

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 3 March 1994

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

HOMEFUND LEGISLATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mrs GRUSOVIN (Heffron) [9.1]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The cornerstone of the HomeFund legislation passed in December was the provision of impartial financial counselling and legal assistance for all HomeFund borrowers eligible for the restructuring scheme. By now every member of this House must be fully aware of the dire financial and social consequences that have flowed from past failure to provide HomeFund families with proper financial counselling and legal assistance. Despite that knowledge, it would appear that the Government is intent upon repeating the same mistakes in the establishment of the HomeFund Restructure Information Centre. The centre is being promoted by the Home Purchase Assistance Authority as the first contact point for HomeFund borrowers seeking assistance.

When a borrower calls the 008 number an employee of the authority talks to the borrower. That borrower can then be referred to an employee of the Department of Consumer Affairs for supposedly impartial financial counselling and legal assistance. But this is only if the employee of the authority considers it appropriate to do so. That process borders on being scandalous, it is a blatant attempt to circumvent the specific requirements of section 14 of the HomeFund Restructuring Act. The present Consumer Affairs service comprises 10 financial advisers and five legal officers. This structure is supposed to be able to give impartial advice to more than 26,000 HomeFund borrowers, which is absurd to say the least. The newspaper advertisement for staff placed by Consumer Affairs on 15 January speaks for itself: "Successful applicants will receive training in the new HomeFund restructuring provisions".

What about training on the rights of HomeFund borrowers as contained in their existing mortgages? What about training on the redress available to HomeFund borrowers from the HomeFund Commissioner? Not on your life! Give the HomeFund borrowers who telephone a sales spiel on the new structuring scheme; send them through yet another revolving door; do anything, but do not provide proper advice in case it affects the State budget. That is the secret agenda of this Government and this poor excuse for a Minister for Consumer Affairs who, after all, should regard her primary role as that of protecting the interests of consumers. More than 10,000 borrowers have called the information centre. I ask any honourable member to tell me how 15 advisers could ever give proper counsel and legal assistance to 10,000 borrowers. That is simply ludicrous and demonstrates the contempt with which the

Government is treating the specific requirements of section 14 of the HomeFund Restructuring Act. I turn to the advertisement that was placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Consumer Affairs to order. She will have a chance to speak in the debate at a later time.

Mrs GRUSOVIN: The advertisement that was placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 15 January 1994 advertised for applicants for the HomeFund Advisory Service. I shall inform honourable members of what happened to one of the respondents to that advertisement who communicated with my office this week, on 28 February. The letter from that person stated:

Dear Mrs Grusovin,

Having read an article in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* regarding the HomeFund Commission's requirement to "provide the borrowers' access to impartial financial counselling and legal assistance services" I feel compelled to relate an experience which may explain, in part, why the Commission is only prepared to provide advice.

How right you are in stating "advice is very different from counselling and assistance".

I would like to relate an experience in specific regard to the actions of the Department of Consumer Affairs when looking to employ "advisers" for HomeFund borrowers.

In the 15th January 1994 *Sydney Morning Herald* Employment Section, the Department of Consumer Affairs advertised for financial and legal advisers on an initial temporary basis (up to six months), with the possibility of the position becoming permanent. The advertisement required immediate start for various positions. A facsimile number was provided, asking for responses "ASAP". I applied for the position of Financial Adviser by fax on that Saturday (15/1/94).

With some twelve years of finance and banking experience, including developing mortgage-related products, client advising and financial planning, I felt eminently qualified to apply, and still feel I warranted a considered response from the Department as a result of my application.

On the following Tuesday (18/1/94) I received a phone call from a "staffer" confirming receipt of my application, asking whether the application was complete. He located the fax sheet.

Ms Machin: On a point of order. The honourable member is quoting at length from a letter. I understand that the usual practice is to specifically identify such document so that honourable members will be aware of its source.

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is correct. The honourable member has been quoting from a letter in detail and should identify the person who wrote the letter.

Mrs GRUSOVIN: I have no problems with tabling the letter and providing the name of the person.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member cannot table the letter. It is a matter of informing the House who wrote the letter.

Mrs GRUSOVIN: The applicant was Mr Tony Kobler, and I have his telephone number. The letter proceeds:

On the 25th January 1994 I received a reply from Consumer Affairs referring to my application.

