

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 13th October, 1993

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Report: Neary/SRA

Mr Speaker, in accordance with section 31 of the Ombudsman's Act 1974, laid upon the table the special report to Parliament entitled the "Neary SRA Report" dated 12th October, 1993.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES COST

Mr CARR: My question is directed to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Why did the Premier deceive the people of New South Wales about the real cost of the Olympic Games?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection from the Government benches. Honourable members will hear the question in silence. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr CARR: My question is directed to the Premier and Minister for the Olympic Games. Why did the Premier deceive the people of New South Wales about the real cost of the Olympics Games? Now that he has admitted that the real cost is \$3 billion, will he assure the House that the Games will break even?

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

Mr FAHEY: I say again that bipartisanship does not last long when the real deceiver is the Leader of the Opposition. Of course, he demonstrates that time and time again.

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

Mr FAHEY: Not so long ago the Minister for the Environment went to the Leader of the Opposition and said that, at the request of the trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, something ought to be built in the Games area that was in the interests of the community and the public.

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

Mr FAHEY: He sought the support, on the basis of, I might add, certain Labor Party people who were part of that proposal ensuring that the community might benefit from it.

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

Mr FAHEY: That weekend the Leader of the Opposition tried to disguise it all. He was ticked off for that by former Premier Wran and others. Once again it seems that as soon as he gets hold of something he lets it go.

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

Mr FAHEY: In relation to the structure of the statutory authority I spoke of in the House yesterday, I went to the Leader of the Opposition and said that there ought to be a structure that he might consider long before going to Monte Carlo -

Mr A. S. Aquilina: On a point of order. The Premier was asked whether he could assure the House that the cost of the Olympic Games would not blow out.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Eastwood to order. It is difficult to follow a point of order when members continually interject, though I have grave doubts as to whether there is a point of order involved in what the honourable member is endeavouring to put. Nevertheless, I will not tolerate continued interjections from the Government benches. I ask honourable members to give their support and enable question time to proceed in an orderly fashion. The honourable member for St Marys has the call and he will finish his point of order as quickly as possible.

Mr A. S. Aquilina: Thank you for your indulgence. I ask that the Premier be directed to get to the point and answer the question that was asked of him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order, as the honourable member knows. I am sure the Premier heard the question perfectly. I call the honourable member for Coogee to order for the second time.

Mr FAHEY: As I said, long before the decision on the Games the Government sought, in the interests of bipartisanship, to inform the Opposition -

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

Mr FAHEY: - and others of the structure that was there to give them an opportunity to have input.

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

Mr FAHEY: A week later the Leader of the Opposition was telling the world on radio and everywhere else what the structure should be, and seeking to claim credit for it.

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

Mr FAHEY: The budget bid for the Games was prepared under complete scrutiny and in a very responsible fashion. I add that a briefing of some hours duration, involving the Leader of the Opposition, took place.

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

Mr FAHEY: That briefing included the Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing, senior public servants -

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

Mr FAHEY: Those who were involved in the finance commission of the bid company included some of the most senior accountants in this country and all of them capable people. An opportunity was provided to the Opposition for questions to be raised. The same briefing was given to the Independents. Questions could have been raised at that time.

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

Mr FAHEY: It was made abundantly clear at that briefing that the budget of \$1.7 billion was to fund the staging of the Olympic Games -

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

Mr FAHEY: It in no way related to what was released on 9th September with respect to the Homebush Bay development.

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

Mr FAHEY: The \$807 million was made public. In fact, a display in this regard was featured in the foyer of this Parliament and at the Royal Easter Show. So much for best kept secrets.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES COST

Mr CARR: I ask a supplementary question. In view of the Premier's answer, does the \$3 billion budget include all interest and debt servicing charges?

Mr FAHEY: Again, the Leader of the Opposition wants to play games with this whole process.

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

Mr FAHEY: It is clear that the Opposition does not support the Games.

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

Mr FAHEY: I know that the Leader of the Opposition does not support the Games, though many members on the Opposition benches do.

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

Mr FAHEY: Those Opposition members came to the Government before and after Sydney's successful result and made it abundantly clear that they are supportive of the Games.

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

Mr FAHEY: The Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that those very good and capable people - the public servants and the people in the private sector -

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

Mr FAHEY: Only two weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition was casting aspersions on those people.

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

Mr FAHEY: Only two weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition praised Rod McGeoch and the finance commission for the work they had done, on which he was fully briefed. Perhaps he was asleep at the time; I would not know. The Leader of the Opposition was given plenty of opportunities to go through that information thoroughly.

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

Mr FAHEY: Other members on the Opposition bench must have been asleep with him. It is obvious from all the figures available that the public understands that the staging of the Games will cost \$1.7 billion.

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

Mr FAHEY: There are other documents with respect to other matters.

HOME BUSH BAY DEVELOPMENT

Mr FRASER: I address my question without notice to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports. Will the Minister advise on the progress of the development of sporting facilities and remediation work at Homebush Bay? Is the Government's capital works at Homebush an extension of the previous Labor Government's rejuvenation of the area?

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

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Mr ARMSTRONG: I thank the honourable member for Coffs Harbour for his question and for his active interest in the provision of modern residential, sporting and recreational facilities for the Homebush area of Sydney. When completed the Homebush Bay redevelopment will be a jewel in the crown of rejuvenation of that part of Sydney. It will represent one of the truly great urban renewals of any great city anywhere in the world. This is no new revelation; it is not a sudden rush of blood decision. It is a longstanding strategy which this Government has had and progressed.

The renewal and redevelopment of Homebush Bay has a long history, predating the Olympic bid by more than a decade. I remind the Leader of the Opposition of his party's involvement in the project. The Labor State Government of 1978 announced that a sports stadium and recreation area would be constructed at Homebush Bay. This later became the State Sports Centre. It was completed in 1984. In February 1983 work commenced on Bicentennial Park, which was finally opened in January 1988. When the coalition Government came to office in March 1988 it remained committed to Homebush Bay's renewal. It continued the remediation work at the site, by pursuing heritage and conservation studies,

and by constructing the athletic and aquatic centre and other recreational facilities.

Homebush Bay has always formed part of this Government's comprehensive program of urban renewal, I must emphasise, irrespective of the outcome of the Olympics bid. We were always going to spend \$807 million there, irrespective of the Olympics. Just because Homebush Bay forms part of the Olympic facilities does not mean that it is a part of the Olympic budget any more than Darling Harbour is. Darling Harbour is to be the venue for a number of Olympic events. That might be news to the Leader of the Opposition. For him now to feign surprise at the potential cost of the Homebush Bay redevelopment is nothing more than an unconvincing act of guile and deceit.

The House can be well and truly assured that the figure of \$807 million for the renewal of Homebush Bay came as no surprise to the Leader of the Opposition. He knew of that degree of expenditure from the detailed briefings that he received, just as anyone who was closely involved with the Olympic bid knew. The Leader of the Opposition knew right throughout the bid because he received full briefings on that \$807 million. The former Labor Government was instrumental in commencing the redevelopment of Homebush Bay.

The Leader of the Opposition is now trying to mislead the Parliament and the people of New South Wales and act from a position of ignorance. His ignorance is exemplified by his incapacity to be able to convince anybody of the stories he has been trying to drag around for the last couple of days.

Mr Gibson: He has convinced you.

Mr ARMSTRONG: We will talk about the honourable member afterwards. Twelve months ago the State Government released the master plan for Homebush Bay. At that time the renewal of Homebush Bay was already well under way, with funds of \$300 million committed to stage one of the renewal program and work started on the construction of the international athletic and aquatic centres. Also, work had already started on the rehabilitation and remediation of the degraded land around the site.

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

Mr ARMSTRONG: In case the Leader of the Opposition and the media need reminding, the master plan was a public document. I emphasise that it was no secret. It was exhibited at no less than 11 city and suburban locations - including shopping centres and libraries - and right here in Parliament House. Its release received widespread media coverage at the time. It is nothing short of outrageous to suggest that we have concealed in any way the cost of the Olympic Games. We have always been committed to the redevelopment of Homebush Bay, started by Labor and given greater importance by this Government. We have always been clear about the cost of redevelopment. We have said explicitly that the cost of redevelopment without a successful Games bid would be \$807 million. This money was always going to be spent whether or not Sydney won the year 2000 Olympic Games bid. The wide-eyed innocence with which the Leader of the Opposition said "I had no idea" fooled nobody except himself. Nobody has been kept in the dark. There have been no rubbery figures. There has been no overnight blowout. What is more, the Leader of the Opposition knows it.

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

Mr ARMSTRONG: Labor started the project at Homebush and Opposition members know that the figure of \$807 million is accurate and that their cheap little political trick to try to mislead the people of New South Wales is not working. They have lost the plot. The Government has always been clear and precise about the costs of Homebush Bay without the Olympics and the cost of Homebush Bay with the Olympics. Not only have we not concealed the costs, but we have been at pains to spell them out. Let me quote the very words of the Leader of the Opposition - a man of incredibly short memory, I might say - in this House less than a month ago when he praised the people of Sydney who the Leader of the Opposition said "contributed to the work of previous governments of both political persuasions that

achieved some of the great monuments that make the Sydney bid so attractive, from the construction of the Opera House to the Bicentennial Park, to the Penrith Lakes Scheme, to the sports centre, to Sydney Football Stadium and all the other facilities that make the Sydney bid so powerfully convincing, not the least Darling Harbour".

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

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Mr ARMSTRONG: The Leader of the Opposition was so keen then to show how Labor has contributed to the bid, he should also be keen to count the cost of those works in the Olympic budget. Then we would really see a massive cost blowout? He cannot have it both ways. If the Leader of the Opposition says that it is absurd to include those costs in the Olympic budget, he has no choice but to also acknowledge the absurdity of his claim yesterday that the \$807 million for Homebush Bay is a new and startling revelation of an Olympic budget blowout. How quickly the Leader of the Opposition has abandoned the spirit of bipartisan Olympic politics in favour of the muck-raking to which he is so comfortably and well suited. For the record, let me inform the House that the Homebush redevelopment program is well advanced, on budget and on time. When completed it will endow Sydney with a modern suburb offering western Sydney and the entire populace facilities of international standard - facilities which were always going to be provided whether or not we won the Olympic Games bid. To support that information I table the full documentation regarding Homebush Bay which was presented to the media at the press conference on 9th September, 1992.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES COST

Mr RICHARDSON: My question is addressed to the Premier and Minister for Economic Development. Having regard to Opposition claims that the cost of staging the Olympic Games has blown out, was the Opposition given a full briefing about the costs of staging the games?

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

Mr FAHEY: I thank the honourable member for his maiden question and I congratulate him on his maiden speech in this House last night, a magnificent contribution and an indication that he will be representing the people of The Hills for many years to come.

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

Mr FAHEY: The \$1.7 billion budget for the staging of the Olympic Games was clear, conservative and accepted by the International Olympic Committee. The Games budget was not linked to the revitalisation of Homebush Bay, but the decision to award the Olympics to Sydney means that the redevelopment of Homebush Bay will be fast tracked. We will see a planned 20-year program condensed into 10 years, three of which have already passed. The cost of the work at Homebush Bay is also clear. In September 1992 there was a major announcement by the State Government of its plans for the revitalisation of Homebush Bay, an area long neglected, a worn-out industrial suburb to which the Labor Government started to make some changes before the 1988 State election.

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

Mr FAHEY: Our announcement in September last year was not kept secret. There was a public launch at the Intercontinental Hotel accompanied by a two-page media release. This was followed by a page one story in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* which referred in its headline to a \$800 million city development plan. As I said earlier, there was also a display at the Royal Easter Show. I note the comments I made in a speech delivered at the Intercontinental at the launch on 9th September last year:

If we discount the possibilities which will only materialise if Sydney wins the 2000 Olympics, the facilities already planned will cost \$807 million. However, \$300 million of that amount has already been committed and the remainder will be spent over a period of perhaps 20 years.

That statement was clear and unequivocal as to what was going to occur. We proposed - in fact we are substantially under way with - the building of a major sporting, recreational and commercial complex right in the heart of the Sydney metropolitan area. The Olympic Games will provide an entire residential suburb flowing from the athletes village. The proposed cost of the village is public. Included in the budget are the costs of leasing and refurbishing the buildings after the Games. Included in our announcement about Homebush Bay was a commitment to the construction of the Sydney aquatic and athletics centre - projects that were up and running long before we won the Olympic Games.

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

Mr FAHEY: Everybody knows that the winning of the Games will accelerate Homebush redevelopment. The Olympics will provide a major opportunity for Sydney and New South Wales to acquire much needed sporting facilities of an international standard. Let us look at Melbourne. The Melbourne Cricket Ground was built for the 1956 Olympics. It remains a lasting community asset. After question time yesterday the Leader of the Opposition embarked upon his favourite role, that of the great deceiver.

Down he went to the media gallery, down to the gallery below, pretending to be shocked and amazed and, as we have just heard from the Deputy Premier, he indicated that he did not know that the Homebush development was separate from the budget for staging the Olympics. There is no blow-out. The cost of staging the Olympics, already recognised by the International Olympics Committee, has been carefully planned and budgeted as \$1.7 billion. The cost of the Homebush Bay re-development, as announced in September 1992 - and I quote from a speech - is \$807 million.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs to order.

Mr FAHEY: The cost of the athletes village - \$500 million. It is convenient for the Australian Labor Party to roll these figures together and to come up with the big word "blow-out". It is very

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convenient, of course, but it just will not stick. These figures have all been announced over the past year. The fact of the matter is that if Labor is really serious about this it would want us to include the cost of Darling Harbour, which is going to be used for five sports. What about the Sydney Football Stadium? That is going to be used. Why not the third runway or the airport at Badgerys Creek?

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

Mr FAHEY: Look at some of our competitors for that particular right to host the Games. In Beijing a new six-lane freeway has been built from Beijing Airport into the heart of that city. Was that cost included in Beijing's Olympic bid budget? The simple answer is no. Was the cost of building a major new underground rail link included as part of Beijing's bid? The answer is no. China saw the opportunity of hosting the games as a way of undertaking major infrastructure projects. The same thing happened in Montreal and Barcelona. Those cities in their bids did not deceive the International Olympic Committee. Their bid for staging the Games met all the requirements of the IOC and withstood the toughest scrutiny. Staging the Olympics is a matter different from the re-development of Homebush Bay.

Our bid was sound. There was no deception about the alleged add-on costs for the Homebush Bay redevelopment or for the athletes village. Officials of IOC did look at Sydney's bid, and they looked at it in the context of taking into account the need for a balanced budget, for accommodation for athletes and officials, for essential infrastructure like transport, roads, bridges, ferry terminals, and all of those factors

that are part of the \$807 million. The only deceit in this whole exercise is from the Opposition. The bipartisanship that was pronounced by the Leader of the Opposition amounted to nothing very quickly. As quickly as he got home, he changed his views - like most other things. He is duplicitous; there is no other word for it.

The Opposition briefing that occurred on 22nd January involved Ministers Baird and Webster; it involved Rod McGeoch, the chief executive officer of the bid committee; it involved Peter Jolly, a senior accountant in the private sector; it involved a number of officers including the Director-General of the Premier's Department; and it was given to the Leader of the Opposition and to a number of other Labor members and some Labor staff. I am advised that at that meeting the Opposition was given a document entitled "The Budget Process and Assumptions", as prepared by the finance commission of the bid committee. It was an exhaustive briefing of the \$1.7 billion budget to stage the Games, which had been provided to the IOC in the bid books. That budget did not include any spending on the athletics or aquatics centres at Homebush. They are apart from the development of Homebush Bay and they were released, as I have said, in detail on 9th September, 1992.

I am also advised that at that meeting the remediation and development of Homebush Bay was discussed. It was pointed out that the Homebush Bay Corporation's costs of developing Homebush Bay had been made public previously. The information with regard to the \$807 million to be spent there before the year 2000 was widely and publicly available from the launch at the Intercontinental Hotel on 9th September, 1992; and, as I have said also again today, it was exhibited at Parliament House and at the Royal Easter Show. Members have to understand just what the Leader of the Opposition is about each time he expresses his amazement, as he has done since question time yesterday, on this particular matter.

The Leader of the Opposition was full of praise for the bid team, those out there who worked day and night to get these Games for Sydney, including the Minister for Transport, who did a magnificent job. But very quickly he has turned to attacking the integrity of the very people he was praising, by suggesting that he was not aware that the Olympic village is to be privately funded, as we have made clear in this House, or in respect of the \$807 million for the Homebush Bay development. As I said earlier, he certainly displayed his true colours when given a briefing in respect of the structure of the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games; and a week later he went out and displayed it all to the public, stating that it belonged to him. That just shows how bereft he is of any thoughts and how he has to borrow them.

If only the Leader of the Opposition could play a role similar to that played by John Brown in the work he did for the bid. His efforts have been denigrated by the statements of the Leader of the Opposition, as have the efforts of the Prime Minister, Michael Easson and Ros Kelly, to name just a few. It is clear the Opposition is not very worried about or interested in what the Olympics are about. It is not interested in what they mean or the inspiration they will provide for our schoolchildren, who will be very much part of these games in the year 2000. The Opposition is not interested in them and does not care.

I now wish to table a number of documents. The first document was prepared by David Smithers, Chairman of the Finance Commission, and provided by way of a briefing to Cabinet which took place in December last year. I understand that a document in similar terms, if not the same document, was left with the Leader of the Opposition in the briefing that occurred on 22nd January this year. The second document is a far more detailed document entitled "Sydney Olympic Candidature - Financial Plan for the Staging of the 2000 Olympic Games", which goes through in some considerable detail exactly what the budget in respect of the Games is about and exactly what the budget is about in respect of the Homebush Bay development.

The last document is the report of the IOC Commission for the Games of the 27th Olympiad 2000, which details the comments it made on the Sydney budget and the budgets from the other cities

that were bidding for the games. This Government is more than happy to proceed on the basis that it is fully accountable for all that it does and that all dollars to be spent from this point onwards, as I said yesterday in this House, will be the subject of scrutiny by this Parliament and all the other built-in public sector scrutiny factors in this State, including the Ombudsman, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Annual Reports Act and the Auditor-General.

That will be the subject of a responsible approach by this Government from this point forward to the year 2000 and beyond. The Games are the Games of the people of Sydney and New South Wales and they will be staged in a responsible manner by this Government. All that it does will be open to all people. All of the figures, all of the budgets, all of the documents and all of the plans will be available to allow the people of New South Wales to see exactly what is being done.

POOL FENCING ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr MACDONALD: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Energy and Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives and relates to the Swimming Pools Act 1992. What recommendations have been made by the Pool Fencing Advisory Committee with regard to drowning statistics? Has the Minister considered appropriate amendments to the Act?

Mr WEST: I indicate to the honourable member for Manly that the Swimming Pool Advisory Committee, which was established last year, has been considering if any changes should be made. The committee has met on about five occasions and is endeavouring to provide me with an analysis of the statistics. Last Sunday an article appeared in the *Sun-Herald* which purported to represent the latest statistics from the coroner. My inquiries revealed that those statistics would not be available to me, or to the Government, until November. When those statistics are available and when the committee examines those statistics and reports to me, I will certainly consider the committee's advice. If changes are recommended and it is clear that the Act is not working, we will move for those changes in the Parliament.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES SITE REMEDIAL WORK

Dr REFSHAUGE: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Does land associated with the main Olympic site at Homebush Bay require remedial work costing an estimated \$230 million? Has this been included in the Olympic budget, or will it add another \$230 million to the blowout?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs to order for the second time.

Mr FAHEY: I indicate firstly in response to the question from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that in the budgets that have been prepared and passed through this Chamber during the past couple of years the sum of \$300 million was appropriated for the development of the aquatic centre, the athletic centre, and remediation work, which included the removal of the abattoirs and the sale yards and the extensive earthworks at Homebush Bay. The breakdown of that \$300 million is \$217 million for construction of sporting facilities and \$83 million for remediation work. That information was also the subject of one of the information sheets distributed publicly and widely in September last year entitled "Homebush Bay Information Sheet the Cost of Developing Homebush Bay".

In that document the sum of \$83 million was allocated for the site remediation and environmental works. I refer the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to the documents I have tabled today to indicate that there is a further need for \$807 million to continue with further site works at Homebush Bay. An appropriation has been built into that allocation and into the budgets and documents tabled by me in this

House today.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES IMPACT ON STATE BUDGET

Mr ZAMMIT: My question without notice is addressed to the Treasurer and Minister for the Arts. What advice has the Minister received about the financial impact of the Olympics and the Homebush Bay project on the State's Budget? What provision has been made for this?

Mr COLLINS: I thank the honourable member for Strathfield for his question. I remind the House that the 1993-94 State Budget was structured on the assumption that Sydney would win the 2000 Olympic Games. The Government has made provision for that not only in this year's Budget but in the forward estimates for 1994-95 and for 1995-96. The Homebush Bay redevelopment, which includes the construction of the much-needed aquatic centre referred to earlier, and the athletics stadium, will cost \$807 million. More than \$150 million has already been spent on this program and \$125 million has been allocated in the 1993-94 State Budget.

This expenditure should be put in the context of an annual capital works budget for this State of \$5.5 billion, the biggest capital works budget of any State in the Commonwealth. It should be noted that expenditure on Olympic facilities has been accommodated in the Budget, which will reduce the deficit by more than \$100 million in 1993-94 from \$997 million to \$890 million. The \$1.7 billion budget submitted to the International Olympic Committee is revenue neutral; it has been formulated on the basis that it will have no impact on the State Budget. These figures, as has been stressed a number of times this afternoon, have been in the public arena for almost a year. This Budget includes the cost of the Olympics village at some \$500 million, which, as the Premier said, was announced in September 1992.

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The New South Wales Government has demonstrated that the Games costs can be accommodated in an overall program of responsible financial management in compiling the Budget. On the assumption that Sydney would win the 2000 Olympic Games, this Government has ensured it can continue with its debt and deficit reduction programs. As the Deputy Premier said in an earlier answer, the Opposition leader is fully aware of the cost associated with the Olympic Games. The Government has briefed the Leader of the Opposition through every step of the formulation of the costs associated with bringing the Olympic Games to Sydney. Yet what has happened today? On the first sitting day after we win the Olympic Games, the Leader of the Opposition has been jumping up and attacking the Government over its plan, its flawless plan, for the Olympic Games.

All honourable member will recall that about three weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition said, "Now look, win, lose or draw, I just want you to know that this was a fantastic bid, and whatever happens we are going to back it all the way. Even if we lose, we will back it". What happened then? On the first sitting day after Parliament resumed, what did members of the Opposition do? How did they spend the whole of question time? Attacking the Government, attacking the achievement of Sydney's successful Olympic bid, attacking an achievement for the people of this State. That is what the Opposition has done. That is what this orchestrated attack is all about. I intended to conclude my answer at that point, but because the Opposition is so interested in the points I am making, I will add one or two more comments. The Opposition is concerned about accountability.

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

Mr COLLINS: Let me talk about accountability. Let me talk about lies that the Opposition has peddled with regard to future State budgets. The Opposition has already run up budget promises for this State of another \$1.8 billion to date. Three weeks ago Bankcard Bob was a great bloke when he was saying, "Win, lose or draw, we are in there with you. This a bipartisan bid". That did not last a single

sitting day. The people of this State are backing this achievement every inch of the way. They are looking forward to the Games in the year 2000. They look forward to the best ever Games. They will look poorly upon the Opposition, which is already trailing in the polls. When this exercise is over - when the Opposition's orchestrated attack on the Olympic achievement, the achievement of the people of this State, is over - the Opposition will trail even more. Carr's popularity will plummet even further.

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

Mr COLLINS: It is hard to believe it could go down further, but it will. I shall conclude my answer at this point, but before doing so I shall table a document prepared by Treasury dealing with the net impact on the State Budget of the Olympics 2000 bid and Homebush 2000. The attached schedules consolidate the net impact on the State Budget of the Olympics 2000 bid and the redevelopment of Homebush Bay. The schedules contain figures drawn from estimates available as at 1st June, 1993.

NATIONAL ELECTRICITY GRID TRIAL

Mr TURNER: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives. Will the Minister advise the House on the state of negotiations with the Federal Government regarding the implementation of a trial for a national electricity grid?

Mr WEST: The honourable member for Myall Lakes has asked a timely question in respect of this important matter. It is with some considerable regret that I inform the House that negotiations by New South Wales and Victoria with the Federal Government in relation to a national electricity grid trial have not resulted in an agreement. The Victoria Minister, the Hon. Jim Plowman, and I met in Melbourne on Friday of last week and again in Sydney on Monday. Later on Monday we took an agreed joint proposal to a meeting with our Federal counterpart, the Hon. Michael Lee. Our proposals were flexible. Unfortunately, Mr Lee's proposals were set in concrete and he was not prepared to make any changes at all.

Let me make it clear to the House that both New South Wales and Victoria are committed to a national electricity grid. We think it is a good idea, which, through competition, should result in a better deal for all consumers. In our talks on Monday with Mr Lee, Mr Plowman and I found that his focus was centred on what is best for the Business Council of Australia. He and his advisers seemed to have little or no regard for what was best for domestic consumers. They wanted to break down the generation structure in this State and have many different generators supplying the intrastate market. That was when the Federal Minister stepped out of his weight division. The Federal Government has never run a power station; it has never had any experience with power stations. But the Minister is now telling the two most populous States of Australia how they should run their power stations.

The Hon. Michael Lee, the Federal Minister, was formerly an engineer with Pacific Power. I am told that he was a fairly bright youngster, but that he was nowhere near the brightest in that organisation. He now thinks he should be running the show. He has his own agenda for Pacific Power, but it has nothing to do with the Government's commitment to the agreement of the Council of Australian Governments on competition within the industry. It has nothing at all to do with the latest position paper on competition of the National Grid Management Council. In fact, it has nothing to do with any agreement this State has with the Federal

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Government. This is a plan by a former employee to now become the boss of his former employer. Of course, that will not happen.

The Government wants effective interstate competition. The Federal Minister is merely pushing his own barrow. The idea that there might be or should be multiple generators in the States could have some merit. But to date no studies have been done on such a proposal, and I am not prepared to be

railroaded by the Federal Minister. If it can be proved that multiple generators will improve things for consumers, the Government will probably move in that direction. Pacific Power knows that; I have told it. The National Grid Management Council knows that, and I have also told Michael Lee. They all know that New South Wales is prepared to move in that direction, but the decision will ultimately be made by the market-place. Multiple generation within the States was not part of the communiqué that was issued after the Melbourne Council of Australian Governments meeting. Put simply, the Federal Minister has got it wrong by insisting that intrastate competition be part of the paper trial for the national grid.

Victoria and New South Wales were at odds with the Federal Government also over the methodology to be used in the paper trial about who pays what for the power going along the transmission lines. The Federal Government was proposing that those furthest away from the source of power would pay the most. That was its preferred option, though of course it would have meant a huge imposition on country consumers. This Government is certainly not prepared to consider that in isolation. Other methods that could and should be trialed did not suit Mr Lee's argument. I must say that the latest correspondence I have received from Mr Lee indicates that he appears to be moving from that sticking point.

As I said earlier, the Government is keen to be part of the national grid. New South Wales has already shown that it is prepared to reform its electricity industry and that it will stay on that reformist road. The idea of the national grid first came out of an Industry Commission report that said that competition among the States would improve productivity. The report set down the types of productivity gains that could be achieved. The goals that it set for New South Wales have already been matched or bettered, without interstate competition. With that competition - that is, proper competition on a fair basis - even greater benefits will flow to the people of New South Wales.

The Industry Commission said that if international best practice levels of capital and labour were reached in the Australian electricity supply industry, cost savings of \$1.2 billion, in average 1989-90 dollars, would be made - not the \$2 billion that Michael Lee claimed yesterday in his press release. Productivity increases in Pacific Power alone have averaged 6.6 per cent a year since 1987-88, generating about \$1.1 billion in savings in 1989-90 dollars.

The National Grid Management Council has fixed July of 1995 as the start up date for the grid. The paper trials, which were due to begin next month, were to last for six months, and competitive trading was to be phased in with full market competition by July 1995. That July 1995 date can still be met, and New South Wales is prepared to push forward in that regard. If the Federal Government gets off its high horse and starts acting in a reasonable way, that can be done smoothly. If that does not happen, I intend to propose to the Governments of Victoria and South Australia that we immediately proceed with our own paper trial. Despite the fact that our talks broke down on Monday, I believe an acceptable agreement is possible and that there is still room to negotiate with the Federal Government. The Government wants this process to be successful but it knows that unless it begins with the correct foundation the end result will be nothing but a dismal failure.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES BUDGET

Mrs GRUSOVIN: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Does the Premier stand by comments he made to a *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist that, "Every speech I've ever made I've said that, broadly speaking, you've got a \$3 billion budget". Will the Premier table those speeches?

Mr Humpherson: On a point of order. My point of order has two grounds: first, the honourable member referred to the Premier by other than his correct title; second, in regard to seeking verification of newspaper articles, I understand that former Speakers Kelly and Ellis ruled that a member may not, by a question or part of a question, seek confirmation of a newspaper report.

Mr Whelan: On the point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Chair wishes to evaluate the advice of the honourable member for Ashfield in silence.

Mr Whelan: I understand that the honourable member for Davidson is making his maiden point of order. However, I draw your attention to the fact that the first question asked referred to the Premier in his new-found, self-styled status as the Premier for the Olympics so the question should be allowed.

