacked if we are to have an effectively functioning democracy. It is not good enough for the honourable member for Wakehurst to make a blistering attack upon Mr Temby and the ICAC while refusing to offer any alternative other than, one presumes, going back to square one. He was not

happy with square one when every now and then a royal commission with all the powers of ICAC and unlimited funds was established. The honourable member for Wakehurst wants to take us back to the situation where royal commissions intermittently intervened, not only at the behest of the Government but very often at the behest of the Opposition and the public, and sought to deal with a serious wrong or series of wrongs in our society.

I hope the colleagues of the honourable member for Wakehurst will not take him to task but rather reason with him. If he has so little faith in ICAC, one wonders whether he has any faith in any of the Government's philosophies. Has he got the message clear about how vital it is if democracy is really to survive that we have a system - and perhaps the ICAC system that exists at the moment can be substantially improved - that makes a genuine attempt to avoid corruption? It is all very well for civil libertarians to say that ICAC is imperfect. But nothing is perfect! The decent people of New South Wales will gain no comfort from hearing members of the Government castigate ICAC as though it is some kind of terrible evil in society.

The opening of Parliament was adverted to by the honourable member for Wakehurst and he seemed to be quietly thrilled by the grandeur and style of the ceremony. I appreciated the dignified way in which he spoke about it. I am sorry to say that the honourable member for Monaro chose to indulge in a childish game of sniggering at the personal appearance of various people. Such behaviour lowers the standard of debate. The Address-in-Reply debate is as important as any debate in the Parliament. It is unworthy of the honourable member for Monaro, whose words I often listen to with considerable interest though not necessarily with agreement, to lower the standard of debate by sneering at the physical characteristics of people. He could do better and he should feel ashamed of himself that he did not attempt to do better.

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All of us are concerned about the preservation of the best elements of the Westminster system. I am sure we realise that that system did not spring fully formed from the bosom of Abraham nor was it delivered on a tablet of stone from on high. It was built up by human beings over a period in relation to which mistakes and improvements were made. Eventually there was presented a system we are proud of and have a responsibility to uphold, support and improve so far as we are able. It is most important that in an Address-in-Reply debate we consider, even if briefly, what Parliament really means to people. I suggest that wide-ranging debate and the frankness many members have shown in the debate are a useful contribution. Although I do not agree with what the honourable member for Wakehurst said about the Independent Commission Against Corruption, I do give him credit for saying something that rocks the boat a bit. It is not a debate calculated to winning friends and influencing people within one's own ranks. Though his frankness shows his sincerity, I believe his words were not well chosen and his point of view was not well argued.

The pomp and ceremony of the opening of the Parliament needs to be assessed and reassessed from time to time. It is not good enough to say something is traditional and therefore we should revere it and keep on in the same way necessarily year after year, decade after decade, century after century. Winston Churchill, who was both a traditionalist and dissenter, remarked once that, "Tradition in the British navy was rum, sodomy and the lash". The truth of that statement is evident to anyone who has read the least little bit about the British navy, which also has, of course, many magnificent traditions. What he said was a corrective to the uncritical acceptance that because something has many good features and good values therefore we must take it holus bolus. It seems to me, for example, that it is not automatically necessary for the Speech of His Excellency the Governor to be delivered in the Legislative Council. There is no compelling constitutional or any other reason, it seems to me, why that necessarily happens.

I am not suggesting that the Legislative Assembly should always be the place in which the Governor's Speech is read but only that it is perfectly reasonable to consider that it be read in the Assembly and the Council turn about. It might be read in this place on one occasion and in the other place on the next occasion. That is an unremarkable and unoriginal thought yet it would pass for lateral thinking, given the routine view that people take about these matters. Frankly, I do not like overhearing the conversations of others but at times one cannot help it. It is clear that a number of honourable members on both sides of the House find the proceedings of the

opening of Parliament aesthetically repulsive or distasteful or not altogether meaningful. Quite a number of honourable members find the business not real or not exemplifying, characterising or expressing satisfactorily the contemporary attitude of people.

We have the echo of the past but it seems to me that we all resent or resile from feeling like slaves of the past and that the ceremony that occurs - with all due respect to the people who participated - no longer is valid or emotionally satisfying. There is less and less interest in it. This year it certainly did not feature in the media in the same way it has previously. I do not mean to say that the ceremony in itself is wrong or that we should adopt some harsh utilitarian way of conducting it. We should remember our traditions but remember also it is our responsibility to renew them and not act as though any suggestion for change is treacherous or lacks appreciation for the values of tradition.

The honourable member for Wakehurst suggested that the Medicare agreement might have been signed very late in the piece by the Minister for Health because he had been shrewdly bargaining to get more money from the Commonwealth. That is not completely untrue of course. It is completely untrue, however, to suggest, as he did, that had the Minister for Health not shown the hardihood to reject the advice of the shadow minister for health New South Wales would have been worse off. There was a haggling, a bargaining, a negotiating process, and, of course, governments, business firms and individuals involve themselves in bargaining exercises. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggested that it would be risky of the Minister for Health to set his mind against doing a deal with the present Federal Government on the basis that honest John Hewson would give him a better deal. Ultimately he opted, prudently and properly on the basis of security, to do a deal with the present Federal Government. On balance he knows very well, as does the honourable member for Wakehurst, the Commonwealth has been extremely fair and reasonable to the States on health issues.

It is not good enough for this State or any other State to blame the Commonwealth for any inadequacies or imperfections in the health delivery service in Australia, which I might say is tremendously successful by world standards. The health service consumes 8 per cent of the gross domestic product and delivers to all people with that percentage of the national income a very good service. If it was in people's minds to increase the percentage to 9 per cent or 10 per cent, it could be and should be an even better system. Perhaps that should happen. I am inclined to think it would be better if 9 per cent of the gross domestic product was spent on our health care system, but the other 1 per cent would have to be taken from somewhere else. That 1 per cent will not come like manna from heaven.