Normally a reply will state the applicant's lack of suitability to the position, lack of qualification or some such reasonable excuse. However, in this instance a unique response was forthcoming.

Would you believe, and I quote, "Because of the need to establish the service almost immediately, interviews for the position were conducted on 20 and 21 January 1993".

This information may be relevant to you in your quest to ensure the best possible circumstances for HomeFund borrowers. Their methodology, in my opinion, suggests the Commission has no inclination to provide impartial financial advice or counselling. Rather they seem more concerned with ensuring continuity of employment for staff at the ongoing expense of both the Government and the borrowers.

The informant goes on to ask me to continue to work to ensure that borrowers get a better deal, to which they are entitled. Involved in all this matter is the important provision of financial counselling, which the Opposition believes was inherently agreed to in the legislation passed in December. I am in receipt of correspondence from Credit Line which has been most concerned about the difficulties it is experiencing in securing sufficient resources to help families in crisis. Credit Line's letter, signed by Betty Weule, of 7 December 1993 stated:

Cash grant assistance can band-aid some families in crisis but financial counselling provides long term benefits in that, in addition to handling the immediate financial crisis by way of advocacy, negotiation, budgeting, debt consolidation, court representation of the client and information the clients gain control of their own financial situation and are better able to cope on an ongoing basis.

Mrs Weule also pointed out to me that the staff worked in their own time to raise more than half of Credit Line's running costs. She said:

Credit Line is the largest financial counselling service in Australia and in addition to providing a state wide service also resources, trains and supervises most of the other agencies operating in New South Wales without cost.

The reduction of financial counselling services will impact on the most disadvantaged sector of our community. Is this a responsible welfare policy?

I have had further correspondence from financial counselling services at Penrith, seeking my support to make representation to ensure adequate funding levels for all those services. One would have thought at this time that it was most important for financial counselling services to be properly resourced, in view of the fact that we have the largest tragedy facing potential home owners in this State. I can assure honourable members that thousands of HomeFund borrowers are still facing the loss of their homes. I understand that before Christmas Treasury allocated \$325,000 to the Department of Consumer Affairs for financial counselling. The Minister has still not allocated those funds, despite pleas and submissions from financial counselling centres which are starved of funding.

I understand - and I am reasonably up to date on these matters - that the Minister is "looking at other alternatives for the money". I would have to ask whether the Minister is playing some political game at the present moment, for that deeply concerns me. The information that has come to light over the past week suggests that the competence of the 15 people employed by the Department of Consumer Affairs is questionable and the advice given in most instances is closer to a sales pitch for the new scheme than to advice based upon a proper assessment of a borrower's financial position and legal rights. I could quote for hours from a pile of correspondence I have received this past week. It is a mounting pile. I assure the Minister that many borrowers are coming forward because they are not getting the help they require. However, I shall select a few quotes that might be of interest to the House and further clarify problems facing borrowers. I refer to a letter from borrowers who approached the legal advice line HomeFund Restructuring, which states:

I told the person on the phone that I had been placed in Category B but in July 94 I will be going onto a pension and that by the time 25 years had passed I would be in my 80s. All I was advised to do was fill in the assessment form and enclose a letter.

Also he did not know fully yet all the rules etc and to ring back next week when they've learnt more themselves.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Heffron intends to quote from letters she should identify the letters in the way she was asked to earlier.

Mrs GRUSOVIN: This is a quote from a letter from Mr Malcolm and Mrs Catherine Murray of Wentworth Falls. In response to their request to personally discuss their legal financial position with someone, the Murrays were told:

They were not able at this time, maybe later, to keep in touch. All we were told was to fill out the form, to be recategorised [if appropriate].

These are random quotes. However, I shall go into more detail with regard to the Murray family. These are indicative of answers that have been given to borrowers by the advisory service. The letter continued:

I asked her if I would still lose my home if I pay the arrears. She said she was not qualified to answer that question. The only thing she would advise me to do was to fill out the Assessment form.

The Murrays have written to my office and I quote from the letter as follows:

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My questions [to the advice line] were;

1. What is the legal position if I do not want any re-structure?
2. What is the minimum payment set out by the Department of Housing?