Mrs Grusovin: Further to the point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved. The Premier will give his answer.

Mr FAHEY: It is abundantly clear that the Opposition does not want the Olympic Games. If the honourable member for Drummoyne, who was recently in Barcelona and also in Monte Carlo, is in favour of the Olympics why does he not stand up?

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

Mr FAHEY: What about the honourable member for Auburn? Where is the honourable member for Auburn? He is not present in the Chamber. Homebush Bay in his electorate will be

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developed. Maybe he should stand up. Is the honourable member for St Marys in favour of the rowing course at St Marys? Honourable members at this end of the Chamber would never know that there is any support from members at the other end of the Chamber because they are clearly not demonstrating the support that you are talking about right now, Mr Speaker.

I suspect that the honourable member for Heffron was not listening earlier today, just as the Leader of the Opposition was not listening when the briefing was given on 22nd January, when I referred to the speech I gave at the Intercontinental Hotel on 9th September and quoted from it. In that speech I distinguished between what was to occur in relation to the Olympic budget and what was to occur in respect of the Homebush Bay development, the \$807 million.

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

Mr FAHEY: There was the launch of the village, with Greenpeace. It is environmentally sensitive, and all that was built into it. Displays were put out.

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

Mr FAHEY: I explained how it was costed into the Budget documents that are here today. The reality of it is, as I indicated earlier, that there is a balanced budget for the staging of the Olympics of \$1.7 billion, which has been accepted by the International Olympic Committee and scrutinised by many people. I referred to the other figures in an earlier answer I gave today. The great majority of my speeches are given without the aid of notes, unlike those of honourable members opposite, who always need to refer to the words in front of them.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES BUDGET

Mrs GRUSOVIN: I ask a supplementary question of the Premier. In view of his answer -

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

Mrs GRUSOVIN: - will the Premier assure the House that the three documents tabled by him today provide all and the latest financial details of the bid?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That question is completely separate. It does not arise out of the question previously asked. If anything, it arises out of a question that was asked earlier in the day. Members will be well aware of the ruling I gave earlier, in which I said that the context of a supplementary question must arise directly out of an answer given to the question that has just been asked.

Mr Whelan: On a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I hope the honourable member will not canvass my ruling.

Mr Whelan: The Premier, in answering the honourable member for Heffron, referred specifically to a number of things, including a speech and documents, and he referred to the documents that he has tabled. The simple question is, and it is supplementary to both the question and the answer -

[Interruption]

I am not canvassing anyone's ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ashfield is canvassing my ruling. The papers were tabled as a result of a question asked earlier in the day. If a member were to ask a supplementary question touching on those documents, the appropriate time to have done so would have been immediately following the tabling of those documents. Members have asked a series of questions relating to the Olympic bid. If I were to rule that the question asked by the member for Heffron was supplementary to the question she asked previously, that would widen the ambit so that any question relating to the Olympic Games might become supplementary to the previous question asked. That is not the intention of the rule relating to supplementary questions. A supplementary question must be drawn out from the substance of the immediately preceding answer.

TWEED HEALTH SERVICES

Mr BECK: I direct my question to the Minister for Health. What action is the Government taking to give people in the Tweed better access to health services? In particular, did the national health summit assist in clearing up some health anomalies on the Queensland-New South Wales border?

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

Mr PHILLIPS: The honourable member for Murwillumbah has asked an important question, and I thank him for his co-operation in working with the Queensland and New South Wales governments to resolve this important issue. It is important to note that each day Opposition members unsuccessfully try the supplementary questions trick to reduce the number of Government questions. They leave the Chamber. Half of them have walked out. They are not interested in health issues; they concentrate on their particular issue, and that is to undermine the Olympics. Their Queensland colleagues are overjoyed about Sydney's successful Olympic bid, and they will support us to the hilt for the next seven years, unlike members of the Opposition.

Governments have a real problem in trying to reach agreement on roles and responsibilities in health care. Nowhere are these challenges more obvious than in border towns such as Albury-Wodonga and Tweed Heads-Coolangatta. In the Tweed, for example, the bureaucratic blame game has created massive headaches for local people. Previous governments have failed to tackle this important issue. To give an example of the nonsense that goes on in border towns, I refer to a case of Mr and Mrs Smith

and their three children, one of whom was receiving treatment for a terminal illness at a Brisbane hospital. Mr Smith was employed as a builder. The family lived in a street located directly on the New South Wales-Queensland border. While trying to maintain employment and the education of their other two children, Mr and Mrs Smith were making daily visits to Brisbane to spend time with their critically ill son. No assistance was available through the transport subsidy scheme. The family experienced severe stress and disruption to their lifestyle and to their financial situation and were unable to provide support for or to have quality time with their dying son. Eventually some limited assistance for accommodation expenses was obtained for Mrs Smith by hospital social work staff.

Had Mr and Mrs Smith lived on the other side of the street their travel and accommodation expenses would have been covered and they would have been able to manage what is obviously a difficult family situation. The national health summit was established to tackle these intergovernmental issues. I am pleased that the process of getting all health Ministers around the table to thrash out these issues is working, and working well. I inform the House that the New South Wales and Queensland governments have signed an historic agreement aimed at tackling this issue in the Tweed-Coolangatta region. In the future there will be no New South Wales-Queensland border so far as health is concerned. In conjunction with my Queensland counterpart the Hon. Ken Hayward, the honourable member for Murwillumbah, Don Beck, who worked on this particular scheme, and also Mary Rose, the Queensland Labor member for Currumbin, I have established a joint ministerial committee comprising local health service board members from both sides of the border as well as departmental representatives.

The committee's first report on identifying the primary, secondary and tertiary health services required for the next century will be released early in the new year. Co-ordinated planning will save duplication of administration, resources, infrastructure, building, et cetera. The report will identify opportunities for improved co-operation between all services on both sides of the border and those issues affecting service access for residents of each State requiring a common approach. It will also explore future organisation and funding arrangements, allowing for the huge growth that is occurring in the northern sector of New South Wales and the southern sector of Queensland. Funding for that area has risen by 35 per cent in real terms in the past few years because of substantial growth and pressure. Therefore it is important that the two governments put aside that border issue and work together to resolve these issues. This should be the start of an important process to break down the barriers of government responsibilities for health services.

To give a few more examples of the blame game, accident and emergency and the local general practitioner clinic must be tackled at a national level, and that is being done through the national health summit. Pilot schemes are already in place to overcome the problem where people go to their general practitioner, are charged, and then attend hospital for the same service, which is free. This causes inequities in the system and cost shifts between the Federal Government paying for the GP and the State Government paying for hospitals. Those issues must be resolved. Another important issue is how private health insurance and the public system are impacting and causing perverse incentives in the way people behave when it comes to resolving health issues. The national health summit can achieve these goals and is working well. Co-operation between the Queensland Labor Government, the New South Wales Government and other governments in Australia is in severe contrast to Dr No, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who says no to whatever this Government tries to do. Even if it involves removing resources to the west, he says no, much to the consternation of Labor members in the west. When the Government wanted to put a \$160,000 development in the seat of the Leader of the Opposition he said, "No, we do not want a new hospital at Prince of Wales". He does not want a new women's hospital at Prince of Wales. I wish I received the same co-operation from the New South Wales Opposition as I do from a fellow health Minister in Queensland, who knows where the future lies.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is living in the past. He is opposing

co-operation with the private sector, yet his Queensland Labor colleague was reported in a newspaper article as saying:

The State Minister for Health, Mr Hayward, yesterday called for greater co-operation between public and private health service providers, saying the two could no longer afford to stand apart in the face of increasing delivery costs.

The article continues:

"It might be appropriate in some instances for the Government to contract the provision of services for public patients from private hospitals in areas where there is a need and no suitable public facilities are available", he said.

We are doing those things in New South Wales and Dr No has opposed us every step of the way. I congratulate the honourable member for Murwillumbah on tackling these important cross-border issues with Queensland and on the way he is standing up for the people of the Tweed. I congratulate the Queensland Government on the way it has worked with us to resolve this issue.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr WHELAN: I ask that you, Mr Speaker, might reconsider your ruling in relation to supplementary questions. The only thing left to do would be to move dissent, which I am very reluctant to do. I ask you whether you would consider a very brief discussion in regard to some rulings that the question can be supplementary to the answer given. I ask that you reconsider the position.

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am willing to consider in my chambers afterwards the points raised by the honourable member for Ashfield. The time for questions has now expired. I am more than happy to discuss this with him. As I explained when points of order have been taken in relation to supplementary questions, it is a new procedure in this House. The guidelines are probably still settling down. I have given a fairly definitive ruling which was been accepted by the House. I believe that in the ruling I have given today I adhered strictly to that previous ruling. Nevertheless, I am more than happy to discuss this later in my chambers with the honourable member for Ashfield. If there is a need to fine tune the ruling, I will do so.

PETITIONS

Capital Punishment

Petition 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 Windsor**.

Serious Traffic Offence Penalties

Petitions praying that the House review the laws relating to road accident fatality or grievous bodily harm and institute severe penalties, received from **Mr Jeffery, Mr Newman, Mr Small and Mr Smith**.

Gosford Railway Station

Petition praying that the Government give priority to the construction of escalators and the provision of a non-slip surface, toilets and a parenting room at Gosford Railway Station, received from **Mr McBride**.

Newcastle Rail Services

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

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**.

Brothels

Petition 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 Richardson**.

Brighton Memorial Playing Fields

Petition praying that Brighton Memorial Playing Fields not be sold or rezoned, received from **Mr Thompson**.

Camden District Hospital

Petitions praying that Camden District Hospital not be privatised and that children's services be reopened to make the hospital fully operational, received from **Dr Refshauge**.

David Berry Hospital

Petitions praying that the David Berry Hospital at Berry not be closed or sold, received from **Mr Harrison and Mr McManus**.

Newcastle Acute Hospital Beds

Petition praying that the House support the provision of increased funding for acute hospital beds in Newcastle, received from **Mr Gaudry**.

Shellharbour Public Hospital Children's Ward

Petition praying that the children's ward of Shellharbour Public Hospital be reopened, received from **Mr Rumble**.

Berkeley Police Station

Petitions praying that Berkeley Police Station be manned on a 24-hour basis and foot patrols be introduced, received from **Mr Rumble and Mr Sullivan**.

Police Service Rotational Transfer Policy

Petitions praying that the House reject any policy by the New South Wales Police Service to introduce rotational transfer, received from **Mr Face, Mr Gaudry and Mr Mills**.

Caroline Bay Multi Arts Centre

Petition praying that the House order the establishment of a commission of inquiry under the environmental protection Act to consider the environmental and fiscal effects of the Multi Arts Centre proposed for Caroline Bay, East Gosford, order a half-term election for the 10 aldermen of Gosford City Council on 18th September, 1993, and order the council to cease expenditure on the centre until the results of the election become known, received from **Mr McBride**.

STATE RAIL AUTHORITY SIGNALLING SYSTEM AND MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

Matter for Urgent Consideration

Mr LANGTON (Kogarah) [3.26]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the Ombudsman's Report on Railway Signalling tabled today;
- (2) censures the Minister for Transport for failing to ensure the safe operations of the SRA signalling system;
- (3) condemns the Minister's continued victimisation of former SRA engineer Mr Vincent Neary;
- (4) calls upon the Minister to immediately hold a public inquiry into all issues raised in the Ombudsman's Report; and
- (5) calls upon the Minister to order the reinstatement of Mr Neary to the SRA with all due entitlements.

On 21st May, 1990 - more than three and a half years ago - I moved in this House a suspension of standing orders motion: "That this House condemns the Minister for Transport for the maladministration of his

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portfolio in respect of the CityRail resignalling project". For more than three years the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads has repeatedly rejected my concerns over signalling safety in the State Rail Authority. The Minister has attacked my support of former SRA civil engineer, Mr Vincent Neary, as a political put up. Earlier this year the SRA sacked Mr Neary, alleging that he had breached the SRA's code of conduct. Does the SRA's code of conduct preclude its officers from revealing the truth? Is it against the code of conduct to try to alert the SRA to gross breaches of public safety? I told the *Sydney Morning Herald* at that time:

Vince Neary is one of the most honest blokes ever in the SRA. He came to me as a last resort. He was genuinely concerned about waste and mismanagement in the SRA and signalling safety.

I went on to say:

This is a classic case of a whistle blower being victimised. The SRA has spent thousands of dollars over the years trying to refute his allegations.

The Ombudsman found that:

Mr Neary has at all times acted in good faith in his dealings with this Office and has been motivated by continuing concerns about signalling safety.

The Ombudsman went on to say:

He has presented his evidence and arguments in a sober and objective fashion . . . there is much in the material available to this Office relating to the Authority's treatment of Mr Neary to lead to the conclusion that Mr Neary's complaints are regarded by the Authority as an unwelcome intrusion and a hindrance to its business.

What did the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads have to say about Mr Neary? In May 1992 he accused Mr Neary of "a political put up". In April this year he said in this House:

Mr Neary once more has given the honourable member a dump. A check has been undertaken of the allegations of Mr Neary and, if the honourable member for Kogarah continues along this path, he will continue to be embarrassed.

I continued along that path. Today I am not the one in this Chamber who is embarrassed. The Ombudsman stated in his report:

Mr Neary's complaints go to the fundamentals of safe signalling practice - the design, testing, certification, commissioning and operation of the signalling system.

The Ombudsman said in his report:

The complaints squarely raise the issue of the safe operation of the rail network and it is in the public interest that they be ventilated.

The report also stated, "The Ombudsman recommends the establishment of a full public inquiry". What has the Minister had to say about the allegations I have been making for the last three and a half years with respect to unsafe signalling? I remind the House of some of his wonderful comments. In 1990 he said in this House, "The Government does not apologise for the authority's record since it came to office". I wonder whether he still feels that way. The Minister also said in 1990:

[Opposition claims that] public safety is being compromised . . . [are] totally without foundation . . . [Brian Langton] got it wrong.

In November 1992 he said:

Allegations of serious deficiencies in the signalling system have been made previously by the honourable member for Kogarah. I remind honourable members that his claims were discounted . . . proved wrong . . . are 100 percent a furphy.

He said also in this Chamber:

. . . the allegations of the honourable member have been proved absolutely worthless.

In April this year he said:

If honourable members opposite want to run with Mr Neary they may do so. I am confident in the management of the State Rail Authority.

I wonder whether today the Minister still places as much confidence in the State Rail Authority as he did then. I do not believe the public would place the same confidence in the State Rail Authority or in the Minister after learning of the Ombudsman's report today. They have every reason to question why they should have any confidence in the State Rail Authority. Apart from whatever was contained in the

Ombudsman's report, I can assure honourable members of this House that unsafe practices in the Sydney rail signalling system are still happening. At Lithgow there is a problem. At North Sydney there is a problem with the solid state interlocking system which was recently installed. It has run into problems. Points have actually broken and relayed incorrect signals. Trains have had to run at reduced speed to avoid further damage. As we speak those problems exist at Lithgow and at North Sydney, and no doubt at other places in the State. Mr Neary referred the Ombudsman to the report of the investigation into the Clapham Junction accident in the United Kingdom, a report by Mr Anthony Hidden, Q.C. He stated:

The concept of absolute safety must be a gospel spread across the whole work force and paramount in the minds of management. The vital importance of this concept was acknowledged time and again in evidence which the court heard. This was perfectly understandable because it is so self-evident.

Apparently it is not self-evident to the State Rail Authority or the Minister because in the SRA's Boland report it is stated, "Mr Neary's basic premise is absolute safety. This argument is clearly fallacious and is not accepted worldwide". The SRA clearly does not accept the same standards as are accepted all around the world and as were accepted as a standard of practice as a result of the Clapham Junction incident. The Minister's basic premise is not absolute safety of rail commuters; it is absolute political safety of his own position. He has ensured that his political survival is the central mission of the State Rail Authority as well. He has done everything possible to suppress this issue. He has attacked me and any members of the Opposition who have raised the matter here or anywhere else. He has attacked Mr Neary, a man with 28 years' experience as a signalling engineer, and he has seen the State Rail Authority complete the victimisation by first demoting him and then sacking him.

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The Minister attacked the Ombudsman. In August this year when I called on the Minister to release the Ombudsman's report, which I knew he had had since July, his office told members of the press gallery that the report was "full of errors", an allegation which the Minister's office later had to retract. The Minister suggested to the Ombudsman that the new Rail Safety Bill would provide for an investigation of the matters, an investigation which would be under the control of the Minister's loyal deputy, the Director-General of Transport. The Ombudsman rejected that attempt at a whitewash and now he has called for a public inquiry. Rail safety is in doubt. The House will not accept the extraordinary and puny attempt by the Minister, since I gave notice of this matter at question time today, to have an inquiry into railway signalling.

In the press release which the Minister, in his normal sleazy fashion, has sneaked out in the last hour or so he has continued to refuse to accept the basic problems referred to in the Ombudsman's report. He has refused to accept the central findings of the Ombudsman. When is the Minister going to face the fact that there is a problem? The Ombudsman has said there is a problem but the Minister will not accept that. This is not good enough. I repeat that rail safety is in doubt. A full and open inquiry must be held to investigate the issues which have been raised by Mr Neary and which have been outlined in the Ombudsman's report. Mr Neary must be reinstated. The Minister must be censured. I do not believe the Minister has any option but to resign.

Mr BAIRD (Northcott - Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads) [3.36]: I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting paragraphs 2, 3 and 5.

Paragraphs 1 and 4 are acceptable to the Government. As I have said in this House before, transport safety is No. 1 priority. The possibility of a Clapham Junction incident is why we have had five separate inquiries into rail safety while I have been the Minister. No single issue is more important than safety. When we came to government we asked the Booz Allen team to look at the situation. I have said this

before and I will repeat it ad nauseam: we were told by the team that on a scale of one to 10 - at 10 you close the system down completely - we were at 9.995. We were shown photographs of faulty wirings. The whole system was in danger. The team said that \$30 million had to be spent immediately to preserve the integrity of the system. When Labor was in office that situation was allowed to develop. It is a disgrace to all Labor members. Since the coalition came to office it has spent \$300 million in this area, which is vastly in excess of anything that Labor spent in its term of office. It is appalling that Labor members have the hypocrisy to accuse us. We have done so much on signalling and Labor did so little.

Mr Langton: Read the Ombudsman's report.

Mr BAIRD: We have. We also had people review the report. Then we had the Hesketh report, which examined all aspects of safety. It made a series of recommendations about what should happen with signalling in State Rail. Then we had the Neary allegations. I was concerned and I told State Rail, "I want to find the best signal person that we can in the world to review the system so that we can settle the matter once and for all". We found Mr Nelson, Vice-President of the European Signalmen's Association. His report said that progress had been made on each of the 16 recommendations listed in the Hesketh report in May 1991.

Mr Langton: You are reading your own press release.

Mr BAIRD: No, this is from the Nelson report, at 2.6. He said:

Mr Neary's allegations of shortcomings in the management of systems safety may well have had validity five years ago.

That was when Labor was in government. The report went on to state:

I found no evidence to suggest that there is such a problem today.

They are the words of Mr Nelson. He went on to say:

Mr Neary was invited to meet me so that I could form my own opinion of him and hear directly from him of his concerns. He declined the invitation.

That was said by the man who was brought out to hear the allegations. I could do no more than find the best signalling person available in the world at that time. He came here, gave the clearance and said that Mr Neary refused to meet with him. I was concerned about the allegations, and it is right that the Ombudsman's office should be concerned about them as well. There was no technical person to advise the Ombudsman's office on the allegations made.

Lawyers evaluated the process he went through and brought down a report on his role. They had no problems with him taking on that role. We raised some concerns in regard to the initial report. He examined some of the claims, and changes were made in the light of the facts that were brought out by State Rail. I think that is right and proper and should have occurred. Since then, the Mercer mid-term review has gone over all aspects of State Rail to consider how we performed with the original Booz Allen concept of reform. We are completing that review now. The interim Mercer mid-term review of signalling stated:

While the review has not been completed, preliminary findings by Richard Whalan and Mercer signalling specialists are: high priority, safety and integrity problems identified by Booz Allen have been largely addressed. Costs are escalating and there is evidence that standards are too high in some areas. There is a need for value engineering assessment. Consideration should be given to using lower cost technology. Better maintenance and practices training should be implemented to correct the vast majority of signals systems failures. Mercer estimates the cost of signal electrical systems

renewal could be reduced by about \$120 million over the next five years.

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One man is accusing the Government of not doing enough, yet the technical experts are saying it is doing too much.

Mr Langton: The Minister should read from the Ombudsman's report.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Kogarah to order. He will have a chance to reply if he wishes to.

Mr BAIRD: I am referring to the technical experts. With the best will in the world, the Ombudsman admitted he did not have the technical advice to be able to evaluate, and that it was a lawyer's opinion of Mr Neary's allegations. He does not make any allegations. He simply considered the allegations made by Neary and the responses by the head of the State Rail Authority. These are technical experts. The Booz Allen report indicted the previous Labor administration. We have seen the Hesketh report, the Nelson report - which gave a clearance to it - and finally the Mercer report. In my position I would do no more than the technical experts. The honourable member for Kogarah perhaps could tell me what more could be done. We agreed when we received the report from the Ombudsman - and he recommended this - that we would have a public inquiry, as is right and proper, and that everyone could have input.

I want everyone to have their say and let us finish this once and for all. If there is a problem, let us evaluate it. Let everyone have their input. The honourable member can put forward his vast knowledge of signalling and make his input, and we can all decide whether we have a problem or not. I am perfectly happy to have that happen. But when signalling experts are brought out to inquire into the matter the Opposition simply says it does not like the results they produce. Mr Neary says he does not want to consult with these people. This is his chance. It is put up or shut up time. Under the Act that the Government put through this House a few weeks ago we can have that inquiry under the Director-General.

We can call on overseas and Australian experts to provide an evaluation, and that can all be done in public. Other aspects, including the reinstatement of Mr Neary, are currently being considered by the Transport Appeals Board, which is the appropriate forum. That board is currently hearing a case concerning the dismissal of Mr Neary and will reconvene on 27th, 28th and 29th October. Accordingly, it is inappropriate for the Government to interfere in the process of resolving issues between employees and employers. The board was specifically established for that purpose. Such interference would effectively pre-empt the decision of the tribunal.

No less than five independent signalling reviews have been undertaken of State Rail. The first exposed the poverty of management of State Rail and the condition of signalling under the previous Labor administration. Since that time this Government has spent more than \$300 million of the total program funding, which is estimated at \$650 million. We are about halfway through it. Constant evaluation is appropriate. For that reason this group was set up in the Department of Transport, which is separate from State Rail and can provide independence. Every member of the House with any sense of responsibility would want to be sure about safety. That is number one. We have been through the exercise of having reviews before, and they have given a clearance. But we are happy to support an open public inquiry. Let the experts be called. Let Mr Neary have his say, and let us determine whether our rail system is safe.

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [3.46]: As the Minister knows, I have taken an interest in this matter for quite some time. It is clearly established on both sides that Mr Neary is an honest man, a sincere man, a competent man, a conscientious public servant, and that he did his job well. We might talk about safety and about who did what, but I am interested in what happened to Mr Neary, because I have had a long

and passionate interest in whistleblowers. I am willing to go along with this amendment to the motion. I am not willing to censure the Minister. However, if this matter is not once and for all publicly resolved it will not go away. It will come back to this House, and I give due notice that some action will be taken as far as I am concerned. I am very unhappy that the Ombudsman recommended that the director-general hold the inquiry. I would signal an amendment being moved calling upon the Minister to appoint an independent Queen's Counsel who is satisfactory to both sides to chair the inquiry. The reason I say that is very clear: this is a censure motion against a Minister. If it does not come out correctly, the Minister is in the barrel. That can be taken as a reflection by me on the director-general. I do not mind how it is taken.

I know of the experience of a whistleblower within the Department of Motor Transport. That fellow has worked for me for 10 years. I know what can happen within the culture of a large transport organisation. I know what can happen to Vince Neary. I know that if an inquiry does not have within its terms of reference a consideration of how Vince Neary was treated as a person within the department, that inquiry may obtain technical evidence but not justice for a man who spoke out and had every right and responsibility to speak out. There is no higher calling for a public servant than to speak out, especially where lives could be at risk. I give due notice that the inquiry has to be handled and be seen to be handled in a completely independent way - with opportunity given to Mr Neary to be properly represented - so that it can examine the way he was treated. I am impressed with what the Ombudsman said in his report:

In response, the SRA agreed to have Mr Neary's complaints examined by an independent signalling expert and in April 1991 the SRA directed Mr Neary to submit his report on 26th April. While preparing his report Mr Neary was denied access to essential records and statistics.

If that is true, I would not want to be in Mr Neary's shoes and would not want to appear before that expert. How can an engineer be expected to rely on
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memory of technical matters? An engineer has to be able to use detail to try to prove a case, and he needs access to records to do that. Was he denied that access, and did that put him behind the eight-ball? I want to know that for a start. I again quote from the Ombudsman's report:

Although the Hesketh report supported Mr Neary's allegations of unsafe standards, Mr Neary was demoted and relegated to menial duties two weeks after the report was published. He had worked for the SRA for 17 years.

Later the report stated:

Eventually Mr Neary was removed from the signalling area permanently and later directed to stay at home on special leave with pay.

The report later states:

In the Ombudsman's opinion, Mr Neary has at all times acted in good faith in his dealing with this Office and has been motivated by continuing concerns about rail safety. He has presented his evidence and arguments in a sober and objective fashion.

Yet, disciplinary charges were preferred against Mr Neary by the SRA in relation to alleged breaches of the SRA's Code of Conduct and on 19 May 1993 he was dismissed from the SRA.

Mr Neary's case highlights a major flaw in the proposed Whistleblowers Protection Bill . . .

Because of time constraints I will now paraphrase. The report says that this prevents the Ombudsman from investigating a public authority's victimisation of a whistleblower. That is pretty powerful stuff. I

support that, and signal to the Government that this matter will not go away unless it is independently dealt with and seen to be so, unless Mr Neary receives proper treatment and proper representation, and unless the whistleblower's bill is amended in a way that satisfies the Ombudsman's concerns. I believe I have already moved the amendment, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I seek clarification from the honourable member for South Coast on his amendment.

Mr HATTON: Yes. I move:

That should the amendment moved by the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads be agreed to the amended motion be further amended by the inclusion of the following paragraph:

- (3) calls upon the Minister to appoint an independent Queen's Counsel, satisfactory to the Director-General of Transport and Mr Neary to chair the inquiry; that the terms of reference be such as would allow Mr Neary to properly present his case and that Mr Neary be afforded adequate legal and technical representation.

Ms MACHIN (Port Macquarie - Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport) [3.51]: There are two issues rolled up in the motion, and they are becoming confused. They are the issue of rail safety and the issue of the treatment of Mr Neary. I accept that they are rolled together in this report, but if we are to step back from the motion and look at the overall matter of importance to New South Wales, that is rail safety, we need to ensure that we separate our consideration of those two matters. I shall first consider rail safety and why the Opposition is attempting to censure the Minister. Censure is a serious matter in this House, and should be taken as such. The questions have to be asked: Does the Minister deserve censure? What has he done? What is his track record on signalling in New South Wales?

To date, his track record includes the expenditure of \$300 million, with a similar amount still to be spent, and some five independent reports into rail safety, and signalling in particular. As the Minister pointed out previously, some of those reports have indicated that we are perhaps spending too much. I do not know whether rail passengers would agree with that. I think most of us would like to think that the Government will overspend rather than underspend. The hypocrisy of the honourable member for Kogarah is quite breathtaking. He cannot walk away from the fact that a report prepared when this Government first came into office was so damning that it suggested a virtual closedown of the system. I suppose in a sense we are fortunate that the public did not know about that, because it is crucial that the public have confidence in the safety of the rail system. This motion goes to the heart of that.

The honourable member for Kogarah is continually undermining public confidence in the safety of our rail system. I do not believe commuters should be worried in that way; they have the right to think that when they board a train they will be safe. The implication in the motion is very offensive. It essentially implies that this Minister, who has a very good record in terms of transport - particularly in rail - would sanction running a system that was unsafe and put at risk the lives of millions of people every year. That is a disgraceful implication by the honourable member for Kogarah, particularly following on from his own colleagues' track record in government. I cannot believe that he would be so duplicitous.

The other matter is the inquiry, which the honourable member for South Coast just touched on. The Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads has already said that we will hold an inquiry. It was proposed that that be held under the Rail Safety Act. The honourable member for South Coast would like to see a separate inquiry established, which begs the question: Why have legislation that was passed specifically for such purposes, only a few weeks ago in this House, if we are to set up an entirely different inquiry, with legal representation, thereby taking it out of the hands of the people it was legislated for. We may as well abandon the Act if we are not going to use it on the very first occasion we have to do so. I do not support the amendment moved by the honourable member for South Coast. Either we have the

mechanism in place and are consistent about it or we do not have a system at all, and have ad hoc inquiries as the Parliament decides. This amendment underlines the system which has been put in place.