Let us compare market comparisons. Market comparison means compare what you might get from X with what you might get from Y. Some people in the United States health care system receive nothing, and others near nothing, while others are faced with the horrible prospect of paying extortionate prices to receive, admittedly, a higher level of service. We do not need to look to the United States nor do we need to look to market-based models for the delivery of health care services. In fact the Commonwealth

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Government has done the right thing for New South Wales, as has the New South Wales Minister for Health by prudently conceding that it is far better to accept the final negotiated deal with the present Federal Government rather than hope for some chimera from a possible future Liberal Federal government. Had he thought there was no chance of Dr Hewson winning the election, he might have taken a different attitude, but when it popped into his mind that the Coalition possibly could win the election he decided to act prudently, and I thank him for that.

I would like to refer to the epoch-making local government legislation. With reservations, I congratulate the Government on preparing and presenting a bill to the Parliament. I know that many consultations occurred, and I appreciate that. I accept that the job had to be done and that, inevitably, given the complexity of relations between local government and State government, it would be a difficult job. There could never be unanimity of opinion about what is appropriate. I ask the Minister for Local Government and the Government as a whole to consider, in an open-minded way, that the bill might be improved by the acceptance of possible amendments from the Government or from the Independents. I am not specifying any at the moment but I am asking the Government to be open-minded about it. I will mention just one matter that I do not believe has been addressed

adequately in the bill as it has been prepared. Consider the case of, say, the Woollahra local government authority where there is a relatively small difference between the most highly valued residential properties and the least highly valued residential properties. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Whatever kind of rating system is used in such a place, there is a relatively small gap between the highest ratepayer and the lowest ratepayer, with a relatively slight gap between the top valuation and the bottom valuation. In places that I partially represent, such as the city of Lake Macquarie and the shire of Wyong, that is very much not so. There are exceedingly valuable residential properties and there are quite a number of relatively lowly valued residential properties. The consequence can be simply this: that whatever combination of percentages one uses to set the rate - 50-50 or 30-70 - in a place where there is not very much difference between the top valuation and the bottom valuation, there is fairly near to being a rate that everyone can live with. However, in those other places, such as Wyong shire and the city of Lake Macquarie, some people whose means are no greater than, say, the average means of those in Woollahra, can pay three, four, five, six or seven times the average rate. Their means are not greater, their property values are not greater, but they substantially subsidise those who have comparatively modest properties. That is not satisfactorily taken into account by the formula that has been set so far, and it seems to me, from reading the literature, that it is just often overlooked. I hope the Government will be open-minded in considering any possible amendments to the operation of the system that would take account of that.

I have always said to people who own highly valued residential land in Lake Macquarie or Wyong that I could never go along with the idea that everyone pays on a per capita basis. It is unsatisfactory and inequitable, but basically they accept it. But they do not accept, and I agree with them, that someone who owns residential property valued at, say, \$100,000 in the city of Lake Macquarie should pay a very much higher contribution to the provision of local government services than someone who owns land somewhere else, where incomes may be very much the same yet the contributions are very, very different. This is not a matter that I believe is impossible to deal with but it is simply often overlooked. Even more significantly, I point out that in a local government area that is growing in population and where land zonings are changing there is a very great increase in the responsibilities of the local government authority. If the population increases by 30 per cent, there is a very great additional call on the local government authority to provide all sorts of civic amenities. But does the legislation that will come before this House provide that the local government authorities should have a right to adjust their incomes accordingly? It does not and, I hasten to add, it did not under the Labor Government which preceded this Government.

I say not in a partisan spirit, but, I hope, sincerely, that there is a problem here to be remedied. If the population increases by 30 per cent, lots of land ceases to be rural or non-urban and becomes residential. Houses are built and people move in, yet the overall income of the local government authority - the council - must stay the same because of the rate-pegging formula. Section 94 contributions may mitigate this inequity to some extent but, it seems to me, only to a very small extent. It is an anomaly that two places, perhaps not many kilometres apart - one fairly fully developed and populated, and one relatively undeveloped and unpopulated - can have an increase in population of 1 per cent and 30 per cent respectively, therefore a rise in responsibility of 1 per cent or 30 per cent or something fairly close to that, yet both local government authorities will have their incomes pegged at the same level, despite the difference that emerges from the growth in population and the rezoning of land. I hope that the Government will urgently consider this anomaly and other problems that will emerge in debate and will be ready, sincerely and in a spirit of non-partisan co-operation, to improve the local government legislation as presented. I do not attack that legislation at all. It has been an achievement of a kind to get it to the stage it has reached, but please do not regard it as having been written on tablets of stone. Continue the process of consultation in this place and it will be all the better as an Act.

The honourable member for Wakehurst discoursed for a time on families, and we are to have Family Week in August. I suppose August would start off with some very cold winds and every horse would have a birthday but, best of all, we are going

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to have a happy families time to sit down and consider families. Well, fair enough! I think it would be better if we considered the situation of families throughout the year. Instead of pursuing an economic agenda that

operates on the basis of accounting procedures, the Government should give consideration to families and individuals throughout the year; then we would be in a better situation. The Government inherited a State that is in pretty good shape. Okay, there are some worries about liabilities of a certain kind. I am not saying it was in perfect shape but it had a triple-A credit rating and it had had that triple-A credit rating for a long time. It is not possible to say, as it might be possible to say elsewhere, that this Government inherited a difficult situation - except in so far as it was responsible for an ideology which created difficulties that need not have existed and was ready to bend the knee to some particularly rigid types of new orthodoxies that, having been tested in the 1980s in Australia and elsewhere in the world, were shown to be far less certain or safe a guide than some people naively imagined them to be at the beginning of the 1980s.