He immediately embarked on a sales pitch to demonstrate the "hopelessness" of our position and how we would not be able to repay the balance still owing after 25 years. I responded by telling him that I had a financial background and was well aware of accrued compounding interest and that I was asking for a LEGAL opinion only.

Once again, he launched into his lecture on financial morals . . . this phone call lasted some 75 MINUTES!

In desperation, I asked him what was the minimum repayment stipulated by the Department of Housing - by this stage, I was resigned to making my own legal assessment, but needed the facts. He replied that he didn't know the answer, but did say he'd phone me back. I asked how long this might take. He answered "We're pretty busy, right now - I guess around two or three days".

You are aware of much of the litany of horrors we have endured. Until I received the Government's "offers" today, I thought we had finished with all this and I could simply continue working 16+ hours per day, six days per week to try to get my new business off the ground and work our way out of our problems.

The Minister might be interested to note that the correspondents finished their letter by saying:

Should this letter ever be discussed in Parliament, Ms Grusovin may care to inform the government that Catherine and I have always voted Liberal - up until now. Silly us.

That letter is indicative of letters I am receiving from distraught HomeFund borrowers who still are being sent through revolving doors. An offer was made by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, acting on behalf of the HomeFund support coalition, consumer legal centres and financial counsellors comprising that group to produce within a three-week time frame a comprehensive manual for both financial counsellors and legal officers. This was estimated to cost \$50,000. However, it was rejected as being too expensive - too expensive when we are dealing with the greatest housing scandal this State has ever seen, the greatest consumer rip-off, and all under the auspices of the New South Wales Government claiming that it was managing better by putting people first!

Having regard to the fact that counsel and other senior personnel will be required to devote a considerable amount of time to producing the document to which I have just referred, the cost would appear to have been more than justifiable and, indeed, an excellent idea. An offer was made by the Legal Aid Commission to provide the advisory service through its suburban and country offices. However, this, too, was not considered by the Minister for Consumer Affairs as an acceptable proposition. It is totally inappropriate for the Department of Consumer Affairs to provide advice about matters in which it has the vested interest of resolution along the lines of the agenda set by the Government. I vividly recall the remarks of HomeFund Commissioner Rogers to the Solicitor General in the public discussion held on 2 November 1993 as follows:

Mr Solicitor, you are the captain of your own ship but is it really appropriate for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, who is the person charged with responsibility - I am using that term loosely - for the welfare of consumers, to ally herself with the submissions which you will no doubt make on behalf of the Treasurer, the Department of Housing and so on?

Section 14 of the HomeFund Restructuring Act, as it stands at the present time, states:

It is the duty of the Minister to ensure that HomeFund borrowers who are eligible to participate in the restructure scheme, but who are not yet participating in that scheme, are given access to impartial financial counselling and legal assistance services.

The booklet entitled "HomeFund Borrower's Guide to Loan Restructuring" recently forwarded to HomeFund borrowers by the Home Purchase Assistance Authority states that "impartial financial or legal advice" is available free of charge from the advisory service managed by the New South Wales Department of Consumer Affairs. This wording is inconsistent with the Act for financial advice is not financial counselling and legal advice is not legal assistance. I challenge the Minister to argue otherwise. The intention of the Government to deny HomeFund borrowers access to proper and professional advice is patently transparent. The Minister for Consumer Affairs, the one person, as Commissioner Rogers put it, responsible for the welfare of consumers in this State, should be ashamed to be associated with such an obvious scam. Yesterday the Premier advised of the initiatives that the Government was going to take in this, the International Year of the Family. In yesterday's *Sydney Morning Herald* he stated:

As our most basic social unit, families deserve all the support and encouragement that we can give. That is why the Government is making families - all families - a major priority.

Little priority has been given to dealing with the problems of HomeFund families throughout this State, not only this year, but also last year and in 1992. It is clear that problems have been demonstrated within the scheme prior to that time. However, these families have been cajoled into taking home loans that they could never repay. They have placed themselves, the finances of their families and their prospects of ever owning a home, in severe jeopardy. If the Government and the Minister were fair dinkum the proposals of the Legal Aid Commission would have been enforced and proper assistance provided to

borrowers.