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Mr Neary has a right to have his say and will no doubt do that at the forthcoming inquiry. I am concerned that from what I understand of the Ombudsman's report - and I have not read all of it yet - it was quite a limited inquiry. The honourable member for Kogarah kept waving the report and saying, "Read the report", when my colleague was talking about the numerous inquiries that have been held before. The Ombudsman's report specifically dealt with allegations of the treatment and the way those allegations were handled by Mr Neary, not about rail safety. I would have thought that if the Ombudsman were to make recommendations about rail safety, he would talk to more people than just Mr Neary when gathering his evidence. I understand he did not have any particular input, though he may have had some legal consultations. Towards the end of his report, he actually discussed that with the State Rail Authority and the Minister. It was a limited report. An inquiry will ventilate all these issues. I suggest we use the mechanism that is already in place. Finally, I return to my original point: that censure is a serious procedure in this House.

Mr Langton: That is why I moved it.

Ms MACHIN: I do not believe that the Minister deserves censure for spending \$300 million.

Mr Langton: You have not read the report, that is why.

Ms MACHIN: The honourable member should listen to the whole debate. Then he would understand some of the points, and might solve some of the problems he keeps coming up with. I do not believe that the Minister deserves the censure of the House; basically, he has been fixing the problems that were left to this Government.

Mr PRICE (Waratah) [3.56]: I support the motion of the honourable member for Kogarah, and I express grave concern about some of the aspects raised in the Ombudsman's report. I stress that I am not a railway engineer or a signal engineer, but I have limited knowledge of engineering procedures. I am concerned with a number of the documents before the House. I am certainly concerned at what appears to be the dismissal of Mr Neary on grounds that would not necessarily relate to the facts which were originally raised. I was particularly concerned to read aspects of the report of the Ombudsman that compared comments made by Mr Neary, Mr Hesketh, and finally Mr Nelson, and his subsequent advice. I refer to page 11 of that report and the advice on Mr Neary's comments by Mr Hesketh, referring specifically to design modifications:

The number of design modifications identified in the report during testing indicates a serious lack of training and experience at the design stage but no reference is made to training processes or error recording and feedback to produce improvements in performance.

As a result of that Mr Hesketh provided, in recommendation No. 5, a short-term recommendation that:

... the implementation of a design error recording and feedback system at the design checking stage
... the creation of statistical records which will define weaknesses in either the individual or the design system to allow meaningful training or system modification.

Mr Nelson's subsequent advice 11 months later indicated that progress had been made, but there was no suggestion in his report of the existence of any statistical data, nor of any change in the process of training. Further, the current position, as stated on page 12, is:

177 sheets of design modifications on the Maitland project

195 sheets of design modifications on the Sydenham project, and

103 sheets of design modifications found on the St Mary's project .

These are design deficiencies found in the . . . checking processes in the design office are, of course, additional.

I refer to page 26 of the report, and particularly to the problem where the specifications are mentioned. Reference is made to specification 711, published in November 1992, which is entitled "Inspection, Testing, Installation and Commissioning requirements for Relay Based Interlocking Systems Only". The trouble is that it was out of date, according to this report, before it was published because, since 1992, "The SRA has called tenders for Computer Based Interlocking (CBI) Systems only". The report continually referred to specification 711, which relates to a relay based interlocking system.

I understand that interfacing is necessary, but obviously the specification that has been quoted is not relevant to the present requirements. If one is looking at specification deficiencies and basic design drawing errors, one then has to look at the evaluation system between the various tenderers. Another question that would emerge is who is responsible in the final maintenance period? If defects are not being recorded, that is a serious problem. Time does not permit me to deal with all the matters, but as someone who lives close to Maitland and represents the electorate of Waratah, which has many 84-car coal trains running through it, I am somewhat concerned that there are 177 sheets of design modifications to the Maitland project as unacceptable errors emerged. It seems to me that there are serious problems in that area.

As-installed drawings are not up to date. That is appalling. My engineering background indicates to me that if as-fitted or as-installed drawings are not up to date, it is almost impossible to find a potential error or identify a failure at some time in the future. If records are not available and are not up to date, one cannot expect anything but problems. That means people's lives and property are put in jeopardy. I am amazed that the department is prepared to tolerate that. If there is any evidence of an improvement in the record system, that is great. Item 7.4.4 on page 22 of the report reads:

The report examined records of "certified office copies" of design records. Two sets of drawings are issued. After installation one set should be marked up to "as installed" conditions and returned to the records office. This set is called the coc. The report revealed that:

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an average 87% of cocs for 1986-1991 were missing and unaccounted for; in the case of Wollongong 100 per cent of records were missing

91% of cocs for the period to 1986 were unaccounted for.

That is an appalling indictment of the present system. As an engineer, I cannot understand how State Rail can accept that as being reasonable, particularly for the signal system. [*Time expired.*]

Mr LANGTON (Kogarah) [4.1], in reply: Lord Nelson of Scot Rail has now been sanctified. As his only defence to the serious allegations raised in the Ombudsman's report, and to the serious allegations which have been raised in this Parliament for three and a half years, the Minister used one report by Nelson. That is all honourable members heard in his 10-minute contribution. All that honourable members read about in his press release was Nelson, Nelson, Nelson. They have heard absolutely no other defence by the Minister to the serious allegations which have been made and to the serious motion he faces. He has, in fact, told the House today that he has no defence to the matters that have been

raised and to the motion I have moved. The Minister has agreed, however, to establish a public inquiry. In his press release he said the American-based Mercer Management Consultants are already reviewing State Rail's operations. He said:

Their preliminary finding is that State Rail has a safe system which compares well with similar railways in other parts of the world.

State Rail assure me the system is safe.

For 3½ years State Rail has been telling us the system is safe. Surely one has to believe State Rail! It does not matter what the Ombudsman says; it does not matter what any other reports say; it does not matter what Hesketh says. Everyone says the system is safe! What is the point of having a public inquiry? The Minister said, "We have already done that, it is not a problem". Let me remind the House that the Nelson report, which was the basis of the Minister's defence in this House, was criticised in the Ombudsman's report specifically in relation to the Neary allegations. That is the defence used by the Minister to the motion moved against him: a report that has been criticised. What did the Minister say? He said, "In my position I could do no more". Do no more than what? Suppress the Hesketh report, sack Vince Neary, delay the Ombudsman's report and blame public servants! No, he can do no more - except perhaps to accept some responsibility himself. That is where the responsibility lies. When will he understand that that is his job?

The Minister then threw in the poor assistant Minister for something or other, whatever she is, who probably would not know what a train looks like. She said, "Oh dear, it is confusing to roll the matters of Vince Neary and rail safety into one motion". If it had not been for Vince Neary, there would not have been any allegations. Gosh, the report is called "The Neary/SRA Report" and they have been rolled together! Poor Wendy! We will explain it to her one day. We will explain to her how the system in here works, the poor little precious thing.

The amendment moved by the honourable member for South Coast is intelligent and reasonable and will be accepted by the Opposition. That amendment will finally allay any remaining concerns about the safety of Sydney's signalling system. The director-general will be able to call a public inquiry and appoint an independent person to chair it. Let us not forget that the Minister refused to acknowledge the existence of this report by the Ombudsman. He did not refer to it in his contribution. He referred only to a partly discredited report by Nelson of Scot Rail as his defence. That is simply not good enough.

Mr Baird: Why is the Nelson report discredited?

Mr LANGTON: Mr Speaker, are you going to let that go on?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LANGTON: I apologise.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah was interrupting when other members were speaking.

Mr LANGTON: With the greatest of respect, it is very hard to get a word in.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It was also very hard for other members to get a word in when the member for Kogarah was interjecting. He should accept the situation as it is.

Mr LANGTON: The simple fact is that the allegations which have been made -

Mr O'Doherty: The simple fact is that you have no respect for anyone.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai should have noted the warning in my previous remarks.

Mr LANGTON: The simple fact is that the allegations which have been made by me and Vince Neary for three and a half years have not been answered by the Minister or any of the Government speakers. The Minister has not addressed the serious matters raised by the Ombudsman. The cover-up engaged in by the Minister and the State Rail Authority for three and a half years has not been addressed by the Minister or any member of the Government. I urge honourable members to support my motion. I believe it is the only way to go and the only way to satisfy the public.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! For the information of members I note that the amendment moved by the honourable member for South Coast is consequent upon the carriage of the amendment moved by the Minister for Transport. The question now is, That the amendment moved by the Minister for Transport be agreed to.

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The House divided.

Ayes, 47

Mr Armstrong	Mr Merton
Mr Baird	Ms Moore
Mr Beck	Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Blackmore	Mr O'Doherty
Mr Causley	Mr D. L. Page
Mr Chappell	Mr Peacocke
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr Petch
Mr Cochran	Mr Phillips
Mrs Cohen	Mr Photios
Mr Collins	Mr Richardson
Mr Cruickshank	Mr Rixon
Mr Downy	Mr Schipp
Mr Fraser	Mr Small
Mr Glachan	Mr Smiles
Mr Griffiths	Mr Smith
Mr Hartcher	Mr Souris
Mr Hatton	Mr Tink
Mr Hazzard	Mr Turner
Mr Humpherson	Mr West
Dr Kernohan	Mr Windsor
Mr Kinross	Mr Yabsley
Mr Longley	<i>Tellers,</i>
Dr Macdonald	Mr Jeffery
Ms Machin	Mr Kerr

Noes, 43

Ms Allan	Mr Martin
Mr Anderson	Mr Mills
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Mr Moss
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Bowman	Mr Nagle

Mr Clough	Mr Neilly
Mr Crittenden	Mr Newman
Mr Face	Ms Nori
Mr Gaudry	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Gibson	Mr Price
Mrs Grusovin	Dr Refshauge
Mr Harrison	Mr Rogan
Mr Hunter	Mr Rumble
Mr Iemma	Mr Scully
Mr Irwin	Mr Shedden
Mr Knight	Mr Sullivan
Mr Knowles	Mr Thompson
Mr Langton	Mr Whelan
Mrs Lo Po'	Mr Yeadon
Mr McBride	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr McManus	Mr Beckroge
Mr Markham	Mr Davoren

Pairs

Mr Fahey	Mr Amery
Mr Morris	Mr Carr
Mr Schultz	Mr Doyle
Mr Zammit	Mr Ziolkowski

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment by the Minister for Transport agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question now is, That the motion as amended be further amended by the amendment of the honourable member for South Coast.

The House divided.

Ayes, 45

Ms Allan	Mr Markham
Mr Anderson	Mr Martin
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Mr Mills
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr Moss
Mr Bowman	Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Clough	Mr Nagle
Mr Crittenden	Mr Neilly
Mr Face	Mr Newman
Mr Gaudry	Ms Nori
Mr Gibson	Mr E. T. Page
Mrs Grusovin	Mr Price
Mr Harrison	Dr Refshauge
Mr Hatton	Mr Rogan
Mr Hunter	Mr Rumble
Mr Iemma	Mr Scully
Mr Irwin	Mr Shedden
Mr Knight	Mr Sullivan
Mr Knowles	Mr Thompson

Mr Langton	Mr Whelan
Mrs Lo Po'	Mr Yeadon
Mr McBride	<i>Tellers,</i>
Dr Macdonald	Mr Beckroge
Mr McManus	Mr Davoren

Noes, 45

Mr Armstrong	Ms Moore
Mr Baird	Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Beck	Mr O'Doherty
Mr Blackmore	Mr D. L. Page
Mr Causley	Mr Peacocke
Mr Chappell	Mr Petch
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr Phillips
Mr Cochran	Mr Photios
Mrs Cohen	Mr Richardson
Mr Collins	Mr Rixon
Mr Cruickshank	Mr Schipp
Mr Downy	Mr Small
Mr Fraser	Mr Smiles
Mr Glachan	Mr Smith
Mr Griffiths	Mr Souris
Mr Hartcher	Mr Tink
Mr Hazzard	Mr Turner
Mr Humpherson	Mr West
Dr Kernohan	Mr Windsor
Mr Kinross	Mr Yabsley
Mr Longley	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Machin	Mr Jeffery
Mr Merton	Mr Kerr

Pairs

Mr Amery	Mr Fahey
Mr Carr	Mr Morris
Mr Doyle	Mr Schultz
Mr Ziolkowski	Mr Zammit

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! The numbers being equal, in accordance with the principles established by previous Speakers, I cast my vote with the noes and declare the question to have passed in the negative.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment of the honourable member for South Coast negatived.

Motion as amended agreed to.

COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Motion, by leave, by Mr West agreed to:

(1) That Barry John Morris be discharged from attendance upon the Committee on the Office of the Ombudsman and that Andrew Humpherson be appointed to serve on such committee.

(2) That a message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution.

APPROPRIATION BILL

PARLIAMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL

BUSINESS FRANCHISE LICENCES (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) AMENDMENT BILL

MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

ROAD IMPROVEMENT (SPECIAL FUNDING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12th October.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan - Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Ports) [4.25]: The 1993-94 Budget can be best described as a budget of fairness and equity. It recognises the particular needs of provincial and rural New South Wales and combines fiscal responsibility with initiatives to stimulate economic activity, create jobs and extract maximum benefit from taxpayers' dollars for the people of New South Wales. Since 1988 responsible fiscal management has underpinned the New South Wales Government's triple-A credit rating. Our projected deficit for 1992-93 was \$1.23 billion, but the actual deficit came in at \$997 million. The projected deficit for this 1993-94 Budget is \$890 million, and it will fall further to \$781 million in 1994-95 and \$638 million in 1995-96. By any standard applied in government or private enterprise, that is extraordinary and outstanding management performance. Since 1988 the Government of New South Wales has achieved results that are almost unique in the history of this State in effectively maintaining services and the thrust and superiority of New South Wales, at the same time achieving magnificent financial results. They are undeniable and indisputable.

By 1995-96 the deficit will no longer add to the budget sector net debt in real terms. Total outlays this year will rise by less than 1 per cent in real terms, in line with the need for continuing fiscal restraint. People are getting better value government. Budget receipts as a share of gross State product declined from 14.5 per cent in 1988-89 to 13.9 per cent in 1992-93. Better performance by government trading enterprises ensures a better return for money invested by the taxpayers of New South Wales. All this translates into confidence by global rating agencies in New South Wales economics, with practical results. It assists in the maintenance of a competitive interest rate structure, which in turn keeps the cost of government, and therefore taxes, lower. It boosts confidence, encourages productive long-term investment and acts as a brake on the negative impact of the Federal Budget.

This Budget is all about engendering confidence in the economy and the broad New South Wales community. Unlike the Federal Budget, the New South Wales Liberal Party-National Party Budget has been seen to be responsible, balanced and an effective attack on the key concerns of debt and getting business going again. It is confidence that has been undergirded by our recent Olympics victory. The Olympics decision alone has already translated into renewed enthusiasm and more tourism activity. The key word is confidence. It is suggested that 80 overseas visitors to Sydney in the past week are responding to the worldwide burst of Olympic publicity.

It is expected that 25 per cent of all Olympics visitors will arrive in Sydney during the next five years, well before the staging of the Olympic Games in the year 2000. Many of the people will be primarily

visiting non-metropolitan New South Wales - the beaches, mountains, hinterland and outback. They will be looking at what ordinary Australians are doing - working sheep, riding horses and working in the timber industry. They will be looking at Australians at play and at work. Most of the tourists will seek to see Australians in their working clothes. It is an absolute win for country New South Wales, a win for New South Wales in toto, a win for the New South Wales economy. That win has been achieved by the Liberal Party-National Party Government. Considerable New South Wales tourism infrastructure is in place. We suggest a special emphasis on non-New South Wales holiday periods to maximise the use of tourism resources during times of lower domestic demand.

Before moving on to a number of key decisions in the Budget for non-metropolitan New South Wales, I wish to pinpoint some of the absolute nonsense peddled by the Leader of the Opposition in his reply to the Budget Speech. He gave a command performance of whingeing and knocking. Only he could do that so well. He understands it because that is the character of the man and the character of the party he leads. The party is on the hind foot; it thinks of retrospectivity; it has no vision; it has no future. Indeed, much of this is encompassed in the performance of the Leader of the Opposition. It should be borne in mind that the position of Opposition leader is a responsible one. The

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paramount aim should be to protect and enhance the best interests of the people of New South Wales. Instead, what do we get from the Leader of the Opposition? We get whingeing and whining with little impact and at times no degree of responsibility whatsoever.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about the triple-A rating. He said that it was "never at risk under the 12 years of Labor Government". Nothing has changed. The Leader of the Opposition should stop trying to be negative about the New South Wales economy. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that "jobs is where the massive failure has occurred". The Leader of the Opposition did not recognise and is not willing to acknowledge that this Government has been extraordinarily successful in job creation. He will not give credit where credit is due; he will not tell the truth in this place. He lets loose continually in this House to the press and the people of New South Wales, yet he does not offer one scintilla of vision in his reply to the Budget Speech and in his presentation to this House. He is a leader of a party without a future and without vision.

The Leader of the Opposition fails to recognise that more than 13,000 jobs were created in August. At the same time, 19,300 jobs were lost in the rest of Australia. New South Wales was the only State to enjoy job growth in August. It was the fifth month in a row that New South Wales had a growth in employment. The unemployment rate in New South Wales has fallen steadily since February this year. It is now at the lowest level since July 1992. New South Wales still has the lowest teenage unemployment rate in Australia. At 10.7 per cent unemployment in New South Wales remains below the national average of 11.1 per cent. That figure has been created almost entirely because of the Labor Government in Canberra. The escalating figures of recent years are the pure product of Labor management.

The Leader of the Opposition attacked the Maritime Services Board dividends. Efficiency gains under this Government are tremendous. As I have made clear in this House, gains are reflected in lower port charges. Taxpayers also share in these gains as a return on their investment. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that "business has permanently moved to other ports, especially Brisbane". Port revenue tonnage in Sydney is up 2.26 per cent over the same period last year and container traffic is up 2.24 per cent.

The Leader of the Opposition also claimed, "The failed department of State Development has finally been axed, but five years too late". The Fahey-Armstrong Government has established the Department of Business and Regional Development, under the very capable Minister for Small Business and Minister for Regional Development, Mr Ray Chappell. The Office of Economic Development is under the administration of the Premier. The decentralisation of the New South Wales Agriculture head office was a most successful decentralisation of a government department, apart from being the largest

decentralisation ever undertaken by any government in this country. Who did it? The Liberal Party-National Party; not Mr Carr under the litany of untruths that he drags out around this House from time to time. It is important that I expose this, just in case someone is naive enough to believe him.

It is more important to get on with the job of good government. Provincial, regional New South Wales has again achieved excellent results from the Budget. Health expenditure is up nearly 5 per cent in real terms, to \$4.9 billion; education, an investment in today's youth, has also increased to \$4.9 billion. Together, health and education spending this year represent \$1,640 for every man, woman and child in New South Wales. Country roads and highways are again big winners. I advise honourable members that 35 per cent of the revenue from the 3 x 3 program is collected in country areas - a program introduced by the Liberal-National Party Government - but spending on country roads exceeds well over 50 per cent of the revenue. That is a benefit to all people of New South Wales. Overall benefits from the 3 x 3 program as estimated by Treasury is three times the cost - that is, the 3 x 3 program has a multiplier effect of three to one. The program generates at least 5,000 jobs a year. That fact is often overlooked. It creates benefits to the markets of this State, the tourist industry, and encourages more people to invest in New South Wales.

Mr D. L. Page: Sixty per cent of the money is spent in country areas.

Mr ARMSTRONG: The honourable member for Ballina has reminded me about the money that is spent in country New South Wales. This year's allocation of \$1.38 billion to roadworks capital programs in New South Wales compares favourably with previous years, when taking into account the one-off Commonwealth payment last year of \$136 million into road systems - a payment that will not be repeated this year. More remarkably, the New South Wales result has been achieved by an overall slash in the Federal Budget roads outlays from \$1.6 billion last year to \$813 million this year, with New South Wales expected to bear much of the burden.

The dedicated fuel tax revenue under the New South Wales 3 x 3 program stands in stark contrast to the Federal excise hovering around 30c a litre, which is poured not into roads and transport but into consolidated revenue. The Commonwealth takes and the Commonwealth does not give - it gives only to itself. We hardly need to remind the people of New South Wales that while State fuel taxes go to roads, the Federal tax is being increased by about the total tax amount in New South Wales. The Labor Government in Canberra has had a fuel tax hike of 5¢ or 7¢ a litre - originally 10¢. That really spells out the difference in economic management by the coalition parties in New South Wales. As outlined during the Federal election campaign, the coalition fuel policy would have cut industry and motoring costs by up to 26¢ a litre. Labor's answer was to try to add another 10¢ in its post-election Budget.

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An interesting question is: Does the Leader of the Opposition support the Federal Labor Government's Budget? The current Federal Budget is one of the most talked about in Australia's history; it is certainly one of the worst in memory - certainly one of the worst since World War II so far as country development, jobs and investments are concerned. Does the Leader of the Opposition support the Federal Government's Budget? He has the benefit of parliamentary privilege in this place to support his party, which would be a fairly normal thing to do. The Leader of the Opposition has chosen to completely ignore his Labor colleagues in Canberra. He has turned his back on them. There are two reasons for that: either he does not understand - which I suspect might be the truth - or he is ashamed. I think we will put the two together: he is probably both ashamed and does not understand. That is why the Leader of the Opposition has not supported the Federal Labor Party's Budget.

The leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales should stand up. Is he for Labor or is he running some sort of independent ticket? Does he support what his Labor mates are doing or the fuel tax, sales tax and wine tax policies of Labor in Canberra? Where is the Leader of the Opposition? I hope he goes to the Hunter shortly and talks to people in the wine industry. I hope he will talk to shopkeepers about

sales tax. I hope he talks to people in the motoring industry, the trucking industry and the taxi industry about fuel taxes. I bet he will not. He will do the same thing with them that he does in this Chamber. As soon as the heat comes on he ducks out. He has not been able to face the people I have mentioned because he does not support Labor Party policy in Canberra.

The New South Wales Government understands that the responsible use of fuel tax dedicated to roads has twin benefits: a modest tax means less burden on industry and motorists; better roads mean fuel efficiency gains, especially in country areas. Road improvements are like surgery improving the arteries and veins. They represent lifeblood for the economy, particularly in the vast provincial and rural sector of the State. I am especially pleased that appropriate forward planning is under way to ensure that the transport needs of non-metropolitan New South Wales are fully addressed. Major rail initiatives will complement the road strategy. They include the \$53 million program of new Xplorer services to Armidale, Moree and Canberra. New XPT trains and the XPT sleeper cars are now coming into service on the North Coast line.

Mr Beck: Sleepers to Murwillumbah.

Mr ARMSTRONG: There will be sleepers to Murwillumbah, Coffs Harbour, Ballina, Lismore and Taree.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr ARMSTRONG: Indeed, Mr Speaker. There will be sleeper services to all the wonderful North Coast seats. I suggest that honourable members, including your good self, sir, might well use them in the coming holiday period. The Xplorer train is already undergoing trial services to the Northern Tablelands. The Budget allocates almost half the cost of 350 new coal waggons servicing the Hunter Valley coalfields. They will provide a highly efficient service from the coalface to the ports. With a 100-tonne capacity, these waggons represent a 33 per cent increase in capacity over the existing fleet and will introduce new economies of scale to this already highly efficient industry. This once again shows the support of the New South Wales Government to the coal export industry. The coalition Government has given the coal industry of New South Wales its future into the next century, improved transport and infrastructure, and made Newcastle unarguably the most efficient coal exporting port in the world today - under my predecessor Mr Baird and me. That is a significant achievement. The 350 new coal waggons are also the most modern in the world, and the efficiency gains will continue.

Looking to the future, a mid North Coast transport strategy will aim to facilitate an efficient, integrated transport system to meet the needs of this fast-growing region, with assessment of economic growth, environmental protection and social development. The Government will support a transport strategy report by the Central West Regional Organisation of Councils focusing on freight flows, damage to roads, passenger movements and links to the metropolitan network. The Budget includes \$318 million to the school student transport scheme, which provides free transport to school students.

Mr D. L. Page: The most generous scheme in Australia.

Mr ARMSTRONG: Indeed. Improving the quality of life in provincial and rural New South Wales is not just a question of government outlays and revenue. It is also about creating confidence for investment and job creation; it is about ensuring individuals, companies and co-operatives have a fair chance of succeeding; it is about ensuring individual and enterprise initiative is rewarded. The Government is getting decentralisation and development right - right on track, right in place and right in position for the year 2000 and beyond. The Government will facilitate responsible planning for development in the private sector, despite the rigours of Mr Keating's enduring recession. New South Wales is leading the way with meaningful assistance to the private sector, responsible promotion of industries - especially the export sector - and responsible decentralisation policies. Our early runs on the board include the establishment of Agsell within the Department of Agriculture under my colleague the

Hon. I. R. Causley - a small, tight, highly trained unit with outstanding business acumen. It has led the charge with development of markets for agricultural products. For the first time in 41 years New South Wales put wool into Bulgaria last year. It has contracts with China for 9 per cent of the gross New South Wales clip and a shopfront at International Manufacturers Market in Singapore, the biggest market of its type in South-east Asia.

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As I indicated, the Fahey-Armstrong Government has initiated the Regional Development and Small Business ministry under my colleague the Hon. Ray Chappell. He controls a budget of \$36 million to help business become globally competitive through enterprise improvement, regulatory efficiency, effective industry and regional development programs offering financial assistance and development packages under a range of prescribed programs. Tourism today earns \$8 billion a year and directly creates more than 150,000 jobs. New South Wales is Australia's foremost tourism destination. Despite the hype in the north of Australia - and there are wonderful places to visit - New South Wales is the absolute leader as the primary destination of overseas and interstate visitors. Funding for tourism is up by a whopping 55.7 per cent, or \$12 million, to \$33 million. Did the Labor Party do that during its 12 years in office? Did it do anything more than mouth the words? Did it put any money or expertise into it? Did it do anything about management? Did it recognise the industry? Did it give any support to the tourist operators? No.

Despite Labor being in opposition since 1988, whoever the shadow minister for tourism might be - I do not know - has there been a policy, or a statement or a press release? Has anything positive been constructed? That says it all. It is up to the Government to create policy, put real planning behind it and provide funding. The increased funding will create extra revenue of \$74 million. Funding for regional tourism has doubled to \$2.2 million, and a \$13.1 million advertising campaign will be undertaken. Agriculture, land and water conservation, local government and planning - indeed all portfolios - have good news for the people of provincial, rural New South Wales. Those aspects will be dealt with in more detail by my ministerial colleagues.

In my portfolio of public works and ports the economic development theme of the Budget has been encapsulated in outlays. Public works included \$78 million to match spending by country councils, generally on a dollar-for-dollar basis, to allow almost 80 rural water and sewerage schemes to proceed. In the past five years the Government has initiated 278 major schemes. My predecessor the Hon. Wal Murray, the former leader of the National Party and Minister for Public Works, did a magnificent job with the Public Works Department in creating an environment, putting in the structure and having the vision to provide small towns across the State with access to reticulated water and sewerage - a reasonable expectation in the 1990s. That expectation would never have been fulfilled under Labor but it is becoming reality under the Fahey-Armstrong Liberal Party-National Party Government. More than \$20 million has been budgeted for restoration of historic buildings and structures, including the Farm Cove seawall. I commend that work to members of the House. I go to the bottom of the Botanic Gardens each morning. It is beautiful at this time of year. Excellent restoration has been done.

The First Government House Commemorative Museum has also been restored. An amount of \$28 million has been allocated for coast and estuary programs covering 280 individual projects. Flood mitigation works include \$1.3 million for Gosford, \$1.8 million for Fairfield, \$1.2 million for Liverpool, and \$960,000 for Wollongong under the joint State-Federal program. Ports and waterways users enjoy a 32 per cent increase in expenditure under this Budget to \$27.1 million. The main focus of the Maritime Services Board program is construction of essential port infrastructure with a view to future private sector development and operations of berths on adjoining port land. The board is upgrading radar and navigation aids and is installing environmental works to help prevent pollution on waterways including Sydney Harbour, the Murray River and Myall Lakes.

In Sydney Harbour, major works include completion of jetties, paving for marine operations service

and Moores Wharf at Darling Harbour, and upgrading Berth 7 at Glebe Island for use as a bulk dry terminal. Major works in the Hunter this year include development of infrastructure in the Carrington Basin area. In the Illawarra, \$1.2 million is to be spent to reconstruct the seawall at the southern end of Port Kembla coal loader. The MSB is to fund the capital works program entirely from its trading revenue, further reducing the burden on New South Wales taxpayers. Those programs outlined, and that increase in expenditure, will come from earnings of the Maritime Services Board. That is good business, the sort of business that only the Liberal-National Party Government understands, achieves and delivers.

In the Lachlan electorate, expenditure of more than \$35 million has been allocated. The Lachlan health district alone has been allocated \$24.3 million. My home town of Cowra will receive \$1.1 million for general roads funding, \$223,000 for widening of the Cowra-Canowindra road, and \$198,000 for restoration of the Olympic Way south of Cowra. Other areas within the electorate have received similar funding. Weddin council is to receive \$847,000 general funding for roads. Forbes will receive \$631,000 general roads funding. An amount of \$3 million is provided for construction of Fitzgerald's Bridge. At West Wyalong, \$6.4 million is allocated for the Newell Highway. That will benefit the district and also the thousands of tourists who use the Newell Highway each year, bearing in mind that highway is the main arterial link between Melbourne and the north of Australia today. When Labor was in government it could not even find the western areas of this State. Indeed, Labor used to send out an SOS every now and again pleading for someone to show it the way over the mountains. All Labor could see was a haze. As for Labor's record in sending money west, one need only consider the plight of the honourable member for Broken Hill, who his party believed was living in semi-isolation with the kangaroos.