Governments in New South Wales and, indeed, in other States of Australia have traditionally acted countercyclically. That is to say, in times of recession or unemployment they have tended to borrow money to maintain employment and the level of business activity, and to reduce bankruptcies. In more buoyant times, perhaps in periods approaching boom times, they have tended to rein in expenditure. I do not suggest that governments, of whatever political persuasion in whatever State, have always achieved the right balance. But it has generally been accepted as part of the perceived wisdom that it was sensible for governments in Australia to act countercyclically. If there was a time to trim the ship, the most appropriate time for economic reform was when people had a reasonable chance of obtaining other jobs if they were retrenched. This Government - probably sincerely, but naively and ultimately cruelly - has undertaken a program of microeconomic reform with a sort of brutal efficiency. Certainly the numbers have been reduced dramatically. I am not going to claim that changes should not have been made. Obviously new power stations should be built that require fewer personnel. The same number of people cannot be employed to run all power stations. But there are kinder ways of reducing the number of employees and of achieving microeconomic reform than the methods undertaken by this Government.

Many people I have met believe that although they were being voluntarily retrenched there were many ways in which the aggregated power of employers and the Government was used to pressure them, indeed force them, into retrenchment. Many, many people felt that way. Voluntary retrenchment was the sleeper in 1991. It was not the Labor Party's television advertising that caused many people who were expected to support the Liberal Party to reject it in 1991. The Liberal Party expected that those people who had been pressured into volunteering for microeconomic reform would quickly forget that they were the ones who had to pay. The Government did not have a long-term bottom line but an accounting bottom line that read, "If we get rid of X per cent of people, that's it". Well-paid managers were brought in to get rid of the maximum number of people in the shortest possible time. I have met a couple of them. I do not claim that these people had guilty consciences. I claim that they acted under bad procedures, had bad masters and had a bad policy to implement. Undoubtedly structural reform has been necessary, indeed essential, in Australia. However, there are far less cruel and oppressive ways of implementing it than those employed by the Government. It gives me no satisfaction to discourse on the miseries of many people who have found themselves the victims of actions that have allegedly been taken in the interests of all but that have actually resulted in the sacrifice of an unnecessary number of people to the ideology rather than to the genuine economic necessity.

Mr PACKARD (The Hills) [9.55]: I support the Government's program as outlined by the Governor. In His Excellency's Speech, the Government's economic strategies were reinforced. Necessary management objectives have been delivered at a time when the nation faces a Federal election and, as His Excellency correctly pointed out, at a time when the community at large is becoming increasingly aware of the enormous deficit in Australia's balance of payments and the structural weakness of Australia's economy. It is no secret that Federal mismanagement of the Australian economy has had a severe impact on the financial performance of New South Wales. It is extraordinary to listen to members on the other side of the House. They have got away with absolute murder. They have completely ignored the fact that their Federal colleagues have brought this nation to its knees. If Australia does not have a change of Government on 13th March, if it has three more years of socialist policies, it may never recover.

Opposition members sit on the other side of the House and pontificate about the Government having a management philosophy. It has, and it makes no apologies for it. Without those management policies, New

South Wales would be in the same position as Victoria before the landslide in the recent election. I accept that Opposition members have to step away from their Federal colleagues. How could they possibly endorse what the Federal Government is doing to the nation? Victoria was a basket case. The Labor Government there has now been defeated. Australia is a basket case. It owes \$200 billion. When the Opposition's Federal colleagues came to office the foreign debt was \$23 billion. New South Wales is the only State that is shining like a beacon to show the rest of Australia how the nation has to be turned around. If that does not happen, Australia will have an enormous number of problems. There is little doubt that since the election in 1988 this Government has led the way in responsible financial management and has set standards which other States now attempt to emulate.

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I am proud to be a member of the Government, which will implement policies of sound management and reforms culminating in greater security and quality of life for all citizens and for generations to come. These reforms will provide a level of choice and control never before experienced over goods and services received from government within the entire spectrum of education, health, community services, transport, power and water, as well as local government, thus ensuring that New South Wales citizens benefit in real and tangible ways from greater efficiencies in the public sector.

In recent days much criticism has been made of dividends paid to the Government as a result of improvements and efficiencies made in trading enterprises such as the Water Board. Indeed, the payments of tax and the contribution of dividends has enabled the Government to constrain its budget deficit, unlike the Opposition's Federal colleagues, and release funds to employ about 800 additional teachers, provide more beat police and build new hospitals. The Government's objective is to ensure that New South Wales citizens benefit in a tangible way from the greater efficiency of the public service. Reforms so far have meant that instead of being a net drain on the State Budget, government trading enterprises have become significant contributors to the funding of social and community services within the budget sector.

I hope the Government continues with privatisation, corporatisation and contracting out to private enterprise. I believe that government should be shrunk to a policy group and that all the jobs that can be done by private enterprise should be done by private enterprise. I still cannot accept that there are a number of departments in the New South Wales Government that are manufacturing items that could be manufactured by private enterprise. They are supplying services that could be supplied by private enterprise. In this building, for instance, the cleaners are on staff. What would be wrong with subcontracting the whole job out to private enterprise? Governments are for deciding direction and policy; they are not, in my view, for carrying out the work.

The Government has a commitment to reform the legal profession in order to eliminate restrictive practices, promote greater competition and accountability within the profession and provide greater choice for consumers. My investigations among my constituents reveal a major problem in the criminal justice system. What happens is that people are charged with offences and the Director of Public Prosecutions, at the Government's expense - or at the people's expense - takes up the cudgel. I am told that costs cannot be claimed against the Director of Public Prosecutions. Recently I was told about an instance of \$60,000 of a person's hard earned money being spent defending his good name. He won the case 11 to one and he still ripped up \$60,000. If reform is to take place in respect of the legal profession - and I am sure the Premier, coming from that profession, would have much more knowledge of the area than I - the aspect that needs investigation is how people who are forced to defend themselves can be insulated against the cost of that defence.