A recent memorandum from the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales to all staff solicitors states quite clearly that they can expect to receive requests for advice from borrowers following newspaper advertisements and receipt of home purchase assistance authority letters. Proper advice should involve consideration of the HomeFund Restructuring Act, the HomeFund Commissioner Act, the Contracts Review Act, the Fair Trading Act, the Trade Practices Act and common law principles of unconscionability and breach of contract. The memorandum goes on to say:

Commission solicitors have neither the training nor the time necessary for the detailed consideration of all issues which is essential for proper professional advice.

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The memorandum continues:

It will be safer for most HomeFund borrowers if we do not offer legal advice but refer them instead to the HomeFund Advisory Service.

That would be great if, in fact, the borrowers were being given proper assistance from that HomeFund Advisory Service. I am most concerned, and I might say more than ever concerned, after spending most of last Sunday at a meeting in Plumpton, western Sydney, to which I understand the Minister decided not to send any of her officers because Mrs Grusovin would take over the meeting. I can assure you that it would have been an eye opener for the Minister and, perhaps, for her staff. It is not a laughing matter, Minister.

Ms Machin: You set it up.

Mrs GRUSOVIN: I made myself available, quite unlike you or members of your department. Hundreds of borrowers were at that meeting. I did not find it amusing to see borrowers absolutely devastated by what had happened to them over past years and by the prospects that lay ahead of them. I was not terribly impressed by finding a mother of three children who has only realised in the course of information provided to her last weekend that, in fact, she has been wrongly classified. She has been classified as a category D; she is classified as being in arrears; she has been told that if she does not make up those arrears by the end of April she will lose her home. That person has been attempting each month to pay extra money off those arrears.

What has not been apparent, because of the inadequacy of the advice proffered and help provided by this Government, is that this woman should never have been considered to be in arrears, is not in arrears, never was in arrears and, in fact, will be legally able to claim a recompense of the overpayments she has made because she was an affordable borrower. She was never given her rights when her income fell dramatically. So here we go again, another family put through trauma, another family led to believe that its case is hopeless, its plight is hopeless, that it will lose its home; another family led to believe that it could not continue to maintain its commitments when, in fact, it was never provided with the rights available in the contract. That is the appalling thing I see daily in this whole affair. The same borrower has never received a complaints guide from the HomeFund Commissioner. I assure honourable members that she is not the only one. There are many who slipped through the so-called safety net. That is absolutely appalling.

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

Mrs GRUSOVIN: This legislation will ensure that borrowers are given access to impartial financial

counselling and legal assistance services. Those services are quite different from what they are presently receiving, which is financial and legal advice. As well, it is absolutely vital to provide the necessary time and resources to establish a proper service centre; that the dates for the closure of complaints with the HomeFund Commissioner and the acceptance of offers of restructuring from the HomeFund Assistance Authority will require extending for a further period of six and three months respectively. It is most important that we extend the dates of those applications.

It is very distressing to me that we have had a HomeFund Commissioner put in place by this Government and quite handsomely rewarded, a HomeFund Commissioner who flicked through the problems of HomeFund on 31 December 1993 without making determinations even though, in correspondence to borrowers in early December 1993, he apologised for the delays, said he understood their concerns and frustrations and that he hoped he would shortly be able to make determinations. I venture to say that when he wrote those letters he never intended to make any determinations. My guess is that the commissioner was not very keen to see his legal reputation placed in doubt at some future time when some of his judgments would have been appealed in other courts and, I believe, shown to have been faulty.

The ludicrous situation has been reached where in March 1994 we have not had these matters resolved; we have a new HomeFund Commissioner who I am told is still learning the job which explains why he is unable at this stage to give further determinations; we have all these people parked in limbo; and we have people whose debts on their homes are still mounting. They still do not know what to do. They still suffer the frustration of being pushed through revolving doors. We have had the difficulty of a sort of turnover of consumer affairs Ministers in recent times. But the present Minister, I believe, unfortunately still has not apprised herself of the realities of HomeFund. Perhaps one could say that her staff may have been deficient in providing proper briefings on this matter. They themselves do not seem to have a proper understanding of the consumer issues involved in HomeFund.