Mr Mills: We sent him the honourable member for Bathurst as well, and he is over the mountains too.

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Mr ARMSTRONG: We noted that the Opposition recycled him again. The Government has presented a balanced, rational and, what is most important, achievable Budget. This is a budget of economic responsibility, in recognition of the capacity, needs and wants of the taxpayers of New South Wales, and is an acknowledgment that this State has a greater future for development than has any other State in Australia. New South Wales, the original and oldest State, is the Premier State by name and in fact. We are the Olympic State for the year 2000. It is up to us, every man, woman and child in this State, to pick up the ball we have been given by the Olympic Games bid win, and run with it. This Fahey-Armstrong Liberal Party-National Party Government will support the people of New South Wales as they run through to the year 2000 and beyond.

We have given the start, we have given the vision. We have convinced the International Olympic Committee delegates throughout the world that this State is a winner. We have convinced them that this State has and will continue to have political and economic maturity and security over the next seven years to be able to present the most dramatic and historic Games in modern times. The world Olympic organisation has given this State the absolute triple-A rating that New South Wales will be number one in the year 2000. My colleague the honourable member for Coffs Harbour suggests that New South Wales will win a gold medal for its efforts running up to the year 2000 Olympics. It is with great confidence and humility that the Government accepts the honour given to it by the people of New South Wales for its achievements. We have delivered, and we will continue to deliver. We have the support of the people of New South Wales, and I am sure we will continue to have that support as we move through to the year 2000 Olympics. It is with great pleasure that I support and commend this Budget to the Parliament of New South Wales.

Mr MILLS (Wallsend) [4.56]: I remind honourable members of the opening statement by the Labor Leader Bob Carr in his budget reply last month, when he said, "This is the budget of a Government that has given up on jobs". It is worth stating that and reminding members of it after the session we have just been treated to by the Deputy Premier, who is still high on a cloud over Mount Olympus and seems to

have forgotten that the Government has a responsibility to serve the people of New South Wales first of all. The worst thrust of the Budget is that it shows that the Government has given up on jobs. In last year's Budget - in the words of that immortal headline in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* - we were promised 18,000 jobs by Christmas. The 1992-93 Budget was one of jobs fraud. The 1993-94 Budget is one of a jobs sell-out because this financial year jobs in the public sector in New South Wales will be cut by 10,300.

The Tory headline writers for the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* managed to get it wrong both years. Last year's headline trumpeted 18,000 jobs by Christmas. That claim was wrong. This year their headline was "Jobs Safe". That message is not going to apply to 10,300 public sector workers in New South Wales. This year the capital works program is down 4.3 per cent in real terms, that is, down \$400 million on last year's initial allocation. That means 4,300 fewer jobs. Job losses in key authorities are all shown in the back of the Budget Papers - in Elcom, in the Sydney, Shortland, Illawarra and Prospect electricity distributors, in the Hunter Water Corporation, State Rail Authority, State Transit Authority, and the Sydney Water Board. Those job losses amount to 3,500 this year, and a further 4,300 job losses are indicated over the next two years. Job losses around the various departments amount to 2,500. That is a total of 10,300 public sector jobs that will be cut this year.

What audacity and ridiculous untruth for a newspaper in its headline to praise the Government by claiming that jobs are safe, when 10,300 jobs, and probably more, will go. This year it is likely that privatisation of the Hunter Valley coal freight system will occur, though it is not known how many jobs will be lost through that exercise. Budget Paper No. 2 gives an outline of the proposal that was put to the Government by the New South Wales Coal Association to privatise Hunter Valley coal freight lines. Budget Paper No. 2 states that the Government is considering it. From answers to questions in the House it is known that the Government is most seriously considering it. I fear significant job losses will occur in the Hunter region as a result of that proposal.

Last year the capital works program was supposed to increase by \$656 million, but it did not and ended up being underspent by \$327 million. That means that only half of the promised increase was spent. Probably only about 6,000 jobs were gained. A terrible feature of last year's Budget, as revealed in the Estimates this year, was underspending; that is, the money allocated and appropriated by the Government for spending on its departments and services has not been spent. A variety of reasons are usually given in the Budget Papers, the usual reason being a need to meet the macroeconomic objectives of the Government.

Last year health funding was underspent by \$46 million. I can think of many worthy projects in my electorate - and I am sure other members could think of worthy projects in their electorates - where some of the funds from that underspending could well have been used to solve problems and help out people in real need. The budget of the Department of Community Services was underspent by \$20 million. That is an amazing performance by a government in a time of recession. The Police Service budget was underspent by \$21 million. Last year's capital expenditure for roads was underspent by \$60 million; State Rail, \$59 million underspent; Pacific Power capital works, \$46 million underspent; Sydney Water Board, \$28 million underspent. No wonder we did not have the jobs performance that the Government had been hoping for. No wonder New South Wales is performing so badly on jobs.

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A major issue in the Budget is an increased dividend revenue of \$159 million this year to \$1,115 million; two-thirds of that is from electricity bodies. The result is every household will have to pay \$371 per year - or \$93 per quarter - in electricity dividends to the Government. Let every household in New South Wales take note of the massive tax increase they will have to pay this year. Commonwealth Government grants to this State have been increased by \$288 million overall. I note also the recession support package of \$5 million, but that is half the sum for last year and the year before. The capital works program has decreased again this year to a total of \$5,479 million. That is \$100 million less than

the sum actually spent last year. Last year's allocation was \$5,894 million. In other words this year's public works allocation has decreased by \$400 million. No wonder we can say, "Unfortunately, this is the budget that destroys jobs".

There was massive government pre-budget self-promotion about a huge injection of funds for health. That has turned out to be a fraud. Of all the extra spending, \$226 million came from the Commonwealth and most of that was for the transfer of Concord Hospital and its patients to the New South Wales Government. When the additional Commonwealth funds are excluded, this year's total payments, both capital and recurrent for health, come to \$4.7 billion compared with \$4.6 billion last year. This is no increase at all in real terms; in fact it is a real cut of approximately \$80 million in health payments from State sources. That is also confirmed by the Consolidated Fund appropriation, recurrent and capital, which, in both cases, in nominal terms is less than last year's appropriation. The Government lied about increased commitment to hospitals in this year's Budget. We saw the headlines at the Premiers' conference in July, "Fahey avoids cutbacks in health and education".

Mr Jeffery: What paper was that?

Mr MILLS: The *Sydney Morning Herald*. "NSW wins extra \$320 million". That was great news. Just as well, because imagine with the cutback in health spending from State sources what we might have been doing if the Commonwealth had not come to the party with that extra money. I will return to that matter later. There are more deceptions in this year's Budget. Former Premier Greiner's friend, Professor Bob Walker, pointed out perhaps the worst of the deceptions when he showed the real deficit.

Mr Jeffery: Your Labor mate?

Mr MILLS: You do not like the truth. Every time Professor Walker's comments have been questioned by the Liberal Government in this House he has been proved correct. The Government cannot stand that. They rubbish him and put tags on him, but Professor Walker has always proved to be right. The professor has stated very clearly that the real deficit is not \$890 million, as shown in the papers, but \$1,300 million; that is \$410 million higher than the Government admitted. In effect, the Treasurer is cheating to make the Budget look better than it is. How can one trust a Treasurer who tries to hide the truth from Moody's. However, I do not think he will succeed in hiding it from Moody's. Treasury Corporation transactions were excluded from the Budget. This is a Government with no standards of accountability.

I touch briefly on the impact of the Olympics in Sydney, which has not made much difference to what I wanted to say today. I wrote a note this morning which agreed entirely with the Deputy Premier when he said that the great benefit of the Olympics win for Sydney is that it is a confidence boost. It is important for this House to realise that winning the Sydney Olympic 2000 bid will not solve the problems in New South Wales. The Olympics will not be an economic bonanza; we are talking about a break-even Olympics, but the great benefit is that confidence boost. Other measures will be necessary to improve the ailing New South Wales economy and to restore jobs. These measures will be in health, education and welfare. Before the Olympics come along there will be measures in those areas, by a Labor government, to restore the ailing New South Wales economy. Labor shares that bipartisan commitment in regard to making the Olympics work - and the Paralympics as well - to making the Olympics ready on time and debt free - and particularly to be open and above board with the people of New South Wales about the budgets for the Olympics, about the contracts, about the tenders and about the proposal.

Budget Paper No. 2 details the financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth to the States, per capita, for the 1993-94 financial year. This paper makes very sober reading. New South Wales is to receive \$630 per capita, Victoria \$613, Queensland \$872, Western Australia \$903, South Australia \$980, Tasmania \$1,240 and the Territories relatively higher sums. There is bipartisanship again on this point because Labor in New South Wales recognises the need to have a fairer deal for New South Wales. Our fiscal equalisation concept in Australia needs to be refined to reduce the gross disparities between the

States. The present formula comes from the horse and buggy days. It is wrong for Queensland to have a 38 per cent higher per capita rate than does New South Wales in financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth. We must do something about that. In opposition and in government we will do something to attempt to change that approach. The Government seeks to do a fair bit of selling of assets and privatisation in the coming years.

One of the worst of these actions is the proposal by the Department of Community Services to continue selling off residential properties for children. It is outrageous that magistrates say that sometimes State wards have to be sent to juvenile detention centres because no State or other residence is available. That is pathetic and a mismanagement, for theoretical economic reasons, by the Department of Community Services of residential properties for children. The technical repair services unit of the Commercial Services Group is to be disbanded or, in effect,

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privatised - although a group of former workers is taking that up. I mentioned also the Hunter Valley coal freight system. We know of privatisation proceeding in regard to hospitals. The Government Cleaning Service is a major area of privatisation. Almost certainly, if that privatisation goes ahead even this year, there will be job losses in the public sector or the private sector. But the job losses from cleaning services are not even included in the 10,300 job loss figure I mentioned before - that outrageous figure. We are seeing privatisation of water services and various rail services, including a trial in regard to privatisation of security on trains and the closure of Chullora workshops.

That is happening in a climate of waste and mismanagement. The free spectacle program for pensioners is cut by \$1.3 million, but the Eastern Creek promoter receives another \$3.25 million. We oppose the Government's waste. I shall give some recent examples of this waste: more than \$140,000 was spent in legal costs of the arbitration involving former Minister, Neil Pickard; \$164,000 was spent on a public relations exercise to sell the Budget; more than \$180,000 was paid to the present Treasurer arising from the settlement of his defamation action, a matter which has now been referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption; as I said, \$3.25 million for Eastern Creek; and \$96,000 for the Sturgess inquiry on how to remove red tape. The list goes on every year. The Labor Party opposes the policy of forced redundancies. I inform members that 10,300 jobs will disappear this year. We oppose the Government's privatisation program and the fire sale of the State Bank.

I turn now to some features of the Budget that affect the Wallsend electorate. The sum of \$750,000 is to be spent on medical resonance imaging; \$180,000 will be expended to complete 20 units of public housing; and \$1.87 million will be spent on building a detention basin in Winding Creek. I thank the Minister for that item because it is most necessary and is in accord with the good budgetary practices of the Hunter Water Corporation in living up to its responsibilities arising from severe flooding in that area in 1990. Just over \$500,000 will be spent by the State Rail Authority on minor works. Those figures give a subtotal of \$3.38 million. I add to that figure the expenditure on roads, which are all connected by linkage to the F3 Freeway, \$5.3 million; \$0.6 million is to be spent on minor works, and \$1.2 million on maintenance. Therefore a total of \$7.1 million is to be spent on roads, and an overall total of \$10.48 million is to be spent in the electorate of Wallsend.

Bearing in mind that the total capital works budget is \$5,479 million, the Wallsend electorate receives less than one-fifth of its per capita share of that capital works budget. On behalf of my constituents I claim a fairer share of capital works expenditure to meet some of the electorate's well-defined needs. The casualty section at John Hunter Hospital urgently needs to be redesigned and enlarged. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

It is to be hoped that next year something will be done about enlarging and redesigning the casualty section at John Hunter Hospital, which is all too frequently overcrowded and patients are left suffering. The roads in the electorate are in need of significant maintenance and repair work. By December this year, as soon as the F3 Freeway is completed, there will be virtually no expenditure in the Hunter region of any significance on road projects. Most of the F3-related expenditure comes from Federal funding.

Late last year I put in bids to the Treasurer for funds for the urgently needed widening to four lanes of Main Road 223 from Taylor Street in Cardiff to the Crossroads. Motorists must cope with a great traffic clogging device called the Cardiff railway overbridge. Traffic conditions are revolting in peak hour, so much so that on that stretch of road the staff of the recently opened and expanded all-hours service at Lake Macquarie mental health facility are sometimes faced with a 20-minute wait to leave the property and get on to the road to travel around Lake Macquarie. The road urgently requires widening and improvement.

Macquarie Road from Cardiff to Warners Bay, which has three bad black spots, needs to be reconstructed. I note that the Roads and Traffic Authority and the police have recommended that of the two entrances to the Warners Bay industrial area, one should be closed for road safety reasons. Unfortunately, the expenditure required to widen the other entrance and make it safe cannot be found by the Roads and Traffic Authority. As the roads budget was underspent by \$60 million last year, one would expect that during this financial year, although not budgeted for, something could be done about the problems. I have referred to Main Road 217 which from the Crossroads up to the Henholme is in need of reconstruction. That is in the area administered by the Newcastle City Council. This narrow road has bad pavement, is extremely congested, and should be widened to four lanes. Only \$180,000 is to be spent, compared with the \$2.5 million needed for that project in the current financial year. Main Road 217, Glendale Drive from Lake Road to Main Road, urgently needs attention. It also has poor pavement. Main Road 217 requires a new bridge over the railway line at Cockle Creek station. Many trucks with heavy loads pass over that bridge, and the bridge is rusting.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SARAH LEWER BRAVERY AWARD

Mr BLACKMORE (Maitland) [5.15]: It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the act of bravery of a young girl from Gosforth in Maitland. In November 1989 a 12-year-old Gosforth girl named Sarah Lewer was looking

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after her brother and sisters in the family house. At that time her brother, Andrew, was aged eight and her triplet sisters - Jessica, Amy and Katie - were aged five. At one stage, to pacify the children, Sarah decided she would try to cook some chips. When the telephone rang and Sarah was called upon to answer it, flames started to come from the chips on the stove. As a result, the kitchen caught fire. Sarah attempted to put the fire out with the assistance of her brother, Andrew, by putting water on the flaming fat. The top part of Sarah's body was scalded by burning fat.

Sarah immediately thought of the welfare of her brother and sisters and managed to get them out of the house. She attempted to put out the flames. She then ran a distance of about 400 metres, and I understand she injured herself on a barbed wire fence while flames were still coming from the upper part of her body because of the scalding with burning fat. It was a rural property and bindies were embedded in the soles of her feet. One can imagine that she was in great pain. Sarah reached a neighbouring house, the residence of Mr and Mrs Peter Bootland, who saw that she was in quite a mess and was badly burned from below the shoulder to the waist. Sarah was crying and was in a great deal of pain. Subsequently the fire brigade and ambulance were called. Sarah was admitted to hospital and required grafting to damaged areas of skin.

In 1989 when I heard of the heroic deeds of this young lady, I wrote to the then Premier and recommended that an award be made to her for bravery. In October 1992 the Royal Humane Society sent a letter of commendation to Sarah for her bravery. At a recent meeting of the council of the society it was decided to present her with the Sir Neville Pixley book award. That award will take place during the month of October. Sarah is fortunate. She has very proud parents and grandparents, who have been in regular contact with me in regard to the bravery shown by this young girl. Last year the Premier, Mr Fahey, presented Sarah with a certificate of commendation for her bravery.

I raise this matter because I think that each and every member of this House at some stage will feel for young children who are left to care for their younger siblings and who from time to time perform acts of bravery. They forget about themselves and the pain they are currently experiencing and attempt to protect their brothers and sisters, as well as their property. I have been deeply touched by the fact that, at long last, Sarah - who is now aged 16 and in year II at Hunter Valley Grammar School - has received recognition for her heroic deeds. It has made me and the members of Sarah's family very proud to know that she is a young girl who has so much respect for her brothers and sisters and her family that she would put their lives ahead of hers. It is with great pleasure that I raise this matter and ask the House to take note of the heroic acts of bravery of Sarah Lewer of Gosforth, Maitland.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.20]: I am sure that honourable members would all be very proud of the actions of young Sarah Lewer that the honourable member for Maitland has just outlined. People perform some very heroic acts at times and one often hears of similar awards. This young girl's brave act has been suitably acknowledged and I thank the honourable member for Maitland for informing members of it this afternoon.

Mr EUBEL MEDICAL COMPLAINT

Mr RUMBLE (Illawarra) [5.21]: I refer to a matter raised by a constituent, Mr Charles Uebel, of 111 Reddall Parade, Lake Illawarra, concerning his endeavours to extract certain information from the Department of Health. Mr Uebel had previously claimed that two eye operations were carried out at the Sydney Eye Hospital without his permission. I have been informed that one of those operations was carried out in 1986 and that the other was carried out in 1987. Mr Uebel wrote to the complaints unit of the Department of Health in December 1989 regarding the procedures that were carried out on him at the Sydney Eye Hospital. In a letter forwarded to me by the Minister for Health, dated 1st June, 1992, the Minister stated that Sydney Eye Hospital had reviewed Mr Uebel's medical records from 1979 to 1987 and had confirmed that there was no record of the procedure being carried out at that hospital.

The Minister also stated that there had been a delay in the investigation of Mr Uebel's complaint as the medical practitioner had declined on legal advice to provide any information to the complaints unit. He went on to say that the Department of Health was carrying out negotiations with an interstate eye specialist to find a suitable reviewer, and this information was also in the Minister for Health's letter of 1st June, 1992.

It is my understanding that not only will the Department of Health not release the reviewer's report, but that it has also stated that it will not produce the name of the reviewer. My constituent, Mr Uebel, has been through a great deal of trauma; I understand that he has lost the sight of one eye. I ask the Minister for Health that Mr Uebel's request for the name of the reviewer, and my request that the report be produced, be acceded to forthwith by the Department of Health.

MURRUMBIDGEE IRRIGATION AREA FARM SIZE DEREGULATION

Mr CRUICKSHANK (Murrumbidgee) [5.25]: I wish to raise a matter that is creating a lot of uncertainty and doubt amongst farmers in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, in my electorate. In 1989

the Government deregulated farm sizes in that area, a decision that most people found quite unbelievable. In the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area there are specified areas where one can grow rice. All farms are a certain size and carefully defined. They cannot be split up or subdivided.

On the other hand, there are areas which can only be used for horticulture - that is, stone fruit, vines, nut trees and vegetables. That horticulture has

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also been strictly defined and the areas were also very carefully specified. That is the situation which I, and many other people, found to be totally untenable. The regulation was born out of the depression years, I suppose, when people wanted to have a family farm and companies were not allowed to buy in.

At a certain time in our history those were believable and acceptable tenets by which to run a large irrigation area such as the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. However, when the Government came to office in 1988, and subsequently was re-elected in 1989, the now Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Mines was responsible for the deregulation of those areas. At the time some people were upset about their small farms being swamped by big farms. People were buying 400 and 500 acres and planting them with vines, and they felt they were going to be forced out by the multinational companies, et cetera.

That did not prove to be the case. Up until this year the expansion of horticultural areas into the broad acreage areas was continuing quite slowly. People really had not taken advantage of deregulation to a great extent, and the fears of people were unfounded. However, the price of wine grapes is escalating quite dramatically and there are quite a number of people in other areas who are suffering. The price of vegetables is down and rice has been down - or it was until the Japanese opened their doors, and it looks like we might be able to get a foot in there - and a lot of people have started to take advantage of the opportunity to grow horticultural products on large area farms.

That all went along quite well, but now several groups of people have decided, for reasons which are not clear, that they want to prevent this from happening. They have written to the Minister and have induced the Department of Water Resources to impose an embargo on any further planting. What I do not like about it is that this all happened in the month of September. There is only one month during which people can plant vines or trees - September. For more than four and a half years the council, or groups of people who objected to people growing horticultural crops next to their rice farms, could have done something, but they did not. They waited until that time to induce the Water Resources Commission to impose a moratorium on any further expansion.

Why did they do that? That is a very good question and a number of people are not sure why. They say it is because of the problems with spraying. The Pesticides Act is very specific. It says that if you use sprays on your property you are responsible for any drift or any damage that is caused to any other farm. The rice industry knew that this problem was facing it and developed machines which have the ability to put the spray into the water and onto the rice plants without any worry about drift. That is not a problem.

I think the concern comes about because when one plants a rice farm up to grapes, and it starts to produce, the land is revalued by a factor of about 10 - so that \$500-an-acre rice country suddenly becomes \$5,000-an-acre wine country. That, I believe, is raising the value of the land. These people are being dinosaurs. They have written letters to Ministers, threatening them with all kinds of retribution if the moratorium on further expansion or development of horticulture is not maintained in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. I have never heard of anything so crazy in my life. A meeting is to be held later this month when, hopefully, the whole situation will be decided.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.29]: I sympathise with the honourable member for Murrumbidgee. As he said, I was the Minister responsible when those areas of the irrigation districts were deregulated. What was happening was that home

maintenance areas that someone had decided during the 1920s and 1930s were liveable areas were, by the 1980s, certainly not liveable areas. We had the same problem in the Western Division of the State, where, again in the 1920s and 1930s someone had decided what was a liveable area. That is one of the problems we have today in our grazing properties in the west. The regulations for those so-called home maintenance areas are still in place, restricting the market-place from deciding what is a viable unit. There is no doubt that the honourable member for Murrumbidgee has raised a very valid point.

At that time it was argued that companies would take over horticulture in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Companies have not taken over and never will take over from families running viable farms. The honourable member for Murrumbidgee hit the nail on the head when he spoke about revaluation of land. When land is revalued, rates increase, and that is what the argument is all about. People are concerned that if their neighbours use the land for horticultural purposes, it will be revalued and that rates will be increased. That is an extremely narrow-minded attitude, because the horticultural industry is doing well. It is correct that rice should only be grown on certain lands. People are restricted from growing rice on sandy soil where water may leak down through the soil into the underground water system. Rice requires good subsoil. The restriction on rice growing is reasonable, but other restrictions are totally unreasonable and should be removed.

GERRINGONG, GERROA AND JAMBEROO SEWERAGE SCHEME

Mr HARRISON (Kiama) [5.31]: I regret that once again I find it necessary to refer to the failure of the Water Board and this Government to provide a sewerage scheme for the towns of Gerringong, Gerroa and Jamberoo in my electorate of Kiama. Prior to the 1988 State elections, the then Minister responsible, the Hon. Janice Crosio, announced the board's approval for the extension of sewerage to Gerringong and Gerroa. The site for a works depot had been selected and funds had been allocated. Soon after the change of Government, the Water Board, in collusion
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with the now failed Minister, Tim Moore, announced that the scheme had been put on hold indefinitely. Large public meetings were held to protest about this treatment, but funds were diverted, and, I believe, spent in the Blue Mountains and North Sydney areas.

On Friday, 27th October, 1989, former Premier Greiner, during a visit to Gerringong service clubs, assured his hosts that a major announcement on sewerage to Gerringong and Gerroa would be made within four weeks of that date, and this was reported in the *Kiama Independent* on Wednesday, 1st November, 1989. On 22nd November, 1989, I raised this matter in the House by way of private member's statement, but the Minister at that time, Tim Moore, ducked out of the House rather than respond. Four years later we are still waiting for the announcement that was to be made four weeks after 27th October, 1989. For the past four years the board has gone through a period of public consultation. I am informed that board representatives have assured residents that the money is available to do the job, but a cursory glance at this year's Budget Papers discloses that no money is allocated to Gerringong or Gerroa for new works or works in progress.

Similarly, the residents of Jamberoo and the Water Board have gone through a public consultation process for the past two years in relation to a number of options for the installation of a package sewerage scheme for the town. However, at this time the board has deferred that proposal indefinitely. It should be noted that the board did not pay for the cost of investigating the Jamberoo scheme. It was paid for by Kiama Council, which agreed eventually to meet the cost of the Jamberoo sewerage facility study, but even this has not brought forward a sewerage scheme by even as much as one day. In a letter from the Water Board signed by the Regional Manager, Greg Klamus, dated 9th June, 1992, it was stated:

After exhibition of the EIS the Board is expecting to have completed the Determining Authority's report in April, 1993. If a decision is then made to proceed with this scheme detail design will be

programmed to allow construction to begin by August, 1993.

So far nothing has happened. In relation to Gerringong, the letter continues:

If the decision is made to proceed with this scheme then detail design can be undertaken from May, 1994 with construction to commence in September, 1994.

The letter states also that it is envisaged that the board will commence the environmental impact assessment process for the scheme for Jamberoo in May 1993. Once again nothing has been done about that. The people of Gerringong, Gerroa and Jamberoo are completely fed up with public consultation. They have been consulted ad infinitum, and at the end of the day all they have is secondhand advice that the matter has been put on the back burner. If the board is to have any credibility at all, and if the promises that have been made to people over a period of five years are to be taken seriously, the board, in consultation with the appropriate Minister in another place, has to face up to the allocation of resources to get this work done.

Recently I attended an environmental fair at Gerroa. Some hotshot speakers from as far away as Tasmania and Western Australia attended also. Unfortunately, the local environmental problem did not even warrant a mention. The more sensational issues, of course, had plenty of airing, with advice to local residents to refer other matters to their local politicians and prevail on them to take a certain course of action. However, the only people who approached me at the fair were those who wanted to talk about sewerage for Gerringong and Gerroa. That is the local environmental question so far as I am concerned, as it is with Jamberoo. On behalf of the citizens of Gerringong, Gerroa and Jamberoo, I ask for a commitment from the Minister in another place that funds will be allocated and that the Water Board will get on and do the job.

"KANANDAH" WATER IRRIGATION LICENCE

Mr W. T. J. MURRAY (Barwon) [5.36]: At the beginning of this year I made representations to the Water Resources Commission, the Minister at the time, and the Premier about the availability of water for Mr Thomson of Kanandah, Goondiwindi. At the time he had an irrigation licence and required water to finish off a crop. Termination of his water licence took place on 30th January, 1993, and as a result, there is now a cost loss in relation to the crops on that property of \$101,236.71, which is split up over a number of blocks in the area. The Water Resources Commission claimed at the time that it had the right to terminate the licence conditions to lift the height of the water from .08 of a metre, in accordance with the licence originally issued to the Thomsons, to one metre. Subsequently, after representations to the Minister of the day, that figure was reduced to 0.5 of a metre and the Thomsons then proceeded to pump down to that level. They were prevented from doing so and were refused permission to further pump out of Boobera Lagoon. I bring to the attention of the House and to the Minister that the conditions imposed as a result of these actions are contrary to decisions taken and made by land boards. For example, on 3rd March, 1993, the Water Administration Manager, Water Resources, wrote to Mr Tom McCue, Chairman of the Local Land Boards, in the following terms:

Prior to licence L39472 being issued, the application was referred to the Moree Land Board and in its decision dated 5th January 1978 it returned the application to the Department advising that the Moree Aquatic Club was not a person within the provisions of section 11 of the Water Act 1912 and the objection by them as such was invalid.

As a result the appeal was not proceeded with. The letter continued:

As recognised by you, the Department does have certain powers under various sections of the Act to revoke, suspend or modify entitlements. However, it has never been the practice of the Department to utilise such powers during the currency of a licence where a Land Board Decision has determined

the conditions to apply to that licence.

The department was acknowledging its Act at that time. It was also inconsistent with the terms of the licence, given that it was first issued to a previous

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owner in 1978, was reissued in 1983 with the same conditions, and was reissued in 1988. The Department of Water Resources imposed changed conditions in 1993. I accept that they have been told verbally, but this is not sufficient reason to destroy the process of licences which many growers are dependent upon to earn their living, especially during the growing of a crop.

There were also allegations that the Aboriginal community had a right to make a determination. In a land board hearing in July 1983, when this application was first considered, its decision was quite specific: the Aboriginal people had no right to have a particular objection to this area, and they were in fact making a land rights claim which they should do through the proper processes. The matter was also rejected by the Hon. Lin Gordon, who said that the Aboriginal people had no rights or claims to the area. The National Parks and Wildlife Service, in a letter by Mr D. A. Johnstone, admitted that there should be no need for the variations to take place as regards the actions of the Aboriginal community. A new study is now being undertaken which will close down access to all stock of landholders adjoining Boobera Lagoon. It has been recommended in this report just completed that the travelling stock route be closed off, that landholders are not to have access to the lagoon, and that all pumping out of the lagoon should cease. This is an unsatisfactory and unwarranted intrusion into the whole process.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.41]: Obviously I was the Minister involved in the application for a variation to the licence on Boobera Lagoon. The honourable member for Barwon is right in that the owners previous to the Thomsons had a licence for 0.8 of a metre, to which they were allowed to pump. There were representations about that licence, which resulted in the variation. I think the honourable member would know who made those representations. The licence was varied to one metre. I had approaches from the honourable member for Barwon about the licence when the Thomsons were in some trouble when they cropped cotton. I asked the Department of Water Resources to review the licence, which it did. The department undertook a fairly extensive study into what the licence should be on the lagoon. Subsequently the licence was set at 0.5 of a metre.