The Government's concern for fair treatment for all people must relate to all areas. It has prompted work on a variety of amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act which will be introduced in this session of Parliament, including amendments prohibiting discrimination on the ground of age. I have been privileged to sit on the Regulation Review Committee, which I thoroughly enjoy, and I have been wondering whether business discrimination should also be included. More and more, it seems to me, businesses are being discriminated against and they are our only hope to get us back to full employment as a nation - for instance, the

industry that I come from, the motor industry. When the honourable member for Ashfield, the now stumbling, bumbling shadow attorney general, was the stumbling, bumbling Minister for Consumer Affairs, 25 per cent of all used cars changed hands privately. Since the introduction of the Consumer Protection Act, 65 per cent of all cars now change hands privately and there is no warranty between private vendors. Only the retail car industry is supplying warranties in the car business today. Anyone who buys a car at auction is not covered by warranty. Anyone who buys a car privately is not covered by warranty. Private sector sales account for approximately 70 per cent of all cars that change hands. The private retail car dealer is being discriminated against. He or she is the only person in New South Wales providing a car warranty.

Do you know, Mr Acting-Speaker - and I notice that at this moment the Minister for Consumer Affairs is sitting at the table - that auctions now have finance people to sign customers up for finance; they have NRMA inspections now; they own the cars they are selling; and there is no warranty. The only people giving warranty are in the employment section of the car business - the franchise dealers and all the used car dealers. The Minister is currently investigating the Motor Dealers Act. I implore the Minister to make it a level playing field. If a vehicle changes hands the same rules should apply to those who sell vehicles privately as apply to those who sell vehicles commercially. How can it be that a person who sets up a business and employs people is differentiated against and penalised because he happens to be a businessman?

Where employment and economic development are concerned, the persistence of unemployment cannot be addressed without the constructive intervention of the new Federal Government. When the new Federal Government comes to office, when Paul wishes us luck as he waves us goodbye and John takes over the cudgels, it is very important that, as a nation, we address those issues that will result in full employment again. Nobody outside Australia would believe that, as a nation of between 17.5 and 19 million people, with somewhere between 7.5 million and 8.5 million people in the work force, we cannot employ anybody who wants a job. Nobody would believe it. We have built a culture and a structure in this nation that to be unemployed is acceptable; but it is terrible for those people who are unemployed. Honourable members have no idea how tough it is not

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being able to get a job, nor having an expectation of getting a job. How can such people rebuild family culture? How can they build belief in themselves? How can they rebuild self-esteem when there is no prospect of their having a job next year or the year after? There are young people of 25 and 30 years of age who left the education system seven and eight years ago who have never had a job. That is an absolute disgrace and an indictment of this nation. One matter that the Government must consider is unemployment. If there is any truth, it is the current Liberal philosophy that is pinned on every wall in every campaign office: "The answer is jobs, stupid". That is what the forthcoming election is all about. It is about bringing the nation back to work. With the help of the Federal Government, the New South Wales Government will do everything in its power to employ the residents of New South Wales because without employment we have no future as a nation.

That brings me to industrial relations. The shining beacon of industrial relations reform, of course, was the former Minister for Industrial Relations, the now Premier, who did an absolutely outstanding job against all odds. The lot opposite revealed their colours. Michael Easson is standing outside the door saying, "Slip back in there and give them another serve". The owners of the Labor Party came out of the woodwork like you would not believe. A newspaper report reads, "Unions rush to retrieve lost payroll deductions". In Victoria, where it is to become law that the payment of union fees is not mandatory, half of the union membership stopped paying them. Half the number of teachers in Victoria stopped paying their dues the moment it became optional to do so. At some stage the Labor Party's owners, its trainers, its bosses, the people who issue instructions to it, will have to earn the right to represent their members; and down the track there will be a better, stronger, much more useful trade union movement than there is today. Yes, there is a place for the trade union movement. It has done marvellous work in this nation but it should never be mandatory to belong to a union.

The trade union representatives should be talking to their members about the benefits of being in their union; not standing over them and saying, "No ticket, no start. If you do not sign up, you cannot be a teacher. If you do not sign up, you cannot go on to the job". Those days are gone. The New South Wales Labor Party's owners will have to work out how to get themselves a place in the system. They will have to represent their

members. Some of them will do a fine job and some of them will fall by the wayside, where they should go because they have been holding this nation back for 12 years at least, if not more. In my view, Malcolm Fraser was given a mandate to fix this situation years ago but did not do it. This time, whether you like them or not, Dr John Hewson and Mr Howard together will fix it. We must be able to pay people for performance and we have to be able to have individual enterprises working together for the benefit of the nation.

As a nation we will take marvellous steps forward and have full employment a lot quicker by not having a trade-off deal with a centralised wage-fixing system that bears no resemblance to the way the world operates today. Australia must adopt world best practices. This nation is capable of taking on those practices and in many areas already has them. That approach is not helped by collective bargaining, groups of people who, because the nation is in the middle of a Federal election, are standing over employers and saying that they will not work on Monday and they will strike for an extra 6 per cent. They overlook the fact that recently they achieved another 2 per cent for superannuation, taking the total to 5 per cent. If the 6 per cent were granted, they would actually have an 11 per cent increase in wages. If the socialists are re-elected on 13th March, they will take the superannuation levy of 9 per cent and effectively there will be a 15 per cent pay rise in the middle of the biggest recession in 60 years, at a time when labour costs should be decreasing, not increasing. World best practice has labour costs cheaper than they are being delivered in the workplace in this country, and people of Australia can do better than they are doing now.

The Government has established a special committee to undertake a fundamental review of administrative and statutory arrangements for management, regulation and distribution of water resources in New South Wales. The Government will establish also a trust to address problems in the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment area, which borders my electorate. It is important that the beautiful Hawkesbury river is not destroyed. I have misgivings about the coalition policy on urban consolidation. Urban consolidation is absolutely necessary and the infrastructure is in place for it. The policy can be properly managed and worked. However, I would welcome an easing up of the policy regarding a second house in everyone's backyard. That is the policy of the Labor Party also. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

It is important to give back to local councils the authority to decide whether or not a development involving the construction of a lot of townhouses in the middle of quarter-acre or five-acre blocks of land is an overuse of the site and or whether it does not fit into the local environment. I believe the planning legislation should be amended to allow councils to modify some developments that are taking place in areas such as Castle Hill and West Pennant Hills. Should we have dual occupancy houses behind the original houses on a quarter-acre block? Sometimes those developments can be seen to be an overuse of the site. There must always be flexibility. Bob Carr does 180 degree turns all the time; perhaps we should not be quite as flexible as he is, but there must be flexibility to allow the State Government to work with and help local government. One of the great ideas on which the Governor and the Premier are very keen is the city west strategy, which will be the focus for urban renewal in 1993 and beyond. That strategy will

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incorporate a number of projects, such as the redevelopment of Ultimo-Pymont, the casino, and the Eveleigh railway yards, and will transform existing underutilised industrial land into an innovative combination of residential, commercial and cultural facilities serviced by improved transport links. That is an astounding and outstanding step forward.