It is time for this Minister to come to terms with this absolutely vital consumer issue, to apply herself and to undertake the responsibility which presumably she agreed to take up - to provide consumer protection to the community in the State of New South Wales. I am amazed to find that this Minister has time for dealing with killer toys and other somewhat trivial attention seeking exercises that Ministers for consumer affairs quite frequently indulge in. The Minister really has not taken very much time to apply herself to her real responsibility for dealing with the tragic problems of families.

The Premier in this House this week committed himself to improving the status of the family. I challenge the Premier to live up to his words, to ensure that HomeFund families are given access to impartial financial counselling and legal assistance by

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the one and only competent and independent body that can do the job properly, the Legal Aid Commission. I commend this bill to the House as a matter of urgency.

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Machin.

SYDNEY HELIPORT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 14 October 1993.

Mr BAIRD (Northcott - Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads) [9.28]: This private member's bill has been brought forward as a political exercise.

Ms Nori: My constituents have shown their feelings about this publicly.

Mr BAIRD: If they are your supporters we would not expect a huge number. The NIMBY syndrome is alive and well, and that is underlined by this particular bill. The bill is not about looking after the needs or requirements of a large and important central business district such as that of the city of Sydney, a city that won the Olympics, a city that has to look to the future and fulfil its major role in tourism. The honourable member has returned to the past and raised matters about which she has no technical expertise. She has set herself up as better than the commissioner who undertook the heliport inquiry and reviewed all aspects of it. She voted in this House to have the inquiry. The inquiry was held and reported that the heliport should go ahead. The commission of inquiry having recommended that the heliport should go ahead under certain conditions, the honourable member for Port Jackson wants to shift the goal-posts and claim that a commission of inquiry is not good enough. She wants to change the ground rules so that she and her left-wing mates can say, "Not in my backyard please".

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

Mr BAIRD: The honourable member for Port Jackson has had her chance to contribute to the debate. She represents a few people who question the right of those in the central business district to have the use of a heliport. There is no major city in the world that does not have a downtown heliport. That is what this debate is about. The proposed heliport would not be used many times per day, but would be there for tourism and for other reasons. The honourable member for Campbelltown has made a big name for himself by visiting the Olympic site in Atlanta and making suggestions about what we should do. It is a pity he was not around when Sydney was actually bidding for the Olympic Games, but now he has returned as a big hero he should have reported that the city of Atlanta has 21 helipad sites for its Olympic Games. The proposal here is for one downtown site.

In a little over six and a half years Sydney will stage the largest event in the world. Because of a few of her left-wing mates, the honourable member for Port Jackson says that she does not want a central business district heliport. Never mind the needs of the people of Sydney, never mind that the most important athletes in the world will be visiting Sydney. The helipad must be established; we must show our credentials. There is no longer any point in this House calling for inquiries, because after the inquiry has made recommendations certain members do not like those recommendations and all bets are off. We should forget about having inquiries. The Opposition loves inquiries. Every five minutes members of the Opposition are calling for inquiries. The inquiry into this matter has taken place. The commissioner has examined all aspects of the proposal and he gave the go-ahead under certain conditions.

It is hypocritical for the honourable member for Port Jackson to claim that because of her expertise - and she has previously admitted she does not have any - and that of her supporters, who have no knowledge of this project, she does not want the helipad to go ahead. Let me examine some aspects of the inquiry. The inquiry was undertaken by Mr William Simpson. He conducted the inquiry on an absolutely impartial basis. All other parties involved were prepared to accept the limitations imposed by the recommendations. The honourable member for Port Jackson is simply unwilling to accept the umpire's verdict.

Let me contrast her position with that of the Government. Although the Government has fully supported the establishment of a heliport since 1991, it has always maintained that it must operate within acceptable community noise limits. Honourable members would be aware that the honourable member for Port Jackson has vigorously disputed what constitutes acceptable noise. She has generally adopted any advice that would guarantee that the heliport could not operate commercially. I know she will trot out good old Professor Goldberg, as she always does. Professor Goldberg was up at the Castlereagh Freeway. Wherever there is a stoush, he will be there. In the past his expertise has been proved to be very doubtful. He was up in Beecroft checking out supposed freeway noise levels. Now he is at the heliport site in Pymont talking about his concern for the local residents. He is a rent-a-mouth; when there is a protest, drag out good old Professor Goldberg. He will always give the required answers. The

honourable member for Port Jackson and all her left-wing mates roll him out as required.