The problem arose when the Thomsons reached 0.5 of a metre but continued to pump. One cannot break the conditions of a licence. It does not matter whether the crop is perishable or not; the conditions of the licence cannot be broken. Other landholders, other riparian holders of land along the lagoon had their pumps come out of the water, and they could not get stock and domestic water. Under the circumstances, even though I and the Department of Water Resources were sympathetic to the Thomsons, there was no option but to say that they could not continue to pump. It is unfortunate in these circumstances that people lose crops and have financial losses, but that was not the first time I have rejected a variation. There were other instances over a number of years where licence conditions were being breached, and where licenceholders were told that they had to cease pumping. I think that probably clarifies the situation.

LITHGOW MEALS ON WHEELS

Mr CLOUGH (Bathurst) [5.43]: In 1967 in the city of Lithgow a meeting was called by the then Mayor of the city of Lithgow, Jim Robson - whose father, incidentally, was a member of this House for the electorate of Hartley for some years - to set up what is now commonly known as Meals on Wheels. After 26 years of operation, on 27th November the Meals on Wheels arrangement in Lithgow will cease. Mrs Nina Clements is the President, Mrs Hilda Taylor is the Secretary, and Mrs Anne Segal is the Treasurer of Meals on Wheels. They have 60 to 70 volunteer workers helping them distribute meals to people who are very much in need of that service in their homes.

Meals on Wheels is finishing on 27th November because it has been unable to reach an agreement with the Department of Community Services on the need to employ a full-time co-ordinator. The service has been operating voluntarily for all these years and it will now cease to operate. That is a great shame. To date, there are no concrete plans to replace the service, although the matter is under consideration by the local home and community care unit. I understand that the Lithgow information and neighbourhood centre will be giving some thought to what sort of alternative system will be employed in the future to take over what the well established voluntary system has managed all these years.

I listened with some interest to my colleague the honourable member for Barwon speak about what happened in his electorate, and the hard and fast rule which apparently applied. I believe that is another case where there should be a degree of flexibility. If a community organisation is entirely voluntary and prepared to do the work, the system should have allowed it to continue. I cannot promise on behalf of the volunteers at this stage that if the rigid requirement to employ a paid co-ordinator were waived at Lithgow they would continue the service. However, I have no doubt that, if given the opportunity, they would give serious consideration to it.

My understanding is that the home delivery system will be changed. Certain members of the community will be bussed in to communal meals at Regency Lodge on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Other arrangements will be made to deliver frozen meals to those capable of preparing them. If people are not capable of defrosting and recooking a frozen meal, special arrangements will be made. Nothing concrete has been set in place.

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I ask the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Mines to approach his colleague the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for the Ageing to see whether, in this case, discussions can be held with the executive of the Meals on Wheels service in Lithgow with a view to determining whether it could be exempted from the new conditions of operation and whether it could continue to provide the service it has provided for so many years. The people I refer to are not young people by any means - they have been associated with Meals on Wheels for a long time - but they are willing to provide the service and they have the physical ability to do so. It is a shame that something which has grown as a dedicated community service, helping other members of the community, should be allowed to lapse because of what appears to be an inflexible approach by the department.

RURAL FUEL PRICES

Mr WINDSOR (Tamworth) [5.48]: I draw to the attention of the House an issue which has been raised here before - fuel prices in regional areas. I am particularly pleased that the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Mines is in the Chamber to listen to what I have to say. I believe that he has an understanding of the problem and he may attempt to do something about it. As I said, the fuel pricing policy in relation to country areas in particular and the structure whereby fuel companies price their product are not something that is foreign to this House. I know that there have been various attempts over the years to address this problem and to create some equity.

Most attempts have failed, some in the name of free enterprise working to the nth degree, and some in the name of sweetheart deals between oil companies, unions, end users, independent operators - any number of scenarios within the fuel industry. A striking example of the differences in fuel prices is that on 10th October at Marsfield in Sydney a 60-litre fuel tank could be filled for \$37 whereas at Dubbo it cost \$47 to fill that tank. I recognise that there are a number of differences in locations and selling prices and a range of other issues that may explain some of the differences but they do not explain all the differences. The pricing structures for fuel in New South Wales should be investigated. I am aware of an inquiry by

the Industry Commission on this subject at the moment but I do not think that is an excuse for not holding an inquiry in this State.

Recently an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted the President of the Shires Association, Mr Wal Mitchell, as calling upon the Government to conduct an urgent inquiry into the discrimination - I emphasise that word - against country consumers, who have to pay up to 19¢ a litre more for fuel than Sydneysiders. In anyone's economic rationale the cost of freight to most areas of the State would be between 2¢ and 4¢ a litre, which leaves quite a discrepancy in price. Some of it may be explained by the discounting policies of fuel companies. I do not believe that fully explains the situation. I believe that country people are substantially discriminated against by discounting in the major metropolitan areas. The volume of throughput achieved by city outlets leaves no doubt that country fuel users are being asked to pay for their discounting tactics and the prices being charged.

There are many grey areas. The price structure is a blur to most of us. We have great difficulty explaining it away. Given the problems with and concerns about the forthcoming big harvest in country New South Wales, which will need a lot of fuel, I put it to the Minister that a downward adjustment of price would be of immense benefit to recession ridden rural areas. I ask the Minister to bring my statement to the attention of the Premier, who is also the Minister for Economic Development, to the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs and to the attention of the Minister for Regional Development. The Service Stations Association, the Farmers Association, the Shires Association and many other bodies are concerned about this issue. The cost of fuel will be a determinant in regional development in the future.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.53]: The honourable member for Tamworth raised a most important issue to rural New South Wales and Australia in general. A variation of \$10 between Sydney and Dubbo in the cost of filling an ordinary fuel tank can hardly be justified on the basis of freight costs. Country people are saddled with the high cost of fuel. The further west one goes the higher the price one pays. The President of the Shires Association, Wal Mitchell, would be well aware of that. Not many years ago it was a Federal policy that fuel prices should not vary by more than 3¢ anywhere in New South Wales. Though there had to be some form of subsidisation, that was a pretty fair system. The honourable member for Tamworth pointed out that fuel prices add to the costs of production in mining, agriculture or our other competitive export industries. It is a hard world in which our industries have to compete, and freight costs are a big negative. Most mining and agricultural areas are well west of Sydney, and the cost of transport to the ports is a big disincentive that should be taken into consideration. The abolition of the Federal excise taxes of 26¢ or 27¢ a litre in the goods and services tax would have provided an incentive to exports.

BANKSTOWN HOME CARE SERVICES

Mr SHEDDEN (Bankstown) [5.55]: I bring to the attention of the House and in particular to the attention of the Minister for Community Services, the dramatic cutback in home care services in Bankstown, particularly the home cleaning service. Bankstown city has a population of about 160,000 people, of whom 60,000 are over the age of 65. Bankstown will continue to be an ageing community until 2005. Over the past 12 months Bankstown has suffered a massive 24 per cent cut in its home cleaning service with 340

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frail and aged people thrown off the service. Other metropolitan comparisons are Cronulla, 16 per cent; Leichhardt and Marrickville, 22 per cent; and Rockdale, 14 per cent. If this process is taken across the wider metropolitan area as well as the Newcastle and Illawarra areas it appears that thousands of frail and aged people will have been seriously disadvantaged. On checking the Department of Community Services budget for 1992-93 and the Federal home and community care funding I found that there was sufficient growth in funding to provide the service.

The pressure caused by the culling of the frail aged of Bankstown became so great that some home

care staff resigned because of the stress associated with informing the recipients that they would no longer receive the service. It reached a stage where the frail aged recipients would not give their names in case of reprisals from the home care organisation, with the possibility of being thrown off the service. An indication of the severity of cutbacks was that Mrs Christina Grenfell, 85 years of age, a local resident of 57 years, was refused home care last December following surgery for a broken hip. For six months Mrs Grenfell, who lives alone and has no relatives in the area, tried to manage her daily routine with the aid of a frame and a walking stick. At considerable expense she had railing installed in the bathroom, on stairways and all over the house to aid her day-to-day movements. Because Mrs Grenfell finds it difficult to bend she had a variety of tongs made - one set three feet in length - so that she could pick up things from the floor and from tables when she felt too weak to walk around using her frame.

When Mrs Grenfell applied for home care she was told that others were needier than she. Thank God my intervention on behalf of Mrs Grenfell has enabled her to have cleaning services for two to three hours a week from home care. The home care system was originally set up to keep the frail aged and the elderly in their own homes for as long as possible so that they would not be relegated to nursing homes. I am sick and tired of hearing of funding shortages when there has been adequate growth in funding from the federally funded home and community care program and the Department of Community Services. The recently announced dramatic cut in health services will only consolidate health problems in the area because most of the frail people will end up in hospital and nursing homes in the short term.

DUAL OCCUPANCY

Mr RICHARDSON (The Hills) [6.0]: I wish to bring to the attention of honourable members the issue of dual occupancy, which is of considerable interest in The Hills electorate. I commend the Government for its initiative in encouraging urban consolidation. Sydney has a population of about 3.7 million in an area approximately 140 kilometres by 60 kilometres. Sydney is one of the largest cities in area but one of the least densely populated in the world. Apart from the cost of providing services to newly developed areas, there are natural boundaries to be considered: Port Hacking River and the Royal National Park to the south, the Blue Mountains to the west, and Broken Bay to the north. Sydney's urban sprawl cannot be allowed to continue unchecked. As the Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing put it in a brochure entitled "Housing Choice: Better Lifestyle":

Urban consolidation is a way of accommodating more people in established areas where good public transport, health care services, schools, roads, water, sewerage, and electricity are already in place.

It is, I gather, a bipartisan policy that is being honoured a little more in spirit than the bipartisan policy on the Olympic Games has been lately. Regulations covering dual occupancy, outlined in the document I have cited, include Sydney's Regional Environmental Plan No. 12 and State environmental planning policies Nos 25, 28 and 32. The idea is that the policy will encourage dual occupancy on existing blocks of land, and thereby reduce urban sprawl and provide a better range of housing mix in established areas. Not everyone wants to live in a detached house on a quarter-acre block - or two-hectare block, as occurs in Kenthurst and Dural in The Hills electorate. The proposal will not only consolidate housing but also provide a better housing mix for the population.

I commend two videos from the Department of Planning - "Housing for All" and "Housing in Harmony" to the House. It is unfortunate, however, that in some areas of the electorate that policy is being exploited by unscrupulous developers. The policy is supposed to be restricted to established areas, but what is tending to happen is that these dual occupancies are being built in new subdivisions. As a consequence, rather than encouraging urban consolidation and usage of existing facilities, greater strain is being placed on those facilities, creating traffic jams, sewerage problems and the like. Of course, if a developer can put two \$250,000 villas on one site rather than one \$340,000 home, he will make much more profit out of it.

I commend an initiative taken by Hornsby Council in developing a new draft local environment plan. I pay tribute also to the work done by the former member for The Hills, Tony Packard, in that regard. He acted as a liaison point between the council and the Minister for Planning. The policy, in essence, creates a higher density area around Hornsby town centre. Hornsby is an old suburb that has been established for about 100 years. Two railway lines, the main northern line and the North Shore line, join there. Creation of that high density area has enabled the minimum subdivision area to be increased from 300 square metres to 500 square metres in low density residential areas and up to 600 square metres in the Beecroft and Cheltenham areas of the Hornsby shire.

One multi-unit dwelling for each 350 square metres will be allowed in low density residential areas, and in the Beecroft and Cheltenham areas it is proposed to allow one multi-unit dwelling for each 400 square metres. There will be less site coverage

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and more open space areas. A much more attractive planning environment can be created for residents of the shire. I commend the proposal to honourable members and to other councils. I wonder whether it might not be a good idea for the Government to publicise to other councils what Hornsby Council has done. I am sure they could benefit from following that strategy. We certainly put the idea to Baulkham Hills Council - the other council in The Hills electorate - and it is looking at coming up with a similar scheme.

STATE HIGHWAY 23

Mr PRICE (Waratah) [6.5]: I wish to speak about problems associated with State Highway 23, in the Waratah electorate, which have caused some upset to nearby neighbours. That highway has been under construction since about 1987. Products used in that construction were excellent. An amount in excess of \$55 million, being a combination of State and Federal funds, was expended. However, soundproofing has been provided along some sections of the highway but not along others. I referred briefly in my contribution to the budget debate to the problem but I want to be more specific, hence these comments.

The problem has arisen because during the construction period of the highway the Roads and Traffic Authority developed new noise level criteria increasing the decibel rating from 60 to 68. During the early construction period certain expectations and assurances were given, I understand by a number of officers who at that time worked for the department, that on completion of the highway those levels would be acceptable. For about 20 years residents lived with the problem of the National Highway bypass being a residential street at the front of their homes. They were assured that problem would be dramatically reduced, traffic would be transferred to the rear of their homes, and soundproofing would be made available so that any nuisance noise would be eliminated.

That has not occurred, in part because the decibel rating has been increased in the new code without any other explanation. People who are living virtually alongside each other find that one household has had some form of sound barrier provided whereas others have not. The reason given was, "We cannot do sections A, B, C at this stage, because we are not sure what impact the noise barriers will have on their homes as they are located near a gully or are elevated, or some other reason". Now they have none. So at the front of their homes they have a reduced noise level but one that is well above normal residential street noise level, and they have a vastly increased noise problem at the rear of their homes, which makes living in their homes almost impossible. Twenty years ago they moved their bedrooms from the front of their houses to the back to try to avoid the noise; now they have nowhere to go, except to move out. That is a poor alternative. I cannot believe that is really government policy.

Concrete soundproofing was provided near houses on the Swansea bends as part of the highway construction. I request most urgent reconsideration by the Government, through the RTA, of the provision

of soundproofing for those areas that were omitted from the original soundproofing program on Highway 23 between Newcastle Road, Jesmond, and Sandgate Road, Shortland. Also, unusual criteria prevail in decisions to provide soundproofing in some hitherto unsoundproofed areas. In one case, just on verbal advice from my office, soundproofing was considered appropriate for one dead-end street that had been created by the new highway, on the basis that prior to the construction of the highway there had been no noise at all and therefore sound barriers could be provided. But the unfortunate people living in several areas adjacent to Vale Street and Sandgate Road proper find that, though they were subject to highway noise at the front of their homes originally, that noise has now been transferred to the rear of their homes, and they are not eligible for assistance because they should be used to it. Such an attitude and policy are appalling. I emphasise that serious consideration should be given to reviewing noise level design criteria used by the RTA, particularly in areas where highways are provided in part with soundproofing during their construction.

I highlight the fact that along parts of Newcastle Road and Thomas Street, Wallsend, where the National Highway connector will be constructed, similar problems will occur. I am already receiving complaints from people about this. I ask the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads to direct the Roads and Traffic Authority to look carefully at how it can improve that situation and provide noise abatement screening before the noise becomes a major community problem yet again. I emphasise that this needs to be done urgently because the Federal Government has recognised the noise problem on the New England Highway and provided \$400,000 for soundproofing at Beresfield, where a similar problem prevails.

Private members' statements noted.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE UPON ROAD SAFETY

Message

Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Hazzard) reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr Speaker -

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That Mrs Forsythe be discharged from the Joint Standing Committee upon Road Safety and that Mr Pickering be appointed as a Member of such Committee.

Legislative Council
13 October 1993

M. F. Willis
President

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Hazzard) left the chair at 6.11 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

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APPROPRIATION BILL

PARLIAMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL

**BUSINESS FRANCHISE LICENCES (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) AMENDMENT BILL MOTOR
VEHICLES TAXATION
(AMENDMENT) BILL**

ROAD IMPROVEMENT (SPECIAL FUNDING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr MILLS (Wallsend) [7.30]: Other public work projects in the Wallsend electorate in grave need of some of that unspent capital works money are the multipurpose centre at Glendale Technology High School, the disabled access to Cardiff railway station, stage 2 of Glendale Technical and Further Education College, and Throsby Creek flood mitigation works, priorities 1, 2 and 3.

The top priority is \$12.7 million on a catchment management study that has been unfunded for five or six years. Every time it rains heavily I fear for several hundred of my constituents who live on flood-bound land about which something must be done. The Fahey Government has lost its way on public housing. In the Wallsend electorate this year no construction of accommodation units will commence, yet more than 4,000 applicants are on waiting lists for accommodation in the Hunter. More than 1,100 of those applicants are pensioners who face a seven-year wait for a pensioner unit. That delay is longer than anywhere else in New South Wales except the eastern suburbs of Sydney.

In Blacktown, the pensioners wait only two years. Older people will die while waiting in the Hunter. Lack of pensioner units has a tragic effect on their lifestyle. They lose freedom. They have the extra cost of private rental accommodation and suffer from overcrowding if they are living with their children's families. More than 1,000 people will wait up to seven years for single accommodation and families will wait more than four years for two-bedroom and three-bedroom housing. Approximately 1,700 families are suffering at the hands of the microeconomic policies of the Fahey Government - and that is during a recession. My message to the Government is to build more public housing in the Hunter and build it now so that in a recession we can start to reduce unemployment in New South Wales and relieve the suffering of people waiting for public housing in the Hunter. I notice that the Government can offer \$4.2 million to house animals in Taronga Zoo but cannot spend anything on public housing construction in the Hunter. That is a tragedy that marks the style of the Fahey-Armstrong Government.

A major environmental problem is the emission of toxic and harmful substances from the Pasminco zinc-lead smelter at Boolaroo. Local residents have the problem of living with present discharges as well as past pollution. The worst feature is the lead uptake to the blood of young children, which impairs their intellectual development. My constituents are living with lead. They look to the company to stop polluting, and progress is under way through improvements in production and environmental matters. They also look to the Government to help them live with present and past pollution. Last financial year the lead issues paper was issued and now task forces and working parties are under way. The interim reports of some of those bodies were due in September. I wonder where they are. The expenditure by the Minister for the Environment in this area is very small - only \$40,000 in this year's Budget for the lead task force.

Health expenditure is much greater on all lead matters in New South Wales - \$700,000, as shown in Budget Paper No. 2, pages 4-47. The most important question asked by people living in lead-affected Argenton in my electorate, and in Boolaroo and Spears Point in the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for Lake Macquarie, is when some remedial work will start on the historical burden of lead in the ground and in their houses in that community. These people do not want another generation of children to grow up affected by lead. There is a lot of knowledge available these days on how to remedy medium-level contamination of houses and land at a cost of less than \$4,000 a block. Lake Macquarie Council has made a start in that direction by concentrating on first ward kerb and gutter work in Argenton to help cover the dust. I congratulate those first ward aldermen for their efforts. People are asking me when the State Government will come to the party.

Is the Government aware that Pasminco is willing to help remedy the worst-affected area close to the smelter? The Minister should talk to the company and get cracking now, not wait two, three, four or five years before starting. The community has told me and my colleague the honourable member for Lake Macquarie how disappointed and cynical they are. The Environment Protection Authority encourages community-level applications for Environment Restoration and Rehabilitation Trust grants. Several applications were submitted, but no grants were made for environmental restoration and rehabilitation of suburbs around the lead smelter, despite the allocation of 31 grants totalling \$1.45 million. What do the people of Argenton and Boolaroo have to do to qualify for grants? The Minister needs to explain why they missed out.

In addition to money required to remedy lead pollution, people want help from the Government for the cost of soil sampling at their houses. They want free testing, prior to an attempted sale of their houses. Extra resources are also needed for the environmental health centre in Boolaroo, in the Lake Macquarie electorate. I have referred already to the lack of 3 x 3 spending in the Hunter relative to other parts of New South Wales. A lot of catchup work is needed when the freeway-related roads are finished at the end of this year. I wonder what will happen because the

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Roads and Traffic Authority staff cuts projected for this year are 296, as shown in the Budget Papers. So much money is thrown around that one wonders where the money will come from for roads. Federal money amounting to \$52 million this year has been diverted by this Government to consolidated revenue. Last year \$95 million was given in loans to the private operator of the M5 Freeway.

In the past year there was irresponsible underspending in the Department of Community Services of \$14 million in grants and subsidies and \$20 million in net cost of services. That is the worst example of continuing Greinerism in this Government. In a recession it is reprehensible for a Government to apply its overall debt reduction strategy to the welfare sector. It lengthens waiting times for those needing help and throws more people on the unemployment scrap-heap, so that they have to join the welfare queue. Because of the underspending, there is great concern whether the increased Commonwealth funding will reach its target. On page 227 of Budget Paper No. 3 grant and subsidy payments are shown as increasing from \$259 million to \$394 million. Funding for assistance to the disabled is increasing from \$7.7 million to \$101.7 million. Commonwealth payments are shown on page 244 as going from nothing to \$86.3 million in this area.

In spite of needs, there will be 226 fewer public sector jobs in the Department of Community Services in the coming year. In Home and Community Care funding, for the first time in nine years, the growth funding round is cancelled because the State Government is not matching the increased Commonwealth funding. On 28th September the *Newcastle Star* stated:

Newcastle and Lake Macquarie will miss out on new Home and Community Care (HACC) services for frail, aged and disabled people this financial year because of a lack of government funds.

The Department of Community Services, which administers the HACC program, has said there is only enough money available to give existing services the same level of funding as last year.

There is no money to expand them or establish new services.

Where is the money going? Will there be more underspending in that area? Another DOCS matter of concern to me is highlighted in the September information bulletin of the Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales, in an article headed "A home of my own, some friends and something to do", which talks about the current service provision for people who have had a brain injury. The final paragraph states:

The main concern is now to provide long term care services to flow on after discharge from Brain Injury Rehabilitation Programs services. Without adequate community follow up, the function of

rehabilitation services can be compromised.

I appeal to the Minister to carefully and urgently consider the brain injured work support project currently funded by the Hunter Area Assistance Scheme, which expires this month. The Hunter Brain Injury Group seeks that DOCS take on that project, just as the Minister announced recently in the Hunter that DOCS would take up \$150,000 of Motor Accidents Authority funding for the brain injury access project. People with acquired brain injury are falling into a gap that is not covered by either State or Federal programs.

The Department of Community Services cannot find \$4,000 for the Wallsend family support service to provide the additional funds required to meet increased rental in changed premises. The Department of Health kicked the service out of its former premises. The Department of Housing found the service a place to work from, but the additional cost was about \$70 a week in rent. And the Government cannot find 70 times 52 to help them out. This has happened at a time when the department has underspent last year's budget by \$20 million. Potentially dangerous situations are emerging. For example, developmentally disabled teenagers in group homes are having their night-time supervision removed. That should not be happening, particularly when one hears that the money saved is to be used to establish a house for younger developmentally disabled children. If that is the case, enhancement funding should be provided for the new facility and the night-time supervision of developmentally disabled children should be maintained.

Health services underfunding in the Hunter region will continue. Each year the region is \$20 million short. The region is short of 100 hospital beds. There are unmet superspecialty needs in oncology and cardiac surgery. The State Government must negotiate with the Commonwealth Government about nursing home and hostel beds because at any one time in the Hunter region 120 acute care beds are taken up by patients waiting for, assessed and qualified to enter, nursing homes and hostels. That should not be happening. The impasse should be broken. State departmental help is needed to negotiate with the Commonwealth to overcome that problem. The Hunter Area Health Service is considering limiting outside elective surgery; the service will not provide treatment to patients from other parts of New South Wales. This is proposed in an effort to try to save \$6 million or \$7 million because the underfunded budget in the Hunter is so tight.

Articles such as the one dealing with an elderly man reduced to moving about on all fours and having to wait months and months for a hospital bed should not be appearing. There are just not enough beds available. The pressure on the usage of hospital beds in the Hunter region during the winter is absolutely terrible. In relation to education, stage 2 of the Glendale TAFE expansion is needed. Spending on the schools integration program has been reduced. That is a pity, because the community supports integration programs for intellectually disabled and slow learning children. At a number of schools in my electorate those funds have been reduced. [*Time expired.*]

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [7.41]: I am grateful for the capital works budget for the electorate of South Coast, which, with the exception of health care, will make substantial inroads into the needs of
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the rapidly growing Shoalhaven city. In a press release I detailed to the electorate the proposed major capital works in roads, sewerage, water, schools, housing and so on. But the real scandal relates to health care, for which only \$2 million is to be allocated for major capital works in electorates which extend from north of Bulli to south of Ulladulla and Burrill Lake. That \$2 million was allocated to Shellharbour Hospital. In the region administered by the Illawarra Area Health Service, Shoalhaven receives only 26 per cent of the funding yet has 29 per cent of the growth. Three meetings called by the Illawarra Area Health Service, which were attended by 1,500 people, underlined the need and support for the retention of the Karinya palliative care unit at David Berry Hospital, the expansion of Milton Hospital and stage I at Shoalhaven Hospital.

Some recurrent funding could be made available for the accident and emergency service at

Shoalhaven Hospital and high dependency beds at Milton. These facilities are needed desperately. Capital works are needed at both Milton and Shoalhaven hospitals. The David Berry Hospital should be retained. These matters are critical. Reports from Shoalhaven City Council and the Board of Fire Commissioners showed that the west wing at Shoalhaven Hospital has dangerous fire hazards. It was built in 1949 of timber, fibro and weatherboard construction and contained some asbestos. The Minister for Health must take full responsibility for any tragedy which may occur in that building. It is an absolute disgrace that an amount only slightly in excess of \$2 million has been made available for capital works funding for all of the needs of the entire Illawarra area. Other immediate capital works needs are for a proclaimed place in Nowra, which would cost approximately \$150,000, and a new school for North Nowra.

I have placed questions on notice in relation to the planning and funding of new schools at Callala, Mollymook and Manyana, such is the enormous growth of those areas. In addition to the minor and major capital works needs I have mentioned, I will attempt the impossible task of detailing recurrent funding. When one talks about services to the community, one must consider the background of the entire Shoalhaven city. Shoalhaven residents have lower income levels than the remainder of the Illawarra region and the State. The 1986 census revealed that 59.9 per cent of households - that is far more than half - had income levels of less than \$22,000, compared with 48.6 per cent for the entire region and 44.9 per cent for the State at that time. Shoalhaven has an alarmingly high unemployment rate; 4,300 people receiving unemployment benefits, or 15.2 per cent, compared with 14.8 per cent for the Illawarra as a whole. These were the official Australian Bureau of Statistics figures as at July 1992.

Shoalhaven residents have a high dependency on social security benefits. In August 1991 the Department of Social Security was paying 27,104 benefits, representing 39.7 per cent of the population. So far as senior citizens are concerned, the proportion is very high. Again the 1991 census preliminary data showed that 26.5 per cent of Shoalhaven residents were aged over 55 years, compared with 21.8 per cent for the Illawarra and 19.6 per cent for the State. In relation to disabilities, Australian Bureau of Statistics figures in 1988 showed that Shoalhaven has a high proportion of people who have disabilities; 6.1 per cent, compared with 3.4 per cent for the remainder of the Illawarra region, almost half the proportion in Shoalhaven, and 2.9 per cent for the State, less than half. Add to this the scattered nature of the city, spread over 80 kilometres with 40 towns and villages, no government owned public transport, a thin transport web, a 12 per cent growth rate in central Shoalhaven and a high growth rate overall, and the situation becomes quite critical.

In this debate I wish to concentrate on services. To provide community health services, drug and alcohol workers are required for the St George Basin- Sanctuary Point area and one for the Milton-Ulladulla area. Community nurses are not keeping up with the health weighted population growth of the Shoalhaven area; three more nurses are needed. Funding of \$30,000 is required to support the position of palliative care co-ordinator, a person who is responsible for the management and efficient operation of approximately 70 volunteer workers. This is a vital service recognition of community care and participation, and warrants strong support. I must emphasise, in all I say in this debate, the extraordinarily high level of self help within Shoalhaven. We are not merely putting our hands out to the Government.

A mothercraft centre is needed to provide support for emotionally troubled families, particularly where there are instances of child bashing, and funding is required to provide community health Outreach services to the bay and basin areas. Ulladulla does not have the services of a sexual assault worker. There is a crucial need to keep the sexual assault centre adjacent to Shoalhaven City Hospital in Nowra. There is also a need for a proclaimed place. This will have great benefits so far as police are concerned and it will be of great assistance to health workers. What we have was shown recently with the horrendous death of a child in East Nowra. There is a problem for the police in taking drunks to cells, so they are often taken home and become the centre of violent confrontation. That upsets the family. Domestic violence following alcohol consumption is quite common. The St Vincent de Paul Society in Nowra is doing a particularly good job. In 1992-93 that society provided accommodation for 211 men, or

3,351 bed nights. The men requiring accommodation are getting younger in age; 32 per cent are between 18 and 30 years of age. Statistics confirm the need for a proclaimed place to avoid the occurrence of domestic violence. In addition, the police would have a place where those persons could be managed properly, given proper care, and where contact could be made and assistance given to them to deal with alcohol problems.

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The estimated cost of the proposed proclaimed place is, for capital, \$150,000, and for recurrent costs, \$140,000. It has been a feature of my speech tonight to try to address the costs, and detailed submissions have been made to the relevant departments, and in some cases to the Minister. Money has been made available for proclaimed places following the decriminalisation of drunkenness in 1986, but it has not been allocated to the Shoalhaven, where there is a desperate need. There are three medium-term homes run by St Vincent de Paul in Nowra, averaging eight persons a day. From 1st January to the end of August this year 154 persons were arrested by police for being intoxicated. There is no proclaimed place for women suffering intoxication and, of course, arrest by the police means court time and police time. Often there is resistance to arrest and more charges are laid. There are intoxicated persons home delivery problems facing organisations such as St Vincent de Paul, and in some cases the police, because the places are scattered - places such as Huskisson, Sanctuary Point, Milton, Berry and Sussex Inlet are examples.