In keeping with the policy to make government instrumentalities more accountable and accessible, the first comprehensive review of the Local Government Act for 70 years has been completed. The Local Government Bill 1993 will be introduced into the Parliament in this session by the Hon. Gerry Peacocke. In line with the Government's clean air policy a further program to reduce motor vehicle emissions will be evaluated and given a trial. I made a suggestion to the former Minister for the Environment, which he did not accept; I am sure that one day, as part of the pink slip registration procedure, emission control equipment on vehicles will also have to be tested. Service stations which issue pink slips would be asked to buy a simple engine analyser, so that at least once a year the emission equipment on every vehicle could be checked to ensure that it is working properly.

Part of the problem with current emission equipment is that it is not serviced properly and does not work efficiently. The need to amplify and upgrade existing traffic routes and to encourage private sector involvement in the funding of toll roads has been an ongoing strategy of the Government. The people of western Sydney would be in a mess today without the benefit of the western distributor. They will benefit even further when the new Glebe Island Bridge is opened in 1996 and the F2 freeway is finally constructed. The F6 has already been constructed. Government after government has argued about the F2. Surely now is the time and the environment to stop disfranchising the people from The Hills district and build that freeway. I believe there is overwhelming support for the project in the community and that the Government will be applauded by the people of New South Wales if and when it builds the F2, which is vital to that region.

The Government will put money aside to help indigenous people and will ensure that the assessment of Aboriginal land claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act is made justly and expeditiously. I support that move because this matter is becoming a little bit of a joke around the town. For instance, there is a park at Kenthurst which has not caused any problems to anyone. Kenthurst pony club has operated at the park ever since I have been in the area, that is, since 1970. Suddenly, because this is a vacant piece of land - guess what? An Aboriginal land claim has been made in respect of the park used by the local pony club. The Government has a responsibility to all people. It has a responsibility to the indigenous people, but also to everyone else in order to be fair. It is important that the Aboriginal Land Rights Act operates justly so that when a claim is lodged, a decision is made as to whether or not it is a just claim and the matter is determined expeditiously so that everyone can get on with their lives.

At present the Government is considering the report of the Joint Select Committee upon the Management of the Parliament, on which I had the privilege to serve. A proposal will be presented to the Parliament this year. It is absolutely vital that this issue of managing the Parliament is dealt with. The Parliament costs a significant amount of money to run. I am not convinced that the end users - the constituents - are getting good value. If the decision were made to do so, every electoral office in New South Wales could be linked with every bureaucratic office and ministerial office. I foresee the day when a member of the public will be able to use the local member's office as a source of information. The public will be able to go to that office and ask for the current situation on a specific subject; a person in the office will pull up the information on a computer, print out the latest press release, call it up on a master computer and obtain all the information required. In 1993 it is still terribly difficult to get information and answers. The world has made a technological turnaround, but at this stage the New South Wales Parliament has not caught up with that technology. It is time that under management of the Parliament legislation money was put aside to upgrade the technology available in members' offices. It is the members of the Parliament, and the community, who should be benefiting the most from the Parliament of New South Wales. It is their Parliament and they must have their benefits maximised before anyone does anything else.

The Government is also committed to continuing to look at the deregulation of industry. It is important for small business to get a go, and to get our support. The former Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, the Hon. Gerry Peacocke, introduced legislation dealing with tenants in shopping centres, but it is no longer on the agenda. When John Hewson gets into government and he eliminates payroll tax and excise duties and reduces the cost of doing business in Australia, that cost will have to be passed on to local shopkeepers. It will have to come through the shopping centres - the Westfields of the world - and rents will have to be reduced. The truth of the matter is that if every corner store in Australia employed one more person, unemployment would be eliminated. If necessary we will introduce legislation to impose a minimum standard on landlords. Landlords in a commercial area have a special zoning anyway. They have a benefit - their land is worth more than the house next door. They should have to pass that benefit on to their business tenants. We need a business revival in this nation. The Government will continue to put people first in health.

I pay tribute to the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services, whose committee I have the honour to chair. I pay tribute also to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Arts.

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Without his foresight we would not be building the new teaching hospital at Liverpool or the children's hospital at Westmead. It is all very well for people to say we are doing it; when we came to government the Minister

for State Development and Minister for Arts had the courage and the foresight, despite a fair bit of flak from the socialists opposite, to realise that Westmead and Liverpool were the places to build these hospitals. I am delighted to see in the gallery Chifley Liberal supporters from the western region of Sydney. I hope they will bring home the seat of Greenway at the next election.

I am having withdrawal symptoms this year because I am not knocking on doors in Greenway. There are seats that will come to the Liberal Party at the election. People such as those in the gallery this evening have worked year in, year out to push out the bounds of conservatism. They are there when people say, "There are one million unemployed people and we have a \$200 billion deficit. Surely that is not the best we can do for this nation". It is not the best we can do for this nation. On 13th March voters will do exactly as voters did in Victoria, in Western Australia and in Tasmania. When the time comes voters will do exactly the same in South Australia as they have done twice in New South Wales. Honourable members opposite say, "We nearly won". But the Government is still in office, and it will remain in government. The people of New South Wales will be thankful for the policies of Nick Greiner.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Hazzard): Order! I call the honourable member for Kiama to order.