I see that one of the supporters of the honourable member for Port Jackson in the gallery is nodding her head in agreement. She knows that Professor Goldberg is available at any one time one wants to get support from the left. It is astounding that the honourable member for Port Jackson is able to state that technically the commissioner got it wrong. She admitted to the commissioner that she had no technical expertise, but that has not stopped her disputing his findings and the evidence presented by not one, but five experts.

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

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Mr BAIRD: The Government is continuing to govern this State effectively. I am sure the honourable member for Kiama is aware of the fine new Endeavour trains, which he can look forward to seeing on the South Coast. I cannot believe that the honourable member for Port Jackson has the professional training and understanding of acoustics that the expert participants in the commission of inquiry had. I am sure she would agree with that. Cabinet accepted Australian Standard 2363 because at the time it was the most recent and most heavily endorsed standard. But the Government and the Helicopter Association of Australia now agree that the evidence available to Commissioner Simpson has allowed definition of a better standard for the control of heliport noise. That better standard suggested by Commissioner Simpson requires compliance with the threshold of 20 ANEF.

What does ANEF mean in layman's terms? It means that one can hold a conversation outdoors without raising one's voice, and that people on shift work can sleep without being disrupted. During the noise tests held last May for the commission of inquiry, that was amply demonstrated. Shipping on the harbour, passing ferries, trucks on the road and trains over the bridge were all much louder than the test helicopter, but were still accepted by the reasonable person. A common everyday application would normally go ahead. If this proposal related to a normal part of Port Jackson and there were to be some noise, it would go ahead and there would be no complaints. But because the proposal relates to helicopters, it is *Apocalypse Now* so far as the honourable member for Port Jackson is concerned.

The heliport is a private enterprise project. I know the left-wing of the Labor Party does not like private enterprise, but we on this side of the House believe that private enterprise is the way to go. If it were not for private enterprise, I am sure New South Wales would now resemble the former Soviet Union. The heliport project will have significant benefits for the wider community. It aims to serve a primary need determined by the private market. It will have major benefits for tourism and the central business district will have the ability to attract new businesses. It will be a valuable asset in any large-scale central business district emergencies. The Government and the majority of the general public appreciate the metropolitan significance of the central business district heliport proposal and its importance to the helicopter industry.

One would think that New South Wales industry had no problems. If another industry has problems, why worry? The Opposition's mates in Canberra have forced so many companies to the wall during the past few years that not many are left. This Government is putting a great deal of money into tourism, much more than when the Labor Party was in office. The number of bookings in this State has increased by 24 per cent over the past 12 months. However, when an initiative is taken in relation to helicopters, the honourable member for Port Jackson does not want to know about it. The industry, with only 100 civil helicopters based in the Sydney-Newcastle-Wollongong region, is responsible for a great deal of public good: search and rescue, emergency medical transport, police security and pursuit, media coverage of news and sporting events and, most recently, fighting the January bushfires.

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

Mr BAIRD: The honourable member for Kiama has become an instant expert. This is the nonsense that is involved in this type of debate.

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

Mr BAIRD: The honourable member for Kiama has become an instant expert, like the honourable member for Port Jackson. I thank him for making a major contribution to the debate by leaving the Chamber. As I have said, helicopters are involved in search and rescue, emergency medical transport, police security and pursuit, media coverage of news and sporting events, and most recently, fighting the January bushfires.

Ms Nori: Here we go.

Mr BAIRD: Civilian helicopters. The member for Port Jackson says, "Here we go". We have just had the most devastating fires this State has ever known.

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

Mr BAIRD: Helicopters played a major role in fighting the fires. A lady in the public gallery is agreeing that this is a major problem, and it is. The reality is this State has had the worst fires it has ever known.

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

Mr BAIRD: Right across this city helicopters provided a major force in fighting these fires. There are all sorts of reasons to have a central business district heliport. The member for Port Jackson says, "Here we go"; that shows her ignorance. Members whose electorates have large areas of bush would appreciate the importance of getting helicopters out to those areas as quickly as possible.

Ms NORI: From Pymont? Terrific!