I now turn to the important question of caring for the carers. As honourable members know, carers work 24 hours a day. They cannot get away from the problems of caring and, no matter how much love there is for the suffering person, obviously the carers are wearing very thin. People get worn out. In the Shoalhaven area 2,346 people are estimated to be suffering from dementia and by the year 2011 4,470 people will be affected. Those statistics were obtained from the aged care assessment team.

From June to December 1991 a total of 16 carers requested assistance because they were at the end of their tether and in only one year, from June 1992 to December 1992, the figure trebled to 48. Last year a carers support group was formed in Nowra for a self-help program and the number of carers attending its meetings is increasing all the time. This is a desperate need. There is only one nursing home respite bed in Nowra, currently booked until February 1994. The nursing home is unable to cater for anyone who wanders. There are also six hostel respite beds in the area; none of them are appropriate for people who have a moderate-severe dementia as they do not have 24-hour staff coverage.

David Berry Hospital, which does have respite beds, will not take patients because there is a creek nearby and train lines run through the property, constituting considerable problems for people who wander. The Shoalhaven Hospital has no contingency for people with dementia. There is no secure area set aside for people who may wander. There just has to be a dementia care program and facilities and carers program in Shoalhaven. The program has been carefully costed in a detailed submission forwarded to the department. The services of a co-ordinator, 25 hours for an Outreach worker, motor vehicle, office support, volunteer training, et cetera, will cost less than \$100,000.

The dementia in-home respite service is aimed at giving support to people at home. The need was voiced by the carers themselves at a meeting in Nowra, and was acknowledged by professional workers. The need is acknowledged by the professional team working in the area of aged care, including the aged care assessment team, community options, home care, day care co-ordinators, community worker for the aged and young disabled and community health workers. They are seeking recurrent ongoing funding for a program in which volunteers will perform the role of respite carers. Again, we are looking at the effective use of the dollar, where people are involved voluntarily. They will be selected, trained and given ongoing support by the co-ordinator and Outreach workers. The Outreach workers will liaise with and monitor each client, carer and volunteer worker. The co-ordinator will have an assessment and overall management role.

The aim is to provide regular overnight in-home respite; emergency respite, especially in the evenings and on weekends when it is hard to find staff; assistance for carers to prepare carers for outings to day care, which would then increase the usage of existing day care facilities; ongoing education and support to the carers of people, especially those with dementia; and facilitation of carers support groups that would encompass remote areas of the Shoalhaven. The objectives are to provide training for volunteer carers; to evaluate the service provided; to ensure that the rights of users are respected; to ensure equity of access; and to maintain open communication with the auspice body, co-ordinator, Outreach workers, clients, carers and respite volunteers. Another objective is to undertake the necessary legal requirements, such as insurance and screening of volunteers for suitability. Honourable members will see that it is a very carefully thought out and cost effective program, and one in which the community wants to become involved.

In the community services area, there are pockets of problems in Shoalhaven caused by the very real problems of isolation, family dysfunction, sexual dysfunction, unemployment, alcoholism, drug abuse and so on. There have been tragedies at East Nowra and Sanctuary Point in the basin area. The request to the Minister was responded to by the chief policy adviser, Michael Tidball, meeting with the Nowra family support group. It was a very positive meeting and he was most impressed with the self help and what was being done. At Ulladulla there is a full three-day service costing \$26,000, a very cost effective program. At Nowra the total budget was \$126,000 for 1991-92. It was static for almost three years and no allowance was made for superannuation and award increases. This meant that services were cut in a rapidly growing area with very real problems, with a high proportion of single parent families and with the statistics that I outlined earlier.

Some services had to be wiped out. The one-to-one services were cut severely in favour of group services, all in an area which desperately needed expansion. They had to survive that three-year period
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because there was no allowance made by the Government for determinations of a court on superannuation and awards. I am grateful to the Minister for the allocation of an additional \$18,120 for the 1992-93 period for Nowra home care but that 4.4 increase, although very welcome, covers only indexation and part of the three per cent superannuation cost required under the award. Other costs of implementing the award - for example, annual staff increments - are still not covered.

This is in an area of permanent recession. No money was allocated to the Shoalhaven out of the recession alleviation package. There were cuts in real terms. Again, I am not talking about large amounts of money. What is needed is only \$8,500 in recurrent funding. That would satisfy the immediate and urgent needs of the family support service, which is giving outstanding service, and which is such a wonderful preventive service carried through with love and understanding and real commitment by the workers and volunteers.

Neighbourhood centres have similarly been affected by the failure to fund their necessary additional payouts as a result of award determinations for wages and superannuation. The Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Centre this year received \$23,348, but that did not meet the shortfall. Nevertheless, I am grateful for the Minister's response in that regard. In regard to disability services, funding is required to provide an upgraded developmental disability service in Shoalhaven. The money would be used to provide accommodation for those with less serious development disabilities. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I thank the House for that courtesy. Supported accommodation in the community for those with less serious developmental disabilities would also free up accommodation for those who cannot do without full support services - again, a cost-effective strategy. The domestic violence officer was first funded by the Department of Community Services in March 1992. The area covered by this one officer ranges from Berry to Sussex Inlet, but as there is no officer in Ulladulla she also provides a service there. I remind the House that she covers a distance of 80 kilometres, servicing 40 towns and villages. There is funding

for 25 hours per week to cover this area to provide these services. With the current clientele of 57 people, average contact varies from one to 10 contacts, depending on the severity of the disability and the person's needs. A computer is required to assist clients in referral to other agencies and to prepare court reports. Increased funding is required to expand services and meet extreme demands associated with domestic violence orders - unfortunately an increasing trend in the Shoalhaven City area.

The main area of concern in community welfare services is that the total State allocation for the area assistance scheme is \$6.7 million and for the Illawarra \$750,000. Last year's allocation was just under \$7 million and again the same figure for the Illawarra, so there has been no indexation since 1988-89. The sum of \$135,000 remains the ceiling for the Illawarra for pick-up funding, and this does not allow for consumer price index or incremental wage increases. It is important to underline that community welfare services is a community involved group. Members of the community choose the projects, the priorities and the amount of funding. A new mechanism last year meant that departments would only pick up funds for four years as funds are earmarked through Treasury. Of course, that is a great worry. CPI movements must be taken into account. The State Government did not match the 6 per cent growth funds allocated by the Federal Government for home and community care funding, with the result that \$7 million will be lost to the New South Wales home and community care program this year. There will be no HACC round nine funding, hence no growth for new services or programs. Any increase in HACC funding will be used mainly to fund superannuation for home care workers.

Another area in which I have an interest is legal aid cuts to victims of crime. Legal aid for victims of crime seeking compensation has been cut by over 23 per cent, from \$44 million to \$34 million. One of the main concerns is the impact on victims of sexual assault. Since 1992 a decision to cut funding of civil aid has meant that people can no longer obtain legal aid for personal injury, coroners inquests, employment law, wills, and estates, et cetera. This denies financially disadvantaged people access to justice and their legal rights. Approximately \$50,000 is required for total relief in this area.

In the Milton-Ulladulla area, as with areas in northern Shoalhaven, service providers are under great stress. There is a need for an early childhood nurse, a full-time psychologist, a psychiatrist for one session each week, a part-time sexual assault worker, a diabetic educator, a community social worker additional to the 16 hours provided, a full-time receptionist and relief, and a full-time drug and alcohol counsellor. Recent cuts to the Ulladulla service include a drug and alcohol councillor, the withdrawal of a psychologist one day per week, no general relief for any staff, no social worker, no on-call psychiatric nurse, and one on-call palliative care nurse. Residents are concerned that funding for the recently burnt down dental health clinic will be diverted. This rapidly growing isolated area of Shoalhaven has some real problems.

I am grateful to the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services for his visit to Shoalhaven, and his undertaking and promise to provide two police officers for the Huskisson Bay basin area, two drug squad officers for Nowra and a general duties officer for Milton. A detailed submission comparing police numbers and workload in Shoalhaven with other areas such as Warilla has been made to the Minister. Existing police services are strained because of illness, injuries while on duty, police on maternity leave, police being taken off the central police beat program and not being replaced, and significant increases in crime, which demonstrate a need for more physical evidence and fingerprint police. Where police are not replaced or provided

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because of these reasons the community suffers and extreme pressure is placed on remaining police who have to cope with high workloads, yet maintain professional standards and quality of work.

The break and enter statistics for Nowra, Berry, Culburra, Huskisson and Kangaroo Valley speak for themselves. Only 19 incidents of break and enter at Nowra were investigated by detectives from the Nowra patrol, only two at Berry, none at Culburra, three at Huskisson and none at Kangaroo Valley. The number of break and enters of dwellings totalled 70, and in other premises totalled 77, so out of 147 incidents of break and enter only 24 were investigated by Nowra detectives. That matter certainly

screams out for attention by way of an investigation into work practices and staffing. The police situation has become so serious that basic crews to perform normal duties has affected all sections and sectors within the patrol - one supervisor each shift; one station man each shift; one communications officer, morning and afternoon shifts; and two units each shift as the car crew. To maintain this basic minimum level, other sectors and sections have to be utilised to provide for this one bare crew, each shift. An additional station reserve custodial officer from 9 to 5.30 is needed to perform the daily functions required to keep the customer service level to a standard that the community deserves.

Similarly, customer services are not being provided to the general public within Shoalhaven. Only one crew is working on the street each shift. There is absolutely no pro-active policing being performed due to the current policing levels. Police staffing levels for 1993 are the worst they have every been in the past three years. The position previously occupied by Sergeant Hope was lost and never replaced. Previously Sergeant Hope performed approximately five supervision shifts and five licensing shifts each fortnight. The situation now is that beat Sergeant Norwood has to perform these licensing shifts each fortnight with some supervision shifts as well, and this does not allow him to perform his rightful functions as beat supervisor. Constable first class Seddon was transferred in April 1993 and was never replaced. Senior Constable Egan and Constable first class Clisdell were transferred in May 1993 and were never replaced. Constable Ford was pregnant, working non-operational duties, and has been on annual and maternity leave since the beginning of July 1993.

Senior Constable Holt has been on sick leave with stress since mid-July 1993. On his return from sick leave he will perform rotational duties with the youth club. Constable first class Brewer is pregnant and her rotational duties will be non-operational. Senior Constable Shilling and Constable Bradley have had ongoing sick leave since June 1993. Compulsory COPS training since August 1993 will continue until April 1994. Approximately six and a half days each unit for this training will be lost as well as two units lost for these shifts to deliver this training. Dave Wilson, Communications Officer, has taken two months leave without pay from September 1993. Sergeant Round availed himself of three weeks long service leave in September due to the workload from the police station. For nine weeks each year the intelligence officer and the court process officer have to be relieved. Relieving duty is performed throughout the year for the Tactician, Chief Inspector and Station Controller, which amounts to 25 weeks per year or the equivalent of half a year.

Senior Constable Watson has been given an authorised position within the Nowra patrol, and will never be returning to duty; there is expected maternity leave for Constable first class Bowker; Detective Constable first class O'Brien has been on four months leave without pay since August 1993; and the replacement detective sergeant nominated for a position at Nowra in January still has not arrived. I am quite happy with the Minister's response. I could give details of other officers. As can be seen, the situation is quite serious. Officer after officer is having continuous down time and is not being replaced.

There should be a return to special lotteries to raise money for hospitals. Over the years we have had lotteries for all sorts of reasons. The more elderly in the community will remember the income generated from lotteries. I think such lotteries would receive major public support and would be a way to fund our hospitals. I would support such a move. I have emphasised community self-help in all of the programs I have been involved with in the Shoalhaven. I have put to the Minister for Education a program to get the aged and the young involved so that the idealism, energy and enthusiasm of youth can be combined with the living skills, patience, care, love and understanding of the aged. There will be a lot of interaction in the pilot program, which involves arts, crafts, music and drama. There is also tremendous support from schools, with reading programs, et cetera.

I am interested in family medicine facilities, with general practitioners being the eyes and the ears of the community. I have mentioned the proclaimed place. I am also working on safe house respite for children under stress. I have been in touch with a number of professional people, such as Professor Peter Baume, Michael Boland, Mr Semple and others, as well as the Minister and the regional officers of the Department of School Education, so that we can get this cross networking in the community, using

the facilities in the community, the great goodwill in the community, the volunteers of the community, to cut down the need for government expenditure and to make the dollar go further.

Mr LANGTON (Kogarah) [8.11]: I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people of Kogarah in this debate. During the budget debate last year I raised a large number of issues regarding the lack of facilities for people of my electorate. The sad thing is there is still a lack of those facilities. One only has to look at the document produced by the Treasury, entitled "The State Capital Page 3737

Program - 1993-94 - Works Being Undertaken in the Kogarah Electorate From the New South Wales Treasury". There is virtually nothing in that document for the electorate of Kogarah.

While a small amount of work is being undertaken at Carlton Primary School at the moment with respect to cyclical maintenance, there is a dearth of work being done on other schools in the area. That school still has a crying need for a school hall. Major facilities are also needed at other schools. I refer now to Blakehurst High School. The Federal member for Barton, Mr Gary Punch, secured a \$500,000 Federal grant for the school to carry out some works. However, the New South Wales Public Works Department said that it would manage the project to spend the \$500,000, but that its fee - which was to be taken out of the \$500,000 - would be \$98,700. Almost 20 per cent of the money allocated by the Federal Government for these important building works at Blakehurst High School has disappeared into the coffers of the Public Works Department.

The New South Wales Department of School Education has made no allocation for capital works at Blakehurst High School, but when money comes from the Federal Government the New South Wales Government decides to steal it from the kids of that school. The parents and citizens association of that school was trying to negotiate to reduce the amount of the fee. Perhaps the Minister for Education will advise what has happened with those negotiations.

The issue of police is of great concern to me. I raised last year, the year before that and the year before that the matter of the gross overcrowding of the Kogarah police station. Police are housed in an antiquated building. Several years ago a new police station was on the capital works program, but it does not appear on the capital works program any more. In other words, the Government quite clearly has no plans to do anything about the appalling conditions under which the police at Kogarah have to operate. While I am speaking about the police, I put on record the great work which the Kogarah police do in the face of great adversity. There are some problems at Kogarah and they are of great concern to my constituents. For example, there are many high schools in the Kogarah area and at any one time children from six or seven high schools, as well as a number of primary schools, can be found congregating at Kogarah station. That causes enormous problems for shoppers, commuters and other railway users, particularly. Unfortunately, there are insufficient police at Kogarah to handle the problems. I give credit to Inspector Paul Chaplin of the Kogarah police. I know that all of Kogarah thinks he is doing a first-class job with the manpower he has available. Obviously, the manpower is not enough to do the job which is required.

In Kogarah not only are there problems associated with schoolchildren, as I have mentioned, but there is a problem associated with the methadone clinic which was moved from Sutherland. That was done to solve a political problem of the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing. He did a deal with his mate, the then Minister for Health, Peter Collins, to get rid of the methadone clinic and shove it in a Labor electorate. I have that clinic in my electorate and I accept that methadone clinics are a necessary part of our community and our society generally. I fully support the work being done by the Government's methadone program in trying to get people off heroin. However, if that sort of facility is to be put in an area such as Kogarah, quite clearly the responsibility lies with the Government to take the necessary action to ensure that there is sufficient control of the clients of that clinic and that there is sufficient police staffing to control crime which, regrettably, inevitably follows the placement of such a clinic in the middle of Kogarah.

I refer now to public housing. In the current Budget there is a very small allocation for public housing in my electorate. Fifteen units of accommodation are to be supplied. Unfortunately, that is grossly less than what is required to provide reasonable public housing and priority housing for the people in my area in urgent need of government assistance with respect to housing, particularly single parents and the aged. Because of the cutbacks the Government has imposed on community services, there is a greater need for people - whether they are single parents or the aged - to be in an area where they can rely on the assistance of their family and friends. They therefore need to be accommodated in an area close to their family and friends. Regrettably there are not sufficient units of accommodation in the St George area for that purpose. As a result, people are being placed a long way from the area. They have to move away from their family support. Because of the Government's cutbacks in community services, those people are at a major disadvantage.

I spoke earlier about the problems at the Kogarah railway station. There is an enormous problem with vandalism and graffiti. Obviously that is a job for both station staff and the local police. A paltry sum of \$100,000 has been allocated in the current Budget to complete upgrading work at Kogarah station. An amount of about \$1.6 million has been spent upgrading the station, yet two of the four platforms still do not have covered walkways to gain access to them.

There is still not ground level access off the platform into the main shopping centre, though a gate already exists. If anybody from the State Rail Authority or the Department of Transport with a little common sense inspected the area, he would see that things could be done to improve the facilities for people using public transport. This might sound a bit radical for Government members, but we could even attract people back to public transport. People have shifted away from public transport because of the appalling way that it has been run. There is nothing in the Budget for roads in my electorate. Two important projects have been long outstanding but the Government has shown no commitment to them in the Budget. The first is the construction of a new bridge over the railway station at Allawah. Its importance
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has increased because of the rapid development of the Hurstville shopping centre and the need for better access by vehicles to Hurstville. A new and wider overbridge at Allawah is a necessity which this Government refuses to acknowledge by even putting it on a program. The other work is completion of the widening of King Georges Road. Work has stopped on a major section of King Georges Road between Connells Point Road and Penshurst railway bridge. At least last year there was a token allocation - probably enough for two men with a pick and shovel - showing that the work would continue. This year there is no reference to the work in the Budget.

I turn now to transport matters. The State Rail Authority deficit, which the Government continues to claim it has reduced, is still running at \$3 million a day; and that is what it was running at when the then Leader of the Opposition, Nick Greiner, was trying to win government in 1988. The only difference is that now the debt servicing component has been taken over by Treasury and conveniently hidden. That figure is accurate because in the Estimates hearings last year the Minister admitted that the total amount of money that taxpayers had to put in was \$923 million, \$3 million a day, the same as it was in 1988. For all the cuts, for all the 12,500 staff who have gone, for all the service cuts, there has been no significant reduction in the operating deficit of the State Rail Authority. I notice that the SRA is planning yet another major review to examine its proposed operating and financial performance against the original target performances set by the Booz Allen report in 1988-89. All I can say is that it is another bonus for consultants. The Minister might be able to advise us who the consultants will be, their terms of reference and the costs. Taxpayers have a right to this information. They also have a right to expect that such a review will be at least open to public scrutiny and not simply, as was the Booz Allen report in 1988-89, another excuse for the Government to further reduce services. As the SRA debt has not changed and the only significant changes to service have been reductions, I wonder what good the last consultants' review was anyhow. And if it was so lacking in effectiveness why is it still used as a basis for measuring performance?

The Government is examining the privatisation of wheat lines - lines which the Government closed but which it now wants private enterprise to take on. Is this just the beginning of the privatisation of all rural rail services? When the Booz Allen report was produced in July 1989 it recommended that all country rail services be discontinued. I have no doubt that is still the aim of the Government, particularly the Minister. The Minister and other Government members have announced the new Xplorer and Endeavour trains with much fanfare. They are excited about the brave new world: there is going to be a train to Armidale. Is that not marvellous? Is the Government not great? Is Bruce Baird not wonderful for providing a train to Armidale? No. He should not have taken it away in the first place. Why should he pat himself on the back for giving people back something that he should not have taken away in the first place? Trains used to run all round New South Wales. There used to be an XPT service to Grafton, an XPT service to Canberra and an XPT service to Armidale. Those services were taken away in 1990 because, the Minister assured us, nobody was using them, they were costing a fortune, and taxpayers did not want the trains. All of a sudden, in 1993, Bruce is just the best bloke in the world: he is going to provide trains for people. I assure the Government that the people of New South Wales are not that stupid. They know that the demand was there in 1989 and 1990 and that the demand is still there in 1993. However, in the intervening three years people have had to make other arrangements, and patronage may not be as great as it should be because people have settled into other travelling patterns. The new services are not initiatives; they are simply concessions to the people who always maintained that the services were required.

I notice that the SRA will spend \$125 million on redundancies this financial year. If the Government used natural attrition the money saved could be used to improve services and infrastructure for State Rail to build up the State's public transport system. A safe, reliable and clean public transport system, in the city or anywhere else in New South Wales, is what people expect for the taxes they pay. I note that the SRA can identify how many non-management staff have been axed since 1988 - over the past five years the work force has declined from 36,717 to 22,803. But it cannot do the same with reductions in corporate staff. I wonder why we can pinpoint to the individual the number of blue collar workers who have been got rid of over the past five years but we have no idea of how many white collar workers have gone in the past five years. I am not normally a suspicious man but could it be there has been an increase in the number of white collar staff? Or is it too embarrassing for the Government to admit that it is the real growth area of the State Rail Authority. In last Saturday's *Sydney Morning Herald* I noticed an advertisement which I thought gave an insight into what was going on and where the SRA's priorities lie. It reads:

Senior Communications Officer (Newcastle)

Salary package \$48,253, to provide a wide range of specialist communications functions for the Regional General Manager Freight Rail North.

Essential: . . . ability to deal with politically sensitive issues . . . problem solving and networking skills, ability to operate sensitively and autonomously in a challenging environment . . . 19-day month, 24 hours on call . . .

Desirable: Tertiary qualifications in a relevant discipline.

What might be a relevant discipline? Perhaps tightrope walking. The advertisement did not mention that applicants needed knowledge or experience of trains or carrying freight. But then again, the people at present running the SRA have shown clearly that they do not have those abilities either. They probably do not want to be shown up by getting somebody in under them who does know what is happening. I

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want to touch briefly on a whole range of other matters. The airport rail link has been announced and announced and announced and announced. In fact, we might give the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads a gold medal for announcements. What the people of New South Wales want is

action. They are sick and tired of announcement after announcement.

I notice that delay has also occurred in Department of Transport funded projects such as bus-rail interchanges at both Liverpool and Woy Woy. Those projects are underspent and under budget. In other words, no real commitment has been made to providing these kinds of services. The Parramatta River ferry service is behind schedule through underspending and no commitment being made by the Government. Fourteen inspectors have been cut from the transport regulation section of the Department of Transport. In other words, taxis, hire cars and private buses will be on the roads without the level of regulation and control that the public demands of a government to ensure that standards are maintained. After the past three years, only 114 of those inspectors are left. The number of inspectors doing their work on taxis, hire cars and private buses has been cut in half.

The Maritime Services Board budget has been cut by 6 per cent this year - further underspending. The allocation on roads has declined by about 1.5 per cent this year. The Government, very cunningly, has taken untied Federal grants and said: "We will pull that \$50 million-odd out of the roads budget and spend it on something else. We will not tell you, but for the time being we will put it into Treasury and it will go into consolidated revenue. Some time later we might use it for something else. We will throw in public transport there just to keep the people happy". If the Government had been serious about maintaining the level of road funding, tied and untied Federal grants could easily have been allocated to that budget.

I note that western Sydney has been very badly treated in the roads budget. This year only \$47 million - less than 10 per cent of the total roads budget - has been allocated for western Sydney, an area that houses more than 20 per cent of the State's population. One might be accused of being cynical in regarding that action as one by a government that governs for Sydney's North Shore. An amount of \$50 million has been allocated to Interlink to finance a private tollway. A cut of \$78 million has been made to the road enhancement program, which was underspent last year. This litany shows clearly that the Government has no idea about its transport priorities.

Mr GLACHAN (Albury) [8.31]: Any assessment of the Budget should take account of present economic conditions in Australia. In passing judgment on the Budget one must realise that it has been framed during the worst recession in 60 years and in the face of massive cuts in Commonwealth funding during the past few years. Given the constantly dwindling tax base from which this State has to work, one must conclude that this Budget is a very good one. I congratulate the Treasurer on the wonderful job he has done. The Budget also reflects the excellent economic management of this State by this Government since 1988. Things are now beginning to come together for this State, and this Budget sets a pattern for the future. The most important feature of the Budget is that it reduces debt by \$100 million. That is quite an achievement in the present economic climate.

The Budget sets the pattern for the reduction of debt. By 1995-96 it is expected that this State's debt will be down to about \$600 million - a manageable level and an admirable result if it can be achieved. I have every confidence that it can. The Budget, while reducing debt and setting the pattern for further reductions, provides \$5.4 billion for capital expenditure. That allocation will provide infrastructure that this State needs, as well as opportunities for work in this State at a time of such high unemployment. The Budget is strong in the key areas of Government responsibility: health, education, and community services - services that we as a community need. I note it is planned that \$3,500 will be spent on every person in this State.

I am particularly interested in the performance of government trading enterprises and the returns they make to the taxpayers of this State. For a long time many of those enterprises soaked up taxpayers' money, but they are now beginning to operate more efficiently, are better managed, and are starting to return dividends to the people of this State. They are valued at about \$70 billion and should return about \$5 billion per year - a reasonable percentage return on that investment. However, the amounts these enterprises are returning have made a significant difference to the affairs of this State.

The Government should be commended on what it has achieved by way of returns from government trading enterprises. This pattern is one that other States could well follow, and I am sure that many will.

Governments have two choices in difficult times. They can act in a financially responsible way, as is evident in this Budget, or they can seek to remain popular, if that is what they want to do, and borrow more money. A fine example of the sort of trouble a government can get into can be seen by looking across the border into Victoria, as I often do from my vantage point in Albury. Victoria is running its transport system with a loss of about \$5 million a day, it has a debt of about \$7,000 per person and a crippling interest bill and, according to reports will be forced to get rid of about 4,000 schoolteachers and to close between 50 and 150 schools. Already Victoria has had to levy every property-owner in the State to the tune of \$100 to try to reduce its dreadfully crippling debt - all because the former Labor Government acted in a financially irresponsible way.

The former Labor Government borrowed money it should never have borrowed and spent money it should not have spent, and now the people of Victoria are beginning to pay the price for that irresponsibility. New South Wales is fortunate that its Government has

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chosen not to borrow all the money it could borrow, and to act responsibly, and consequently this State's affairs are in an excellent condition. I am proud of the amounts that have been allocated for projects in the Albury electorate. For a long time under the previous Labor administration not much money went into the Albury electorate. To some extent capital works in Albury were neglected. We are now beginning to make up for that. We are doing well, and have done particularly well out of this Budget.

I do not want to boast about what we are getting in Albury or about the monuments we are going to build to ourselves. I am very proud that the infrastructure we are going to build will lay a foundation for the future growth of the City of Albury, a future that belongs to our youth, our young people, our children and grandchildren. We are going to provide a lifestyle for them that will be to their great advantage, and which will make living in Albury very attractive for them well into the future. I am especially proud about what this Government is doing for the Albury electorate and its people. Probably the most important infrastructure under construction in Albury is the new Albury Base Hospital, a facility that we have needed for a long time. There was talk some time ago of simply redeveloping the existing Albury Base Hospital. As I have said in this House on a previous occasion, that hospital was a collection of old worn-out buildings that would never have been of any great value at all.

A great deal of money could have been spent on trying to revamp that old hospital, to little avail. This Government took the decision to build a new hospital. At the time some people in Albury said, "Thank you very much but we would rather not have a new hospital. We would like to keep the old one". I find it hard to believe that people would make statements such as that when offered a brand new state-of-the-art hospital. The project is developing well; I expect it will be completed next year. Patients will occupy beds in the new hospital before Christmas next year and that is wonderful. I congratulate all those in the Department of Health who have been involved in this project.

The budget this year has allocated \$22 million for work on the hospital. The new hospital will have 172 beds compared to 143 in the old hospital. Additionally, 37 beds will be off campus in other sites, providing a total of 209 beds against the present 180. Many people place great emphasis on the number of beds rather than on the outcome of treatment that the patients receive. The Mercy Hospital in Albury has 80 beds; the Wodonga Hospital, just across the border, has 102 beds; and the Albury-Wodonga Private Hospital has 80 beds. A problem with bed numbers has been the large number of elderly, long-term patients who have been sidetracked and finally stuck in the Albury Base Hospital, where they are taking up acute beds which really are not suitable for them.

The Federal Government has a strange formula for working out the number of nursing home beds that any area should have. Fortunately the Lutheran community in Albury is building a new nursing home, and it will take a lot of pressure off the base hospital by providing better accommodation for

patients who should be in a nursing home. Allowing for a growth rate of 7 per cent, it is estimated that admissions to the public hospital in Albury will be 7,770 by 1996; currently they are 6,780. The capacity of the new hospital will be 9,630 admissions a year, an increase in throughput patients of 42 per cent. Considering that there is room for expansion at the new site, the people of the Albury district are certainly getting a wonderful deal.

With the use of more modern technology the average stay in hospital is decreasing continually. In 1972 the average was 11 days; in 1991 it was down to six days, and it is decreasing all the time. When this hospital is completed and operating it will be the best country hospital in New South Wales - I am particularly proud about that. Now that the people in the Albury area have seen the work being carried out at the hospital they understand what a great benefit to them, and future generations, it will be. The construction of the new police station in Olive Street is progressing well. The total cost, including acquisition of land, will be \$7.6 million. This year's Budget has allocated \$3.8 million for work on that station. This public building is almost completed. It will enhance the City of Albury and be one that the citizens of Albury will be proud of. The former Government had a plan to renovate the old police station - as it planned to renovate the hospital - which was built in the 1960s and was totally inadequate. Even with renovation it would not have met the needs of policing in a city the size of Albury.