Mr PACKARD: The people of New South Wales will be thankful for the policies of John Fahey, the present Premier. They will be thankful for the strength that Wal Murray has shown all the way through. Australia will start to come out of the recession and individuals will be free to make something of themselves. We will have small government, not big government, that will allow the ordinary man in the street to work to make something of himself again. This State will come out of recession quicker because the Government of the day, the Fahey-Murray Government, has put in place policies that will see this State in marvellous stead. At the end of the day the nation will give this Government credit. New South Wales is, and will remain for a long time, in safe hands because of the good management and good policies of this Government. I support the New South Wales Government's program for 1993-94.

Mr HUNTER (Lake Macquarie) [10.25]: Yesterday in the Legislative Council Chamber I listened intently to the Governor's Speech, and I felt pity for the Governor. This Government, which holds the Crown in such high esteem, stooped to injecting politics into the Governor's Speech. The Government could not resist bringing the Queen's representative in New South Wales into a Federal election campaign. I thought the Government knew the protocol that should be followed on such an occasion, but it stooped low and brought the Governor into the Federal campaign. Obviously the speech was written by a Liberal government. After taking time to carefully read the Governor's Speech in the *Votes and Proceedings*, I could see that there was nothing much in the Government's plans for the next 12 months that will benefit the people of Lake Macquarie. I am sure my colleague the honourable member for Wallsend, who is in the gallery with his wife Trudy, would agree with me that there was not much in what the Governor said yesterday that will improve the lot of the people in Lake Macquarie.

Reading through the Governor's Speech I found mention that the Government was hoping to improve sewerage services to the people of New South Wales during the next 12 months. I thought that might help people in Lake Macquarie, because at the moment the Hunter fringe area sewerage project - which was started by the previous Labor Government - is under way. The current Government, to its credit, has continued that scheme. But there was only a fleeting mention in the Governor's Speech of improved sewerage services. I would like to draw to the attention of the Government the problems we are having on the western side of Lake Macquarie as a result of the construction of the Westlakes sewerage project. I draw to the attention of the relevant Minister, if he is listening, the fact that certain areas on the western side of Lake Macquarie will not be covered under the Westlakes sewerage scheme. One such area is Cooranbong, which is a growing community, one of the first towns to be established on the western side of Lake Macquarie, more than 100 years ago. Unfortunately, the Government has seen fit to give it a priority two classification. It has said that that town will gain sewerage services only if there is a saving in the overall project.

Again I would like to draw to the Minister's attention the problems of Cooranbong. The town is based on Dora Creek, which flows directly into Lake Macquarie. Independent tests of the creek water have found E. coli

counts greater than 800 per 100 millilitres of presumptive E. coli. People in the area that I speak to tell me that that water is unfit for bathing. I have drawn this to the Minister's attention in questions on notice. I hope and pray that the Minister will be able to provide some extra funding to ensure that Cooranbong is connected to the Westlakes sewerage scheme as it progresses over the next four or five years.

Another problem that has arisen with the Westlakes sewerage service is the sewer service access charge. A number of home owners on the western side of Lake Macquarie have been forced to pay a fee of approximately \$3,000 to connect to the sewerage scheme. Some of those people have only just constructed their homes in the past six or 12 months. With the sewer service not being available, they were forced to install septic tank systems, which also cost approximately \$3,000. So, the people at

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Lake Macquarie have been caught in what we call the sewer trap. On the one hand they have been forced to install septic tanks because the Government has not completed the sewerage scheme; on the other hand, the Government is forcing them to pay \$3,000 to connect to the sewerage scheme. So in a period of just 12 months those people have had to pay \$6,000 to dispose of their effluent. I again draw this to the attention of the Minister and ask him to investigate this problem and to give some fee relief to the people on the western side of Lake Macquarie.

The Governor said also that "the State has been able to constrain its budget deficit and release funds to employ some 800 additional teachers, put more police on the beat and build new hospitals". Though the Government may be creating jobs in those areas, it is certainly not creating jobs in Lake Macquarie. I draw the attention of the House to the plight of mineworkers in the Hunter region, where the Government's decision last year to close Newvale colliery and to wind back Awaba colliery resulted in the loss of more than 200 jobs. Though the Governor praised the Government for creating jobs, in Lake Macquarie alone in the past few months more than 200 jobs have been lost in the coalmining industry as a direct result of this Government's decision to close down State-owned mines. The unemployed Newvale coalminers are prepared to dig into their retrenchment pay and use it to lease back the mine from the Government to enable them to once again find employment. The Government has not assisted them at all. The Electricity Commission of New South Wales has stopped all negotiations with coalminers. It is not willing to give them a fair go, to let them reopen the mine to see if they can make it a viable proposition, which I am sure, if given the chance, the miners could do.

I shall now address law and justice. The Governor said, "The Government will streamline the Legal Aid Commission and make it more efficient and accountable and ensure that it operates within its means". I do not know what is meant by "ensure that it operates within its means", but from the complaints that I have received in my office since the beginning of the year it is obvious that the Government has frozen funding to the Legal Aid Commission. I know of a number of genuine cases in relation to which people have been refused legal aid. One such case is that of a Mr Curtis who lives at Booragul. Mr Curtis was involved in a motor vehicle accident. Apparently he was driving through an intersection at Fennell Bay when a stolen vehicle, which was being pursued by police, slammed into his vehicle. As a result of the accident Mr Curtis suffered a neck injury.

More than 12 months have elapsed since the accident and six months have passed since Mr Curtis applied for legal aid in October 1992. His application for legal aid has been rejected. He is an innocent victim. Both he and his wife do not enjoy good health. Since the accident Mr Curtis has been unable to work. His wife has cancer, and the stress and strain of their ill-health has forced them to place both their children in foster homes. Last week Mrs Curtis came to my office and told me that as her husband's application for legal aid had been rejected she has had to sell her wedding rings to try to finance the court case. This disgusting anomaly of innocent victims of crime being refused legal aid should be addressed. It makes a mockery of the statement made by the Governor on behalf of the Government in this regard.

The Governor spoke about streamlining and improving the court system. I remind the Minister for Justice of the Westlakes court house proposal, for which a site was dedicated in 1980. The former Labor Government made a commitment to construct a court house on the site but unfortunately Labor lost office and the Greiner Government scrapped the project. Only yesterday I received correspondence from the Minister for Justice about the Westlakes court house project which demonstrated that over a number of years the project has lost

priority. It has dropped each year since the Liberal Government came to office - from No. 1 in 1988 under the previous Labor Government to No. 4 when the Greiner Government was elected. It has now dropped to No. 7. It seems to me that the Government is not genuine. It can find money to construct a court house in Tamworth but it cannot find funds to construct a court house in an area where land has been dedicated for such a facility.

Further in the Governor's Speech mention was made of what the Government intended to achieve in the next few years. The Governor said, "Better roads, better hospitals, cleaner drinking water, less polluted river ways as well as Olympic standard sporting facilities will also be the result". He went on to say, "The Government will continue with its commitment to the Sydney Olympic 2000 bid". I totally support the Government in its bid for the year 2000 Olympic Games. As honourable members can see, I am wearing a 2000 Olympics badge. During my travels abroad, when I am lucky enough to be able to visit other countries, I always wear the badge to try to promote our bid for the year 2000 Olympics. However, I am amazed that while the Government is spending millions of dollars promoting the Sydney Olympic 2000 bid, the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing is cutting sport and recreation grants to our grass roots sporting groups - in my case a cut of almost \$10,000 in funding that the department advised would be forthcoming.

Last year the former Minister was most generous; my electorate received \$37,500. This year the department advised me that the amount would increase to approximately \$40,000. A list of worthy sporting projects was submitted but unfortunately the Minister announced last week that funding to the Lake Macquarie electorate had been cut back to a measly \$31,000 - a reduction of about \$9,000. I have made known my disgust to a number of disappointed sporting groups that the Government can spend millions of dollars on the Sydney Olympic 2000 bid yet cut funding to grass roots sporting groups. In his Speech, when speaking about environment and water resource development issues, the Governor said:

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Penalties for marine pollution offences will be increased. An Estuary Management Policy will also be put into effect for the integrated, responsible and ecologically sustainable use of the State's estuaries.

Unfortunately, for a number of years under that scheme Lake Macquarie has missed out. I ask the Government to look closely at its commitment to provide funding to Lake Macquarie for such purposes. I know that many millions of dollars have been poured into the lakes on the Central Coast, but as yet Lake Macquarie has not received such a windfall. Lake Macquarie has had a total catchment management committee up and running for almost 12 months. It has highlighted many areas around the lake where work needs to be done, and I am sure that the people of Lake Macquarie would be most appreciative of Government funding for that scheme. The Governor said further:

The NSW Government, in cooperation with the Commonwealth and other States, will develop a national framework for the management and rehabilitation of contaminated sites. The Government will also consult widely with the community in the development of a strategy to combat lead contamination.

The issues of lead and lead contamination are most important to the people of Lake Macquarie. Often in this House I have spoken about an area at Boolaroo on the northern shore of Lake Macquarie where the Pasminco company has a lead-zinc smelter, which has been in operation for about 100 years. The soil in the surrounding area is contaminated with lead, and the children in those areas have high concentrations of lead in their blood. Honourable members may remember that I drew to the attention of the Minister the situation regarding children attending Boolaroo school, and the Minister was forced to relocate those children to another school in order to decontaminate the Boolaroo school. Approximately \$250,000 to \$300,00 was spent on decontaminating the school and making it fit for the children. It is amazing in this day and age to have to move children out of a school in order to decontaminate it. It is a major problem.

The Government said it will develop a strategy to combat lead contamination, but as yet there have been only promises. The Minister for the Environment visited Lake Macquarie in early February. I appreciate him coming to my electorate and speaking to the concerned citizens of Argenton, Boolaroo and Speers Point, the

three affected areas. Those people put a number of proposals to the Minister. I intend to read the proposals and I ask the Minister to consider them and come up with some answers for the people. These points were put to the Minister by the Mayor of Lake Macquarie, Alderman Carley, when we met at Lake Macquarie City Council. They were developed by a community committee representing a broad cross-section of the community, which was set up by the council, which worked with the council in putting this proposal to the Minister. The proposal reads:

1. To date no thorough survey of lead in soil has been conducted and reliance has been placed on the Public Health Unit's 200 metre grid which gives an indication of levels only. Accurate detailed information is required to properly assess the extent and associated risk. This priority is clearly identified in the document 'Living With Lead'.

[Extension of time agreed to.]

2. The effect of lead on young children in this area is of such importance and magnitude that there is an urgent need for the Government to initiate an overall management plan for lead remediation and protection of the community. The delay in the release of the State Government's Position Paper on Lead and the implementation of an overall management plan is causing considerable stress and anxiety within the community.

I point out to the Government that since last October the Minister for the Environment has been promising the position paper on lead to both myself and the honourable member for Wallsend, whose electorate is also contaminated by fallout. Finally, after some prodding, he agreed to a briefing on the position paper by officers of the Environment Protection Authority. The honourable member for Wallsend and I met with the EPA officers in the second week of December, and they put forward the position paper, which sounded very good. We were in agreement with what they proposed. They said it was going to Cabinet the following week and with Cabinet approval they would see it implemented early in 1993 and that by June 1993 they would be in a position, after wide consultation with the public through a task force, to come forward with recommendations for legislation.

When the Minister visited my electorate a few weeks ago the position paper had turned into a joint discussion paper with the Department of Health and the EPA. I believe it has still not been presented to Cabinet. I think they will spend six months discussing it and then set up a task force which may recommend, in another six months, some action. Something needs to be done. I ask the Government to carry on with its original course. Do not make it a discussion paper; make it a position paper. I am sure the Opposition will support the Government in trying to contain the lead contamination pollution in the State. Many speakers in the Address-in-Reply debate have mentioned lead contamination in the course of the day. It affects not only the Lake Macquarie electorate but many electorates in the inner city where lead in leaded petrol has polluted the environment.