The Department of Housing has provided \$3.75 million in this Budget for 73 housing units to be constructed in my electorate. In Wyse Street, close to the centre of the city, 37 units will be built in the colonial style, with bull nose verandahs and landscaped grounds. Wyse Street is particularly suitable for pensioners who will use this accommodation because it is only a short walk from the main street and is close to doctors' surgeries and other services. This area will be highly sought after: I have been informed that when the announcement was made that work was to start on this project, a number of people approached the department to have their names put on the list to take up accommodation in that development.

The Forestry Commission has allocated \$4.9 million for the Albury electorate, much of which will be spent in the area of Tumbarumba and Holbrook, where softwood growing is an important industry. Money will be spent on seedlings for the forest, and extension and renovation of buildings. This important industry is expanding and employs many people in the field. Australian Newsprint Mills in Albury relies on those forests for its supplies. Money will also be spent on roadworks for the Forestry Commission. That is important because the timber has to be transported from the forest to the mills. The local councils recently approached the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads to talk about the future investment of road infrastructure in the area so

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that the enormous bulk of softwood that is grown can be carted to the mills when it is matured. The timber industry in this area helps to reduce the import of forest products by \$2 million.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is investing about \$1.5 million on roads in the Kosciusko National Park, around the Khancoban area. The Khancoban and Tumbarumba areas depend largely on tourism, and tourists need roads. With softwood plantations and the establishment of grape growing in that area, as well as traditional agricultural pursuits, tourism is certainly a growing industry and of great importance. In the public works portfolio \$800,000 is to be spent in this electorate. That does not sound a lot for this year but it is to finalise some major projects. The most important of these was the augmentation of the Albury city water supply, which will cost a total of \$18 million, of which \$9 million will be supplied by the Government. This allocation will also complete the Howlong sewerage scheme, a scheme which has made a great difference to that fast growing town. The sum of \$200,000 has been allocated for water supply in the Tumbarumba area, and I believe that that work is in Khancoban.

Until recently Khancoban was administered by the Snowy Mountains Authority. It has now been handed over to the Tumbarumba Council. I congratulate the council and the authority on the sensible way they went about handing the control of that town over to the council. The council officers and councillors were very patient and achieved an excellent deal for their ratepayers. On the other hand, the

Snowy Mountains Authority staff were most generous in the financial assistance they offered to the council when it took over the control of Khancoban. Albury railway station has been allocated \$200,000 for upgrading. It is a building I am particularly proud of; it is the most significant railway building in New South Wales, outside Central railway station in Sydney.

State Rail has already spent a considerable amount of money upgrading Albury railway station, and the results have been excellent; State Rail has done a wonderful job. The upgrading will add to the attraction of the station building. Albury TAFE college has been allocated \$2.46 million, which is part of a \$3.4 million scheme to finance the construction of a new business training centre. TAFE facilities will also be upgraded, of course, and that is very important. The business centre will be instrumental in helping to train young people for jobs. In this time of dreadful unemployment, it is most important that TAFE colleges have centres such as this so that young people have greater opportunities to be trained for the jobs they are so desperate to have.

In relation to roads, \$8.9 million has been allocated for major works on the Hume Highway, Olympic Way, et cetera; \$1.4 million has been allocated for minor works; and \$19.3 million has been allocated for other programs. All of that funding, of course, includes capital derived from the 3 x 3 levy. These roadworks will result in enormous improvements to the local roads. A great deal of work has already been done on the road out to the weir and on Jindera Gap. The funds allocated in this year's Budget will enable the road to the weir to be completed and further work to be done on Olympic Way. I am particularly pleased about these allocations. My electorate has certainly done well so far as roadworks are concerned. Some years ago my electorate was well behind in road allocations. It is now catching up and the roads are being put into good order.

The Albury electorate is fortunate to have excellent schools. The Budget provides sufficient funding to maintain those schools in excellent condition. The electorate has a special school called Kandir where children with behavioural difficulties are assisted to return to mainstream education. I am delighted with the allocations to my electorate. [*Time expired.*]

Mr SHEDDEN (Bankstown) [8.51]: I am delighted to take part in the budget debate. Unfortunately, I will not speak in support of the Budget; I will not be able to speak in the same terms as some Government members, who have spoken about the untold millions of dollars that have been dropped into their electorates during the past 12 months. In June 1992 Premier Fahey, in a major departure from the policies of his predecessor, announced a freeze on further cutbacks in government jobs for at least a year. In an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 27th June, 1992, which was headlined "Fahey calls a halt to job cuts", the Premier was quoted as saying:

We will put it on the table what we intend to do and then we'll say there will be a period of calm and peace so people can plan their own lives with some degree of certainty. I think people do need certainty from the point of view of where government is taking them.

And I think right at this moment they feel that four years of being in an air-raid shelter is a long time and is the bombing going to stop and can they look forward to blue skies and not worry about what the announcement is going to be next week or next month.

Let me make it clear that after this Budget many thousands of public servants are charging to the air-raid shelters. The bombing has recommenced and this year there will be no blue skies. Budget Paper No. 2 shows that about 3,000 jobs will disappear from key government authorities such as those supplying electricity and water, the State Rail Authority and the State Transit Authority, not to mention other crucial services such as health and community care. Last year the Premier presented a budget with a theme of creating 5,000 jobs and 18,000 flow-on jobs, which allegedly were to be created by an increase in the capital works program. However, in real terms only 5,000 to 6,000 jobs were created, and the capital works program was underspent by an unbelievable \$327 million. That is a total tragedy in management terms.

All honourable members will remember the loss of about 8,000 public sector jobs outlined in last year's Budget Papers. The loss of those jobs made a

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mockery of the theme that it was a job-creating budget. The Premier has now stated that, despite high unemployment, he is getting out of job creation. On 4th September he said, "Jobs are about, in the main, the Federal Government". As my leader, Bob Carr, has stated, "All governments have a role to play". That is particularly relevant having regard to the Government's performance in relation to employment. The Government intends to reduce its deficit by culling thousands of public sector jobs - a shabby performance by any standards.

Health is an important issue at the present time in this State, particularly in southwestern Sydney, where my electorate of Bankstown is located. Western and southwestern Sydney will not have a world-class health system because during the past four years the Government closed many hospitals. It is worth placing on the record the names of some of those hospitals: Parramatta Hospitals, closed; St Josephs Hospital at Auburn, closed, now a palliative care centre; Lidcombe Hospital, about to close; Canterbury Hospital, about to close; the Western Suburbs Hospital at Ashfield, closed; Marrickville hospital, closed; Balmain Hospital, closed, now a palliative care centre; Eversleigh hospital, Petersham, closed; and Glebe hospital, closed. I could continue, but, as I have said, it is worth placing on record some of the suffering that has taken place because of the closure of medical facilities in the west and southwest of Sydney. I quote from the Governor's Speech delivered at the opening of Parliament on 24th February when he referred to health:

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

In his Budget Speech the Treasurer stated that more than \$900 million will be spent on health services in the greater west. Let me assure the House that those resources are not being spent in the Canterbury-Bankstown and Auburn-Lidcombe areas. Lidcombe Hospital is a 430-bed acute care facility that provides a high standard of health care, particularly for the aged. By 1997 it will be closed and bulldozed. I repeat: by 1997 a modern 430-bed acute care facility will closed and bulldozed. In real terms Lidcombe Hospital is now only a hospital where services continue to decline. Since 1st July, no theatre services have been available at Lidcombe Hospital; only ophthalmology and neurology services. The bulk of the existing services are moving to Concord, Fairfield, Liverpool and Camden. The community also faces the loss of about 50 specialists, both staff and visiting, associated with Lidcombe Hospital.

Parallel with that is the almost total loss of aged care services with the closure of Lidcombe Hospital, which brings about extended waiting times for operations as well as the sad situation of the aged, the underprivileged or those on fixed incomes who cannot afford private health insurance to obtain a private hospital bed. In Bankstown 60,000 of the total population of 160,000 are over the age of 65 and the bulk of the aged care services from Lidcombe are going to Fairfield and Camden, leaving the area severely short of aged care services.

Bankstown Hospital is to be upgraded at a cost of \$76 million, but it will not be able to cater for services in the wider community. There will be no money for development from the Treasurer's \$400 million for the greater west and the money for the development of Bankstown Hospital will come from the existing operating budget of Lidcombe Hospital and the closure of 35 beds at Bankstown Hospital. The real issue is that Lidcombe Hospital will close by 1997 and Bankstown will be nowhere near opening at that stage. We will be lucky if it opens by 1998 or by the turn of the century. What type of health services are we going to have in south western Sydney, in particular in the electorate of Bankstown?

Honourable members have only to speak to regular rail commuters on the Bankstown and Chester Hill lines and to State Rail Authority staff to become aware of how bad services are on those lines. It is

common knowledge that trains run late and are cancelled. It is not uncommon when sitting on the station at Bankstown to hear an announcement over the public address system that the train is cancelled. Though 150 people may be waiting on the station, no one flinches because there is common acceptance that that is the way the system operates.

Honourable members know that control officers at the central control centre still give authorities for late trains to skip stations, leaving hundreds of commuters at the skipped stations and hundreds of commuters on board the trains unaware that the stations are to be skipped. That has been going on for some time. The authorities that authorise the driver to skip stations are called transposition slips. The authority allows late trains to skip some stations and arrive at Central on time. It is also common knowledge that any train that arrives at Central station within 10 to 12 minutes of its scheduled time is classified as being on time. So honourable members will appreciate the standard of rail service we now have in southwestern and western Sydney.

Unlike Government members, I am unable to tell the Parliament that \$20 million, \$30 million or \$50 million will be spent on major capital works in the Bankstown electorate, but I am delighted to announce that this year's capital works program of the Roads and Traffic Authority for that electorate will be \$360,000. A major development of the north-south road that runs from Lucas Heights to Dundas is proposed, but major work on that road through Bankstown has not commenced and will not commence, so I am told, for at least three to four years - although the road should now be completed to carry the amount of traffic that currently uses the road.

Once again, I cannot talk in glowing terms about education in my electorate because I cannot indicate to the House that I have recently received a \$10 million upgrade or a new school in the area. Of course, I can talk about Villawood East Public School, for which I have been trying to obtain major maintenance for the past five years. When two major classrooms in that school were condemned I pursued the Department of

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School Education to approve their replacement. It is common knowledge that that does not happen in regional areas where there is no community impact to force development of or repairs to schools by the Department of School Education. I suppose I must exhibit some reasonable joy about the fact that Bankstown Girls High School will be upgraded this year to the extent of \$3.6 million. Although that redevelopment is taking place, it has been on the works program for seven years. With that upgrading, the girls high school, which has an enrolment of 800, will now be able to dispense with 14 demountable classrooms. Honourable members will see the difference between the way the Government treats southwestern and western Sydney in comparison with the way it treats Government electorates so far as education and major capital works are concerned.

I do not have to detail the concerns about housing in western and southwestern Sydney because honourable members know that 85,000 people are still waiting for public housing. In the electorate of Bankstown many hundreds of people are waiting for four-bedroom accommodation and, so far as the Department of Housing is concerned, they will wait for eight to 10 years for that accommodation. At this stage the waiting time for three-bedroom accommodation is running at 5½ years and that for two-bedroom accommodation at 3½ years. As mentioned earlier, as Bankstown is an ageing community, about 1,000 aged people will be waiting for six years for single pensioner units. Most of the members for the west and southwest have spoken at length over the years about the maintenance program of the Department of Housing, where nothing less than major issues or major problems associated with housing get any real treatment. It has always been my view that now that the Government makes sure that people living in public housing pay almost commercial rent, those people are entitled to reasonable maintenance on their homes.

The concerns of members living in western and southwestern Sydney about the performance of the Government are understandable. If one listens to the rhetoric of the Government on day-to-day issues, one would think that it had a real concern for people; if one listened to the rhetoric of the Minister for

Health, one would think that the health standards in western and southwestern Sydney were nothing short of fantastic. Honourable members have heard that rhetoric for many years but have not seen any results. As I mentioned, many hospitals have closed but few have opened. Honourable members have heard the Minister say that Liverpool Hospital will become a major teaching hospital of world standard, but when will it be completed?

Liverpool Hospital has been on the program since 1988 and is well behind schedule. Similarly, the greater population of western Sydney faces real health issues with Nepean Hospital. Let me say once again that we are tired of the rhetoric. We now want to see the real results of the so-called concerns of this Government for the issues of southwestern and western Sydney. As I mentioned earlier, I have no real desire to support this Budget. The Government has failed in every attempt to support the residents of southwestern and western Sydney.

Mr WINDSOR (Tamworth) [9.11]: It is with a degree of pleasure that I speak to the Appropriation Bill and cognate bills. A number of circumstances will have an impact on my electorate and the electorates of other country members. I wish to make a few comments, some of which will contain a degree of praise for the Government and others that will contain warnings and a degree of criticism. Before doing that, I shall comment generally on the Budget that the Treasurer has brought down. The Budget is a fair and considerate budget for the majority of people in New South Wales, particularly given the recessionary economic period that New South Wales and Australia are experiencing. Probably the best indicator of the Budget being fair and reasonable, irrespective of what I or any other member of this Parliament would say, is evidenced in the way Opposition members have conducted parliamentary debate since the Budget was brought down. There has been little criticism of any real consequence of the Budget. I compliment the Treasurer on the way he delivered this Budget. There are certain warning signs that he must watch, particularly in relation to some of the fervour for the Sydney Olympic Games bid. I warn honourable members not to get carried away with that bid. A degree of economic management should be imposed upon the structure that is to be put in place over the next seven years. Honourable members should remember that New South Wales is not here only for one main event in seven years' time. It has a lot to do prior to and after that event.

I shall speak to a range of issues, the first being education and health and the Government's positive approach to give both education and health issues priority budgetary allocations. I know that all members of Parliament wish for more money, and possibly there will never be enough money to achieve everything that everyone wishes, but generally governments should provide services that private enterprise cannot provide effectively. That can be evidenced by my behaviour on the recent Government Cleaning Service legislation. The Government has kept its priorities focused very much in a capital sense on the education of children. The recession has been kind to the Government to the extent that, in a capital sense, it has been able to spread the education budget further. This has had an impact within my electorate and I am sure in the electorates of others. I am thankful for that, because I am aware of the rewards that will accrue to the children of my electorate.

The health budget has been increased once again. The economics of health at this time are difficult, given the various scenarios with health insurance schemes, the relationship between State and Federal governments and the general economic climate. It is important that this Government, or any government for that matter, maintains as a priority the health of its people. I believe and always have believed that people should also make some form of contribution to

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their own well-being, otherwise they tend not to appreciate the value associated with the services provided. I issue a warning to the Minister for Health and the Government in relation to rural health that with the new regional health policy, the zonal approach and the removal of, essentially, autonomy from individual hospital boards, I will be watching carefully to see that, over the next two years service delivery to small townships is not downgraded. That will be difficult in an economic sense, and if one extends economic rationalism to its nth degree we would all live in Sydney because it would be more than economical for us to do so, but that is not the way the State should be developed.

Accountants within the health ministry should view carefully what they want New South Wales to be. I will raise that subject a little later when I speak about regional development, but it hits upon one of the weaknesses of this Government in that essentially it does not have a great deal of vision about where it would like New South Wales to be in 20 years' time. That is part of the nature of governments generally, I guess, with elections every three or four years. It may also be a symptom of a hung Parliament, but there are opportunities for some degree of vision to be demonstrated by various Ministers within the Government as to where New South Wales is to be.

In relation to the education budgetary analysis, as I said earlier, my electorate has fared reasonably well, and I believe most electorates have in a capital sense, but that does not revolve only around the Minister. A number of other people in the system have a great impact on where money can be best and most efficiently spent. I wish to acknowledge publicly the assistant director-general of the northwest region, Mr Frank Fisher, who, in my view, is doing a sterling job in the north of the State not only in the performance of his duties in a financial sense but very much in a diplomatic sense in the way that he relates to the administrators of the schools, the staff of the schools, and, more importantly, the children of those schools.

Another issue I should like to touch upon is law and order. On occasion some people in this place would have displayed a degree of humour in relation to the city of Tamworth obtaining a police station and court house from the current Government. Some people seem to think that it was in response to some horse trading that was done by me and the then Premier, Mr Greiner, as a consequence of my support for the Appropriation Bill and cognate bills honourable members are now debating. There is funding in this Budget for the court house and police station. I thank the Government for that. The Government is honouring a commitment it made to the people in the electorate of Tamworth. That commitment had been given by various Ministers of various governments over the past 10 years. Besides being a bit of horse trading between me and then Premier Greiner, the commitment was only reinforcing the commitment given by both the coalition and the Labor Party to the people of Tamworth but never delivered.

I, quite rightly I believe, took the opportunity to shore up typical political promises that have been given by both sides but never delivered. This Government will now be delivering. If that commitment has given this decision a bit of backbone, so be it. If honourable members of this House could see the state of the police station in Tamworth, given the importance of Tamworth to the north of the State and the size of the city, they would wonder how that number of men and women have worked in the building. The building is archaic and has needed a bulldozer through it for many years. That will happen over the next 12 to 18 months.

Many people would be aware that I have been associated with the cause of trying to get some justice in New South Wales, particularly where there have been, in the view of many, some imperfections. I have been associated with a number of people who have been calling for a referendum on capital punishment. From my point of view, that has not been driven by emotion; a number of issues are involved in the criticisms that have been made of our justice system. As to whether the system has been delivering justice, not only to those who commit crime but to those who have crimes committed against them, I think the media and a number of people in this place tend to focus too much on the extremities of the debate rather than many of the other issues involved in that debate, some of which are important causes.

In an economic sense and in a human cost sense, we should look at many issues within the justice system. I believe that in addressing the issue of a referendum on capital punishment debate on a range of issues, both for and against capital punishment, will do this society a degree of good and make us start to question some human activity. I will use this opportunity to tell the House that I promised constituents who first came to see me 12 or 13 months ago that, when they obtained 300,000 signatures to a petition calling for a referendum on capital punishment in cases where there was absolutely no doubt about guilt

of the offender, I would introduce a private member's bill calling for a referendum on that subject. Some people may think it is a little odd that I am wearing an Amnesty International badge at this time while raising the subject of capital punishment.

Mr Knight: Tony, we know that you are a political prisoner.

Mr WINDSOR: That is good; I like it. Some people are still living in the past and think they are knights. They had capital punishment back then. It is not odd that I should be wearing an Amnesty International badge. One of the great principles of Amnesty International is the principle of democracy. If 300,000 signatures calling for a referendum are obtained the legislation I will introduce into this House will put to the test people's attitude to democracy. The bill will not call for capital punishment; it will call for a referendum on capital punishment as an option.

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There will be plenty of opportunities for honourable members who think they have better options to introduce those options. It will be a real test of people's views. I shall be interested to see whether those who support Amnesty International will support the democratic right of the people of New South Wales to determine, to some extent, their future. Some people will say that we elect members of Parliament to do that. I made a commitment to my constituents. I said that a small number of signatures would not be sufficient for me to bother introducing anything into Parliament. I said that, if they could gather 300,000 signatures, I would view the subject as one of importance to the community of New South Wales, not just to my electorate. I said that at that stage I would look at introducing legislation that would give the community of New South Wales - not necessarily the politicians of New South Wales - some say in the justice system. If that legislation is not introduced at the end of this session, I will introduce it at the beginning of next year.

Another issue addressed in the Budget about which I and most people in regional New South Wales feel strongly is an issue that has been essentially ignored by governments of all political persuasions, other than at election time when someone goes to his bottom drawer and drags out the rhetoric and starts to talk about it again. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

I am talking about something that has been very dear to my heart - that is, regional development, decentralisation, call it what you will. It essentially means trying to encourage people to live in areas other than the major metropolitan areas of New South Wales. It is heartening for me to see that this Government has decided to create a ministry of small business and regional development. If there is something that this Government should stand for it is development of the State and the ethics of those who conduct small businesses. That has been sadly lacking, to a great degree, for those who are involved in trying to create, employ and make a dollar.

Governments of all persuasions have been anti small business, not in rhetoric but in performance. I hope the creation of a ministry of small business and regional development is an indicator that the Government is serious about doing something concerning these issues. The cynicism in me suggests that nothing will happen. The next 12 months will be a test of where the Government sees its identity lying. Though I applaud the establishment of a ministry covering small business and regional development, its budget is quite small. The Government must get behind the Minister to drive development forward. A number of areas can be used, most of which do not involve the creation of massive amounts of money. Some require the diversion of money from various portfolios and areas to create circumstances in which business will drive regional development.

I and many others in regional New South Wales will be interested to see how strong the Government is in relation to this debate. I believe the next election will be won on the regional development debate. That does not relate only to country areas, as most people in this place would perceive them, but relates very much to the periphery of Sydney and what we are doing environmentally and socially for the people

who live there. In the next 20 years another one million people will live somewhere in New South Wales. If we have any vision about the growth of New South Wales we have to start doing something about the overdevelopment of the western Sydney-Camden corridor. Many members are aware of the geography of that area, the pollution and the economic costs that will be incurred in trying to keep on top of the problem or to correct it - and also the social and environmental costs. The Government should not just prattle out rhetoric at elections; it should actually do something. Having a Premier who comes from a regional area and who also has the portfolio of economic development should ensure that the whole of the State will be developed, not just the metropolitan areas. Having a country-based Minister for Small Business and Minister for Regional Development will mean that the Government has an opportunity, and an obligation, to do something about those issues. I will watch what happens with interest.

Earlier today I spoke on a matter which relates not only to the Budget of New South Wales but also to the budget of many individuals, particularly those in regional areas. I refer to fuel prices. I am pleased that the Minister for Consumer Affairs is in the Chamber. Pricing and discounting structures by oil companies have resulted in discrimination against country people. During private members' statements I encouraged the Premier and Minister for Economic Development, the Minister for Small Business and Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Consumer Affairs to establish an inquiry into fuel pricing structures. I do not suggest that we completely regulate the fuel industry, but it seems that people in rural areas have to make up for fuel being sold at discount prices below production cost in metropolitan areas. We can all come up with examples of fuel being available at lower prices within 50 kilometres of where we live. However, a number of areas need to be investigated.

Over the past few days I have spoken to many people about this matter - the National Roads and Motorists Association, fuel users, the Service Station Association, the New South Wales Farmers Association, and the Shires Association. They all have a blurred view of what is happening. The Government - being a Government which espouses free enterprise principles - has an obligation to see that there is a degree of equity within the pricing and discounting structures. I am aware that the Industry Commission and the Prices Surveillance Authority are inquiring into the matter. Overall regulation of the oil industry is a Federal issue but establishment of a State government inquiry would engender pressure. The inquiry would not have to be an expensive exercise. Such an inquiry could be carried out cheaply and involve members from all sides of the Parliament. Today I was heartened to hear that there is unity on the argument in country New South Wales. Labor

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Party members will discuss this matter in Dubbo at their regional conference later in the year, so there could be a bipartisan and honest look at the matter with a view to reinstating equity in fuel price structures.

I wish to mention a number of other issues in the time remaining for me to speak. I am pleased that the Soil Conservation Service, which in my view was at great risk of being destroyed, has its own documentation within the Budget. The changes in the past six months, with a change of Minister and responsibility for water and soil being under the one Minister, involve positive initiatives. I was fortunate recently to be with the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, the Hon. George Souris, on the Liverpool Plains. Water and soil being included in the one ministry is a positive step. A critical issue in future will be flood plain management. That is a great positive by which we can tackle environmental issues, not the least being salinity and blue-green algae problems.

Aero-medical retrieval services could have a positive impact on the budgetary position of this State not this year but next year. Debate has arisen about the Flying Doctor Service and some confusion has emerged over the role of Tamworth, Dubbo and other towns in relation to that service. The debate should be more extensive and should be addressing what New South Wales is doing about the Air Ambulance, the Flying Doctor Service, helicopter services and aero-medical retrieval services in general. The Government has a tremendous opportunity to display a commitment to regional development of medical services so that people needing them do not necessarily have to travel to Sydney. Such development may involve Tamworth, Dubbo and other regional centres. I encourage the Government

and the Minister for Health to consider budgetary assessment of aero-medical retrieval services over the coming year and to come up with something more positive for all of us that will be more cash positive for the Government. I believe this Budget is fair and reasonable in today's economic climate. I believe also that in future the Government has to work on some of the programs it has put in place. [Time expired.]

Mr BOWMAN (Swansea) [9.41]: I compliment the honourable member for Tamworth on the very constructive and persistent action that he took on behalf of the integrity of the Soil Conservation Service of New South Wales. He certainly had the support of many people on both sides of the House, but he must have felt on many occasions that he had a lonely battle. He deserves great credit. The Government also deserves some credit for being prepared to recast the structure that it - no doubt with good intentions but I believe wrong headedly - set in place. I do not have the same warmth for capital punishment as the honourable member for Tamworth has, though no doubt he is exceedingly sincere about his view and believes he is honouring the commitment he made to his constituents.

Referenda are a very chancy way to seek to govern New South Wales or any other place. No doubt on constitutional matters direct reference ought to be made to the people. However, in umpteen referenda on the Australian Constitution such unconscionable difficulty has been experienced in achieving constitutional change - change which, upon reflection, had been approved by all sides of politics - that members ought to acknowledge that the venture the honourable member is engaged upon of recommending to this Parliament a referendum to determine whether capital punishment should be reintroduced, albeit for a restricted class of offences in this State, is not worth while.

No doubt an overwhelming majority of people in Iran would vote for the fatwah that has created a world scandal of massive proportions, with Salmon Rushdie and various of his publishing and translating associates being threatened or, indeed, wounded or killed by those who believe they have a fundamental right to prevent others saying things they do not like. I know that the honourable member for Tamworth would in no way suggest there ought to be a repressive regime that would hang or otherwise execute dissidents. Throughout history and to the present day capital punishment has been so commonly associated with repression and the absence of democracy that the honourable member ought to pause and reconsider what he has engaged upon, just as he has asked the Government to reconsider what it thinks about the structure it had set up, which in his opinion and mine and that of many other people will vitiate the effectiveness of the Soil Conservation Service.

I cannot go along with his suggestion that a succession of speeches from this side of the House has failed to find any serious fault with the Budget. That is not to say that the Opposition has said everything is wrong with it. There is a degree of consensus about what needs to be done. It is not sensible for an opposition to pretend that everything a Government does is wrong, even in its budget. However, many serious criticisms have been made of the Government's budgetary strategy, and serious criticisms have been made of its failure to deliver on many of its implicit or explicit undertakings to satisfy the aspirations of the people of this State, which it has pledged to meet so far as is possible.

Members should consider the Government's approach in bringing down the Budget in this House. It was delivered in splendid forensic style by the Treasurer. But why did \$160,000 or a bit more have to be spent on a public relations firm in order to manage presentation of this Budget to the people of New South Wales, while Professor Bob Walker, who has been somewhat of a burr under the saddle, was excluded from the lockup privilege extended to many journalists. That happened, I suggest, because the Government had determined it was important to brainwash people so far as it was able, rather than brace them for a stern, realistic and hard-headed discussion about what the Government really was doing.

Professor Walker writes in the *New Accountant*. If one wants to narrowly define journalism so that publication is excluded, I suppose one could say that Professor Walker is not a journalist. But it seems to

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me that would be a false step. I am critical of the Government in many respects, for it showed weakness

and bad judgment in not braving the professor's criticisms and answering them if it felt able to do so effectively. However, it spent a not inconsiderable amount of money in some kind of media management program in an attempt to get good buzz words into the newspapers and on radio and television in order to soothe people or persuade or brainwash them into accepting that the Budget was the best that could possibly be expected.

The honourable member for Tamworth may have believed that fierce criticisms of the Budget had not been made by the community or this side of the House because he discerns a generally extant lack of expectation in regard to this Government. Mediocrity, it is felt, is likely to be what we will get; and when we get it, though we are unhappy, we are not surprised. We have come to expect mediocrity; and when yet again it comes, together with a bit of financial sleight of hand, we protest. But the lack of surprise shows perhaps in the way people have approached criticisms. A government with larger vision and a sterner sense of straightforward presentation might have aroused greater opposition in not delivering what it said it would deliver. Not much more than 12 months ago there were to be 18,000 jobs before Christmas. Everyone felt cheered by that, until they read the fine print and realised that the Government was going to use a considerable amount of money to create yet more redundancies.

It did not count these redundancies as creating concomitant job losses, although it did count the flow-on effect of new jobs that it said would be created by its large capital works program. But it was inconsistent in the way in which it measured and presented its essential strategy to the people. Not surprisingly, people have come to be sceptical and somewhat discouraged. It is this scepticism about the situation in New South Wales, and a lack of faith in the Government and its management, that I suggest has had a great deal to do with the economy in New South Wales lagging, and with employment, investment, and all of the conventional criteria being at a very disappointing level. That is especially so by comparison with other States, which, by nature, are much less well endowed than New South Wales and do not have economies that are nearly as balanced as ours.

It is very disappointing that New South Wales, with its combination of manufacturing, industrial and mineral wealth, has been described as a rust-bucket State or a laggard State, whilst Western Australia and Queensland, with different governments, are showing more dramatic movement out of the recession. The New South Wales Government cannot keep blaming the Federal Government for ever. It is a pretty pale imitation of a policy to throw up one's hands, or shrug one's shoulders and say: "We are in the middle of a recession that someone said we had to have. We are ineffectual and therefore you will have to have the kind of mediocre policy and non-delivery that has now become habitual in New South Wales".