The Governor said, "My Government's aim is to provide a better and safer road system", and went on to mention the amount of money to be allocated to roads this year and the sizeable funding boost to councils under the extended 3 x 3 program. I remind the Minister that though he promised many years ago that the 3 x 3 program would provide extra funding for roads and he has allocated 3 x 3 funding to councils, he has been cutting the capital grants for road improvements. So 3 x 3 money - a tax of 3c a litre over three years introduced by the Government - has not been extra funding at all. The Minister has been cutting back on the money granted to councils and topping it up with the proceeds from the 3 x 3 program. Overall, the funds given to Lake Macquarie council have remained fairly static over the period that this Government has been in office, and certainly since the 3 x 3 levy was introduced.

Earlier today I had the opportunity to speak

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about George Booth Drive. The Governor said that the Government will build a better and safer road system. I pointed out earlier that George Booth Drive is a narrow two-lane road leading from a four-lane section to the Newcastle to Sydney freeway. When the freeway opens in December 1993 it will channel a heavy volume of traffic on to George Booth Drive. George Booth Drive is nothing better than a tar-sealed goat track. I ask the

Deputy Premier to come forward with the \$8 million shortfall identified by the Roads and Traffic Authority as necessary to make George Booth Drive a safe road. I remind the Deputy Premier of my earlier comments and ask him to come through with that money fairly quickly. Lake Macquarie council needs time to plan a major roadworks project worth \$8 million. It would certainly create jobs. If the Government is genuine about creating jobs, it could push that money into local roads to provide a safe road so that when the freeway opens there will be no accidents.

The Governor in his Speech referred to the Local Government Act and the Local Government Bill, which honourable members will debate later in the session. I would like to point out to the Government the problems suffered by many people in Lake Macquarie. The Minister for Consumer Affairs and Assistant Minister for Education would know of the massive increases in waterfront property rates; I believe she has relatives living in my electorate or who visit my electorate. They can certainly advise her of the astronomical cost of rates on waterfront properties at Lake Macquarie. The increase occurred because the Government eliminated rate-pegging of individual blocks and pegged the total income of councils. When new valuations were issued there were massive hikes in valuations and in rates. Unfortunately, the proposed Local Government Bill does not address the problems sufficiently. It will not help many people living in my electorate - many senior citizens, pensioners, who have lived on the lake for many years. In one case a widower with a limited budget spends almost half his income on council rates each year. I am sure many amendments will be made to the Local Government Bill when it is introduced. The Governor referred also to education and training. I am sure the Minister for Consumer Affairs as the Assistant Minister for Education will be very interested in what I am saying. The Governor said:

One of the most important things that the Government can do is build the foundations for the future growth and prosperity of the State and its citizens. Investing in young people is investing in the State's future, and the Government will continue to give high priority to the education and training of our younger generation.

I congratulate the Government. The Minister announced only last week that she would be allocating up to about \$3 million for a new Barnsley school. I appreciate what the Government has done, but I remind it that the present Barnsley school is located on a very bad site. It is a clay pan. When I visited the school on Monday after only a small shower of rain there was flooding and children were walking around with their shoes off so they could go from one classroom to another. High voltage power lines also surround that site. I have asked the Minister questions on notice, the answers to which I am sure will be forthcoming, about the dangers of high voltage power lines and the links to cancer in children. I am suggesting to the Minister that rather than the new Barnsley school being built on a different site and being up and running by approximately the middle of 1995 - I would love the Minister to come to my electorate and open that school but as the next State election is due in March 1995 and the likelihood of the Government surviving is slim - she should fast-track that development so that it is up and running by June 1994. Taking into consideration all the problems we have with the current site, I think it is wrong to leave children being educated on that site. I believe that there are future plans to longwall mine under the existing site so that will further complicate the current flooding problems.

At Toronto there is an annex of the Glendale TAFE. The staff at that annex do a good job but, of course, it is small. The Westlakes area, as the Minister knows, is fast growing - in fact, it is the fastest growing area in the Hunter region, as identified by the latest census figures. A full-blown TAFE college is needed in the area. I believe that that is the feeling of the director of the Hunter Institute of Technology and other people within that institute. A new TAFE is needed on the western side of the lake, somewhere between the present Glendale campus and the Wyong campus. I will be suggesting to the Government that there is plenty of government land at Morisset close to a major railway station which is almost in the centre of the facilities at Wyong and Glendale. I will be writing to the Minister soon putting forward some suggestions in that regard. I hope she will take my suggestions into consideration.

The Governor also mentioned in his Speech the area of health. He said, "My Government puts people first in health care". He went on to say, "New hospitals are being built". He did not mention anything about new hospitals being built in Lake Macquarie; in fact, the only thing the Government has done in the health area

in the Hunter region is close hospitals and put more people in the unemployment queues. I hope the Minister for Health is listening. A public hospital facility is needed on the western side of the lake. The only two facilities available at the moment are the new John Hunter Hospital at Rankin Park, which is some 40 minutes travelling time from the centre of the Westlakes, and the Wyong public hospital to the south, which is again about 40 minutes away from the western side of the lake. We have ambulance services but no casualty ward; we are in need of a 24-hour casualty ward. We need some public hospital beds on the western side of Lake Macquarie. That was acknowledged by the previous Labor Government. A commitment was given to build a \$2.5 million polyclinic which would have provided those facilities. With the coming in of the Greiner Government that commitment was dropped. At this stage the Government is only interested in closing hospitals and facilities in the Hunter region

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rather than opening them. I feel sorry for the Governor in that I think he was drawn into the political debate. Overall, there was nothing much in that Speech which was prepared by the Liberal Government which will benefit the people of Lake Macquarie. I am sad about that, but I will continue to fight to try to gain those facilities which I believe are needed to get that extra funding into the electorate - something the Government is ignoring. It is a shame that the Government did not pay more attention to the worthy causes I have outlined to help the people in the Lake Macquarie area.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Rixon.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

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