If one did not know before one listened to the Budget Speech and the rather feeble supporting speeches from various members of the Government that this Government has lost heart, has lost faith in New South Wales, by this time the heat may have gone out of the debate because all of us now know that there is not much hope of significant change in the morale of the people of New South Wales or in the morale of investors or in the spirit of the work force until this Government gives some sort of lead. We need some sort of positive lead or positive thinking to inspire people to do better, or work or manage more effectively, or achieve more economic growth; it is necessary to stress the need to improve, to economise, to save money. All of those things can be necessary. I am not suggesting for a moment that an attitude of "let's waste and not worry about the consequences", or "let's borrow frivolously and not care about it", is viable or should be permissible - nothing of the sort.

[Interruption]

The interjector would suggest that that is the Labor attitude. New South Wales had a triple-A credit rating in 1988; indeed it had had such a rating since 1976. This Government, because of its pusillanimous approach, because of its timidity and lack of confidence in itself and New South Wales, fears that the triple-A rating might go any moment. The triple-A rating that existed in 1988 should not be in danger if there is any kind of decisive management in New South Wales. This State has seen a lack of decisiveness and a penny-pinching attitude from day one of this Government. It may be that the

present Treasurer, when he gets into full gear, will manage to galvanise his colleagues in the Cabinet and on the Government benches, but I think he has his work cut out, if that is his goal.

Mr Collins: The Government will be here a long time after the Opposition goes.

Mr BOWMAN: It would not matter how long the present Treasurer stays here unless in his time as Treasurer he does what needs to be done. One of the things that need to be done, which this Government has not thought of doing, is to suggest that New South Wales should make progress. It is no good telling people silly lies that will be found out, such as saying, "We will create 18,000 jobs by spending all this money on capital works", whilst at the same time neglecting to tell people about the redundancies created. That discourages not only the poor people who are retrenched but also the potential investors; the style of operation that puts accent on the negative is exactly the opposite of what is needed.

When the Government thinks it is talking about prudence it is really talking down the economy. Under the impetus of winning the Olympic bid the Government has only just started to think about acting in a positive fashion. Even there it has done so with timidity. There was fear that there would be some cost associated with the Paralympics. The indecisiveness of the Government, its terror that it might have to spend some money in order to attract

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investment, came across very strongly. Of course there are some dark secrets that the Government hoped to hide but which cannot be hidden much longer. That may have something to do with its lack of confidence in itself. According to the Auditor-General, the HomeFund fiasco might cost the taxpayers of New South Wales more than \$500 million.

Fascinatingly, \$500 million is exactly the amount required to build the Olympic village. This Government, which regularly berates the Federal Government, is asking it to provide \$500 million for the Olympic village or for the cost of staging the Olympics because, among other things, it seems likely to lose \$500 million of taxpayers' money by the unconscionable way, the grossly incompetent way, in which it expanded the HomeFund scheme rather than amend it - because the economic circumstances changed; it expanded the HomeFund scheme and lent more than \$4 billion. There was a reckless disregard for the most elementary rules of financial and administrative prudence and the Government realises that the public will know just how bad this Government's performance really was, just how little it lived up to its credo of putting people first by managing better. The Government did not manage better.

The Government has not managed better, and the poor unfortunates involved directly in the HomeFund fiasco will not be the only ones to suffer. Ratepayers and taxpayers generally in this State seem likely to suffer the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars. I hope it is not more than half a billion dollars, but I fear it might be. New South Wales would be better served if the Government were to face up frankly to its failures and determine to do better rather than force people to struggle through inquiries and make inveterate efforts to learn exactly how many things have gone wrong. I am not referring only to HomeFund. Honourable members heard about conveyancing coming to New South Wales, after a mammoth struggle, in a form that will advantage the consumer rather than the existing legal monopoly. However, the months have ticked by and still nothing has happened.

Deinstitutionalisation has proceeded at a rapid rate in New South Wales, but concomitant facilities have not been provided in the community to adequately care for those poor souls in our society, many of whom are derelict, because the Government, perhaps with good intentions but with an absolute lack of effectiveness in carrying out those good intentions, has left them in the lurch. It is just not good enough to claim that things will get better in the future. No one, whether they are State wards or psychiatrically disabled, should be turned out into the community because of a pell mell rush to capitalise assets which can be sold off, leaving a gap between the provision of community facilities and the sale of property that will enable the Government to claim that it is thinking about the bottom line. If the Government realised that the line at the very bottom should be the people of New South Wales, it might realise also that some

of its financial management should be less inept than it is. This year the Government's public works program has been reduced when compared with last year. I hope that this year the funds are spent and not held back to keep the deficit below an arbitrary figure feared by the Government. The Government can do better, and it is about time it tried. [*Time expired.*]

Mr KERR (Cronulla) [10.1]: The honourable member for Swansea spoke more truthfully than he realised when he spoke about people being dragged into inquiries. That is about the only Opposition policy that honourable members have seen in action during the whole of this and the previous session of Parliament. People's reputations are being sullied to get cheap little headlines. Public funds have been totally and utterly wasted. Since 1988 that has been the Opposition's contribution to public life in this State. The roll call goes on. The former Deputy Premier, Mr Murray, appeared before an inquiry because someone lied in relation to a former Labor member.

Mr J. H. Murray: What was the determination?

Mr KERR: The determination was that Mr Murray was a totally innocent person who had been set up.

Mr J. H. Murray: Read the report.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Drummoyne should read the report of Mr Justice Helsham on the Walsh Bay inquiry. Tens of thousands of dollars of public funds have been wasted.

Mr J. H. Murray: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr KERR: It was raised by the Opposition. I was trying to support the remarks of the honourable member for Swansea, but I am not receiving much assistance from the other side of the House. I will stop supporting him and move on to talk about the Budget. New South Wales is a State with a triple-A rating - an international credit rating for sustained, sound government management. A State does not get a triple-A rating unless it has sound management. Members opposite should ask the Federal Government about that, because it does not have one. The wonderful city of Sydney has now been chosen in a world competition to host the year 2000 Olympic Games.

Mr J. H. Murray: That is because the Opposition supported the bid.

Mr KERR: Oh, the Opposition supported it! The Leader of the Opposition appeared on television to thank Sydney. "Thank you, Sydney", he said.

Mr Nagle: Just because the Opposition supported the bid does not mean we will turn a blind eye to the Government's incompetence in running the Games.

Mr KERR: I will come to the honourable member for Auburn in a few minutes. He says, "We support you, but that does not mean we are going to turn a blind eye to the way you are going to run the
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Games". I had both eyes open during question time and I saw what members of the Opposition attempted to do. They attempted to undermine public confidence in Sydney's Olympic bid. The Opposition has been given information. What did it do with that information? The Opposition did not understand it. The former Labor Government commenced the Homebush Bay redevelopment. Homebush was to be completed, whatever happened to the bid.

Mr Nagle: That is totally untrue.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Auburn says the former Labor Government did not start the Homebush Bay redevelopment.

Mr Nagle: The present Government started it in 1988.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Auburn should check his history.

Mr Nagle: I know. It is in my electorate.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Rixon): Order! The member for Cronulla has the call.

Mr KERR: I remind the honourable member for Auburn that the previous Labor Government sought to regenerate the Homebush area. The Opposition at that time supported that move. The Government was determined to continue that regeneration, because that is the sort of government we are. Let us have a look at the dismal contrast: the failure after failure of Labor governments, State and Federal, and the blind support for those failed Labor policies by the Carr-led New South Wales Opposition. The Opposition has nothing positive to say. I have outlined what it has done. In this House the Opposition has indulged only in wrecking tactics. Whether it is about dragging people to inquiries, as the honourable member for Swansea said, or whether it is about trying to manipulate figures in relation to Homebush, the Opposition's tactics are negative and wrecking. That is its sole contribution.

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

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Swansea spoke about a recession that we had to have. Because the honourable member for Drummoyne wants to know, I will tell him who the author was. The author was Paul Keating.

Mr Nagle: A wonderful man!

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

Mr KERR: If one gauges the wonder by unemployment, he is becoming more wonderful. If one gauges the wonder by the number of businesses going bankrupt, he is becoming more and more wonderful. The disasters created by Keating have inflicted mass unemployment and human misery that have not been equalled since the Great Depression 60 years ago. The Federal Labor Budget is forecasting the same level of suffering for the foreseeable future. Labor's misguided policies have resulted in 10 years of falling living standards, rising unemployment, hugely increased poverty, and shrinking incomes. Is that something to be proud of? No. What was Labor responsible for in Western Australia? WA Inc.

Mrs Lo Po': Get on to this Budget.

Mr KERR: Opposition members do not like the contrast.

Mrs Lo Po': What is the good news for your electorate?

Mr KERR: I will come to the good news for my electorate, and I will mention something about the electorate of the honourable member for Penrith. However, I like to keep moving around. If I might remind the honourable member for Penrith of the State Bank in South Australia -

Mrs Lo Po': Yes, do.

Mr KERR: I will remind her because Labor fought an election in South Australia to keep the State Bank in public hands, and the Labor Government then sold it; it was privatised. Labor bankrupted Victoria.

Mrs Lo Po': Eastern Creek?

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

Mr KERR: Eastern Creek is a facility for western Sydney. The honourable member for Penrith should have a look at the motions passed by Penrith council in relation to requests for mass transport. Does the honourable member for Penrith now oppose Eastern Creek? Does she suggest it should be closed down? Let me look at revenue cuts. State and local government revenues have been cut severely by arbitrary Commonwealth decisions on revenue sharing and by the serious effects of the recession on State and local tax revenue charges. That is the sort of challenge that the Treasurer had to face. Under the former Fraser Liberal Government tax sharing arrangements were based on a fixed and fair formula enabling predictable budgeting and forecasting. Since 1987-88 Commonwealth general purpose payments to New South Wales have been cut by \$700 million - I repeat, \$700 million - in real terms. For the benefit of the honourable member for Hurstville, that means adjusted for inflation. The \$180 million gain for New South Wales this year is the result of an adjustment by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The effect of the recession on New South Wales revenue collections has been a decline of \$950 million since 1988.

Mr lemma: You do not believe that.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Hurstville says, "You do not believe that". He should look at the figures. Richo's office could probably supply them. There has been a shortfall of \$1.5 million in the two financial years, 1990-91 and 1991-92. We could have paid for Homebush with that, could we not? If members of the Opposition are so upset about \$1.5 million, why do they not ask

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Keating for the money back? If the honourable member had had that sort of money, how many Hurstville leisure centres could he have built?

Mr lemma: Why not kick in for one?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Hurstville to order. If he wants to make a contribution to the debate he should do so in the normal way.

Mr KERR: I will make a deal with the honourable member for Hurstville. If he gives back \$1.5 million, we will kick in for the Hurstville leisure centre. I think the Treasurer will probably go along with that deal. Let me talk about good management that shows the way. In spite of the massive loss of income, the State Liberal Government has maintained all essential services simply by sound management and wise priorities. Other than the normal consumer price index adjustments, the State cannot significantly increase its own taxes and charges. The New South Wales Government has been punished enough by the Keating Labor Government. Under the previous Labor Government in New South Wales many government business enterprises, as in other States, were virtually bankrupt. By contrast, vital microeconomic reform has created greater efficiency and improved profitability.

That has enabled the payment of substantial dividends to the current Government without forcing up the cost of services provided by those enterprises. These dividends, the result of sound business practice, have increased from \$129 million in the last year of Labor to almost \$1 billion this year, and everyone shares in the dividends. We hear a lot about blowouts but we do not hear about the \$1 billion that we got for the people of New South Wales through efficiencies. That \$1 billion can go to hospitals and schools - and that is what this Budget is all about. The huge Keating cutbacks notwithstanding, many New South Wales government services, for example, education, health and law and order, have been maintained fully in pre-recession terms. That is a magnificent tribute to the Treasurer and the Government.

The honourable member for Penrith interjected earlier. This Government has spent more on health

services in western Sydney than ever before. The honourable member for Penrith said she was standing up for the people of eastern Sydney, in relation to cutbacks. I say that east is east and west is west and, so far as Penrith is concerned, the wrong one you have chose. New South Wales is the show window of the world. Our successful Olympic bid - which was led by the Premier - has focused world attention on this State and this city and we must not lose that opportunity to make enduring gains, not only in sport but in our economy and our future.

In sport Australia has shown that teamwork wins. The world acknowledges our sporting prowess, mateship and the successful striving for excellence in human endeavour. It is with those same qualities - what I call Cronulla qualities - that we can build this State. We can all share in more jobs, rising living standards and even wider government services. Honourable members have heard about economic rationalism and they have heard the honourable member for Manly say, "You have got it wrong. It is about people". Certainly government is about people, but unless it reforms and manages better it does not have the money to help the sick patient or the man in the street, or to provide a policeman to ensure there is safety on the streets.

This State has everything - an extensive land mass; a benign climate; wide natural resources; a well educated and adaptive community; an ineffectual Opposition, which makes government easier; and world markets virtually on its doorstep. We have the fastest growing economy in South-east Asia.

Mr lemma: And you are doing nothing about it.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Hurstville says the Government is doing nothing. He has not realised that he is in Macquarie Street now and no longer in Canberra. That might have been appropriate when he was working in Richo's office but, now that he is in this power-house, it is no longer appropriate. The honourable member for Hurstville has a point because, despite all that, Australia is still not competitive on world markets. It is not competitive with other countries that lack our resources and opportunities, but we can gain that edge of competitiveness with one other ingredient, and that is teamwork - something about which this Government knows. We have seen it in sport. That teamwork must be at all levels - government determined to ease the bureaucratic and taxation burdens; to help, not hinder, enlightened management; to be skilled in its role and concerned with understanding, to develop a happy, prosperous and stimulated staff; and employees adequately rewarded with income incentives, job satisfaction and encouragement.

Is it not amazing? Enterprise bargaining was a dirty words a few years ago. When the Premier introduced industrial reforms honourable members heard all about threats to the unions; how, since the early 1900s, we have had a central wage fixing apparatus; and now we must not allow workers to start bargaining in the workplace because that is the job of unions, industrial commissioners, industrial judges and arbitration. What do we have from Mr Brereton and Mr Keating? We hear that we must have productivity, that the people who work in a particular industry are the ones with a vested interest and they should be able to bargain. They should be able to provide higher productivity if they are liberated from the central wage fixing system. It has finally been realised that workers in profitable industries ought to be able to work harder and that should be reflected in their pay packets.

I must say that from 1983 to the present there has been a departure from former workplace practices, but what is still being pushed by the State Opposition is the ugly and totally false concept of class warfare, of conflict between boss and worker so insidiously spread by a Labor Party impoverished of

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constructive thought. That must be eradicated in New South Wales for ever if we are to move forward. There is still a Labor Party in New South Wales that says, "We are not prepared to sell the State Bank; we are not prepared to go out and trust people to own their own houses in Housing Commission areas".

That is amazing. Cuba at Sussex Street, together in the last decade of the twentieth century in

fraternal bondage. What an achievement. Sussex Street is \$10 million in debt - that is another great achievement - and look at the Cuban economy! We can all do a little better if we are convinced that co-operation is the way ahead, and it is the way ahead. I urge that on the honourable member for Bligh. Australians are a great people with proud traditions. We have been a caring and compassionate people and solicitous of the welfare and dignity of the underprivileged. There is no need in Australia, with the type of advantages I mentioned earlier, to have poverty and joblessness, and there is no need for the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor, because what we have seen since 1983 is the corporate State, which has been very cosy. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

Since 1983 we have had the corporate State - big business, big unions and big government - but what about the ordinary people? What about the people in small business that are still the largest -

[Interruption]

Well, they might be representative of ordinariness but they do not represent ordinary people any more, because the biggest employer of labour, the employer that provides jobs, is small business. Labor's way is to lower living standards. The Government's way - what I call the Cronulla way - is to lift up, and beckon onwards with sound incentives, and with teamwork we can do it together.

[Interruption]

Talking about wooden spoons, all the Opposition is good for is stirring. I shall talk about achievement rather than stirring. In the electorate of Cronulla \$35,000 in public works has been provided in this Budget for the Dolans Bay boat ramp and navigational aids. In relation to the environment, \$81,000 has been allocated for sand dune stabilisation at Kurnell. Kurnell, the location for that great film, "20,000 Horsemen", which I am sure the Treasurer would remember, as well as many returned servicemen -

[Interruption]

I will come to the honourable member for Hurstville in a minute, but under the former Labor Government the sandhills were desecrated.

Mr Baird: It was a disgrace.

Mr KERR: It was a disgrace, as the Minister for Transport, an old Cronulla boy, readily acknowledges. Under this Government, Kurnell, the birthplace of Australia, has been given sewerage, a decent road and, with the support of the residents, the Government is considering providing a major resort and housing. That is a transformation of an area that was neglected under the Labor Party. An allocation of \$716,000 was made in this Budget for Kurnell Public School - not a bad achievement by this Government. The people of Kurnell, who have been neglected for too long, ought to be grateful to the Treasurer for making that sort of money available. Caringbah Public School has received an allocation of \$260,000. Under the previous Labor Government, part of the Caringbah Public School site was sold.

After 1988 honourable members heard much about selling off but it was the Labor Government that sold off part of the Caringbah Public School site. Did it provide the proceeds of the sale to that school? No. Sutherland Shire Council, which I have occasionally mentioned in this House, is an investor in the medium-density Caringbah Public School housing site. Cronulla Public School is to receive \$225,000. I was a former student of that school, but that is not the reason for the funding. That sort of money is needed there. Endeavour High School is to receive \$190,000, and \$190,000 has been allocated to Caringbah North Public School. I am pleased that the Minister for Transport is in the Chamber, because \$925,000 has been allocated for the Cronulla station upgrade. Cronulla station has been very much a landmark and it is something of which Cronulla can be very proud. I hope that Sutherland Shire Council will take up the offer made by the Minister of a visitors centre. More than \$300,000 is allocated for

Cronulla rail maintenance.

Only a few years ago literally millions of dollars were spent on the upgrade of the rail line between Cronulla and Caringbah because of the many years of neglect by the previous Labor Government. In order to do that work it was necessary to close the line. This could have occasioned a great deal of dislocation but, once again, teamwork and public participation came into play. Through the endeavours of the Minister and the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce, no dislocation occurred. A loop service and a bus service were provided when that work was being carried out in January.

Mr Richardson: Sound management.

Mr KERR: Sound management, as I am reminded. That is not just an abstract term. To have to sit in a gridlock because the work is being done in the peak times of June or May causes human suffering. Accidents or injuries cause human suffering, and if they are avoided it is because of sound economic management. As the member for Davidson said, it is about time that some of what this Government is doing is not looked at in terms of economic rationalism or in abstract terms but in flesh and blood terms, and that is what we are all about in this House. Woollooware railway station will receive \$450,000. After I was elected in the dark period under Labor -

Mr Jeffery: 1984, a good vintage year.

Mr KERR: Yes, it was a good vintage year and some of us veterans still remain. I remember during those years that Woollooware railway station was a

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repository for graffiti. That public utility was being overrun by vandalism. Now the graffiti is a memory; Cronulla railway station, the Cronulla rail line and the Woollooware railway station are being upgraded. Because of the endeavours of the station master at Caringbah railway station, extensive work is being carried out. Under the Labor Party, the platform was left in a state of disrepair, which could have caused injury. That sort of thing is being rectified. The other major expenditure is \$12,656,000 for the upgrading of the Cronulla sewerage plant. I can remember, as the honourable member for Oxley can, when we were in Opposition the Hon. Janice Crosio -

Mr Jeffery: She looks great in a swimsuit.

Mr KERR: I do not dispute that. It is a matter of public record.

Mr Jeffery: It was on the front page.

Mr KERR: It was on the front page and the story was too big for the tabloids. Often she would say in this House how outfalls were to be the answer to Sydney's sewage problem. A former member of this House, the Hon. Tim Moore, disputed that constantly with her, and he was proved right. In some ways I guess I hoped that he would have been proved wrong because no one wants to see sewage on beaches; but he was right. This Government had to embark on a massive program to safeguard Australia's heritage. Cronulla undoubtedly has the best beaches in the world, and its four surf clubs are in the first half dozen. In fact Cronulla surf club has been three times world champion. What has happened to our beaches over the years has been a disgrace. That situation is being reversed, but it cannot be done cheaply and it will not be done overnight.

I pay tribute to the residents of Cronulla who have made their time and services available to the Water Board through consultative committees. The people who live in the environment are the ones who are best suited to advise on how to improve the environment. Recently John Holt, a former Australian iron man, became a member of a Water Board consultative committee, which I believe is doing essential work. It is not just an engineering problem. It is a problem that needs the input of multiskilled people. People who have been surfing at Cronulla all their lives would have the best store of knowledge and

experience as to how tides and conditions work. I welcome this expenditure, but I advise the House that it is coupled with a very real human commitment by this Government, which will harness the best that our community has to offer.

They are the benefits which have been provided by the Government. I referred earlier to teamwork. The overriding theme of this Budget is debt containment. One of the first actions of the former Premier, Nick Greiner, when he took office was to have a financial audit of the whole of the State. The Curran report showed just how badly this State had been governed and what a repair job was needed. It was only shortly after that, as we embarked on this great task, that we were hit with the recession we had to have. It is a real tragedy that so many opportunities that this State could have availed itself of were robbed from the people by a mob in Canberra.

The Treasurer is right to provide for debt containment. Mr Speaker, you and I, when we run up debts, eventually have to pay for them. A State and a country are no different. We cannot provide for one generation by mortgaging the next. The hallmark of this Government has been sound economic policy and management. That is why it is necessary for us to continue that work. People are struggling and hurting in the community, but that should only provide a greater incentive for all of us to work harder and together to ensure that the best part of Australia, the best country of the world, remains that way.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mrs Lo Po'.

WOOLLOOMOOLOO FINGER WHARF REDEVELOPMENT

Personal Explanations

Mr Baird: I wish to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr Baird: Allegations were made in another place last night by the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann - and I use the word honourable loosely - that I have acted corruptly in conjunction with the honourable member for Bligh in relation to the redevelopment of the finger wharf. If the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann is going to make this type of allegation, she should first of all do what any member of either this House or the other House should do; that is, check her facts. Her allegations are totally without basis. It is disgraceful for a member to come into the Parliament and make these scurrilous allegations with the protection the Parliament gives. The Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann can only examine her own conscience when she makes that type of allegation. She will need to watch out in the future in regard to her actions. If she can stand up in the other place and denigrate two members of this House in the way in which she has, without any basis, and simply release her remarks to the press, heaven help us all.

These allegations are a continuation of a series of furbies orchestrated by a frustrated property developer, Ian Yates, and his notorious allies, regrettably including Jack Munday. In his prime years, Jack Munday achieved quite a lot in preserving historic buildings in the city. The Labor Party, of all parties, should be aware that Ian Yates is hardly a man of distinction to use as a basis for making these allegations. The finger wharf project consideration has been open and in full accordance with government tendering guidelines.

I remind the House and the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann in another place that the Government publicly announced two years ago that it favoured the

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demolition of the wharf and the return of the bay to a natural area for public relaxation. However, following open representations from a number of parties, including the honourable member for Bligh and the Institute of Architects, I agreed to seek public expressions of interest for the redevelopment of the

wharf. The expression of interest process was and is the responsibility of the Maritime Services Board. The expressions of interest were considered by the MSB after consultation with an advisory committee of interested parties, including Woolloomooloo residents. The proposal submitted by Mr Yates did not conform to the publicly stated -

Mr Whelan: On a point of order. The Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads is alleging that he is aggrieved; I would place no restrictions on what he is about to say. However, it is for the Minister to prove that his integrity has been impugned. If, Mr Speaker, you permit that I would be happy, but I would also like such a ruling to apply to every other member who seeks to make a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! To some extent, I anticipated that this point of order would be taken, as I was aware of the matters that have been raised. I also anticipated that the explanations could be lengthy. I bore to mind the extreme gravity of the nature of the allegations made and the difficulty that exists in this House in answering serious allegations made by a member in another place. Brevity is the essence of a personal explanation. I will listen carefully to what the members have to say but ask them to keep their personal explanations as brief as they possibly can. These are extremely serious allegations.

Mr Baird: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have almost finished. The proposal submitted by Mr Yates did not conform to the publicly stated guidelines for acceptable redevelopment of the wharf. The Wedderlight-Delmo proposal was the only conforming tender submitted to the MSB. The MSB formally considered the tenders and made the decision to accept the Wedderlight proposal.

Mr Whelan: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, you have made a decision with which I am happy to agree. However, there must be a consistent policy and attitude of this House in relation to such matters. The Minister is now talking about matters of alleged fact in regard to the allegations made in another place. I am happy for the Minister to have unlimited time, but there should not be one rule for the Minister and another rule for every other member.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have informed the honourable member for Ashfield of my attitude to this particular matter. There have been personal explanations made from both sides of the House that have gone far longer than the personal explanation that has been given by the Minister up until now. Surely the gravity of the matter should be taken into account. Personal explanations are often made in this House on relatively trivial matters, and they do not deserve much more than a straight denial of the allegation made. The Minister for Transport said he is almost finished. If he finishes in a reasonably short time, his explanation will come well within the scope of personal explanations that have been made previously in this House. The Chair will continue to apply the test that I have just outlined. If there is an explanation on matters of such gravity which comes from any other member of the House, that member could expect the same level of indulgence from the Chair.

Mr Baird: Thank you for your ruling, Mr Speaker. In accordance with my usual practice, I have kept the honourable member for Bligh informed of progress on this important potential development in her electorate. The final decision to sign the agreement between the MSB and Wedderlight-Delmo was made by the MSB after I relinquished responsibility for the MSB.

Ms Moore: Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Ms Moore: I wish to reply to the outrageous and baseless accusations made about me last night under parliamentary privilege by the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann in another place. Dr Burgmann's statements related to the redevelopment of the Woolloomooloo Bay finger wharf and an aggrieved developer, Ian Yates. She alleged that I interfered in the tendering process and tried to have the Wedderlight-Delmo bid win without opposition. She alleged that the details of Mr Yates proposal were

revealed to the opposing bidders so that they could match the bid. And she alleged that Minister Baird and I were guilty of corruption and gross impropriety. I totally reject these accusations as outrageous, without basis, without substance and absolutely untrue.

I wish to set the record straight on my involvement in Woolloomooloo Bay. Since 1987 I have worked to open up the bay for public use and to save the historic Woolloomooloo finger wharf. I campaigned against Labor Government plans to demolish the wharf and I supported its permanent conservation. I successfully opposed a scheme in which the wharf was to be restored in association with a five-storey hotel to be built on the foreshore of Woolloomooloo Bay. I made a submission to the commission of inquiry against this Government's plan to remove the permanent conservation order and to demolish the wharf. I was founder of the Artists for the Finger Wharf, which proposed recycling the wharf as a public arts centre to complement the Art Gallery of New South Wales. When that project failed to attract Government funding and the Government was approached by private organisations to restore the wharf, I supported the Minister, Bruce Baird, in calling for expressions of interest for restoration and reuse of the wharf and opening up of the bay.

Three expressions of interests were received: a market-entertainment-arts use; a hotel, residential apartments and sports complex; and maritime, retail, accommodation and community uses. I publicly opposed the Yates scheme for a huge market and

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24-hour entertainment centre because it would cause traffic chaos in the area. On weekends it would bring an estimated 2,000 vehicles an hour into a densely populated residential area. It would create a Flemington market by day and a Kings Cross by night. I have received more than 200 letters from local residents opposing the markets scheme. During the tender process an advisory committee to the Maritime Services Board was set up on my request. The advisory committee was made up of representatives of the National Trust, the Institute of Architects and Friends of the Finger Wharf. In a letter to the chief executive of the Maritime Services Board the Minister for Transport wrote:

It has been suggested to me by the Advisory Committee that all three parties who lodged expressions of interest should be allowed to proceed to tender in order to further explore the merits of the proposals. The Member for Bligh, Ms Moore, has indicated to me that she supports this approach.

Previously the Maritime Services Board had resolved that only one proposal would be put to tender. This resolution was passed at a meeting on 11th June, 1992. I intentionally absented myself from all involvement in the tender process. Allegations made by Dr Meredith Burgmann that I interfered in the tender process are absolutely without basis. When the hotel-apartment scheme was announced as the winning tender I gave it my support as a compromise solution. It was a means of saving the wharf which was compatible with the densely populated residential areas of Woolloomooloo and Potts Point and which would not destroy the peace and amenity of the adjoining gardens. I will continue to work to ensure the scheme includes shops and services for the local community and cultural facilities for the people of Sydney.

Throughout this process I have acted openly and responsibly on behalf of the people of my electorate and of Sydney. Despite the efforts of Dr Burgmann and Ian Yates I will continue to do so. Neither I nor my Independent colleagues have sought anything for ourselves or our electorates as part of the charter of reform agreement with the Government. Instead we sought to install stability for the State, and reforms that would lead to more open government and accountability. I refute the suggestion made by Dr Burgmann that there was any deal with the Government to secure my continued support. I also reject the statement by Dr Burgmann and deplore the tactics of peddling lies on behalf of a fanatical and aggrieved developer. I believe that being a member of Parliament carries with it responsibility to have regard to the truth. I call upon Meredith Burgmann to withdraw the allegations and to apologise.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.