Mr BAIRD: It is a fact that civilian helicopters flew over 5,000 hours during that bushfire crisis, saving homes and property for many threatened Sydney residents. It is this ability to adapt to unexpected and serious situations that shows there is a demand for a strong and commercially healthy helicopter industry and for a convenient and safe landing site. The site for the heliport has been carefully chosen, offering a safe approach over water - not over houses. The site is over water; and as much as the honourable member's very large protest group in the public gallery might want to say

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differently, the reality is there are no houses in the site. The site is more than one kilometre from the nearest house. The site has always formed part of the planning proposals for Pymont-Ultimo, and both visually and economically it is compatible with the complex variety of land uses earmarked in the city west development strategy. Future development adjacent to the heliport has been planned to co-exist with the heliport and take advantage of its accessibility.

The previous Labor Government understood the importance of a city heliport, and of course members opposite know that to be a fact. Who in fact approved the last heliport? It was none other than Bob Carr, the current Leader of the Opposition, a former Minister for the Environment. The honourable member for Port Jackson speaks with all this hypocrisy saying how dreadful and inadequate the proposal is. She has her supporters in the public gallery. However, the reality is it was her leader who previously approved this proposal. He saw the need for it. Undoubtedly a few left-wingers in Balmain got on to the Minister and said, "Look we are worried about our member there. We are going to lose the seat to Dawn Fraser". And well they did at that time, but for reasons that had nothing to do with the heliport. The former Labor Minister finally backed off. It was your leader who previously approved the heliport - almost in the very same site that has now been approved. All of Sydney was looked at. All

of Sydney had the opportunity to have the heliport. Where was it put? In almost exactly the same place as was previously proposed.

It is sheer hypocrisy for the member for Port Jackson to come into this House and say this proposal is totally unacceptable, and the world will end because of this heliport, because it was her leader who previously approved this proposal when the Labor Government was in office. If ever we have had an example of hypocrisy, this is it. The honourable member for Port Jackson has argued that property prices will be affected by the establishment of the heliport. All the evidence indicates that this will not be so. When the Darling Harbour heliport operated in the early 1980s home prices in the Balmain, Millers Point and Pyrmont areas increased at the same rate as regional land prices. That is the reality. We have a test case of what happened before - no impact. One of our members lives within about half a kilometre of the Channel 9 helipad at Willoughby. There has been no impact there and people get on about their daily lives. In fact the honourable member for Willoughby is one of that helipad's supporters. He said it is his experience of the helipad near his place that it has had no impact on people's day-to-day lives.

A curious fact to emerge from the inquiry and from the second reading speech was that the member for Port Jackson regularly drives from Parliament House to Sydney airport in 10 minutes. She says it takes her 10 minutes to get out to the airport. It must be a low flying Ferrari that takes her out to the airport. I know the State's roads have improved significantly under this Government, but to say it takes 10 minutes is stretching things. It is an even bigger porky than those told by the Leader of the Opposition. The reality is that there is at least a half an hour penalty involved in using Mascot instead of the CBD heliport at Pyrmont. Prudent travellers allow the maximum amount of time to ensure connections; and this penalty is large, relative to the flight time to most destinations reached by helicopter. While being a clear advantage for the helicopter user, the CBD heliport will also benefit airline operations by releasing important air traffic capacity at Mascot, Australia's busiest commercial airport.

The honourable member wants to retain the current helicopter arrangements, with the air space over the current Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport to continue and for that airport to be the main site. Often there are delays and helicopters have to remain stationary over the airport. Mascot is a major international airport and it is wrong to believe it is a substitute for the CBD heliport. Pyrmont Wharf 8 was identified as the most suitable heliport site after an exhaustive search of alternative sites in October 1991. As I said earlier, it is close to the CBD and is eminently safe because all approaches are over water; and it is efficient because of its direct access to the harbour helicopter lane. The most affected residential location, Peacock's Point in East Balmain, is nearly a kilometre away from the heliport. The lease for the site is for an initial three-year term with one-year extensions, which will maintain commercial flexibility if an even better site for the heliport emerges with the further development of the CBD. We will continue to look at that to see if there are other alternatives.

I remind honourable members that a task force study spent some years looking at alternative sites. Various group type proposals were tested right around the CBD. The reality is there was no particular reason for choosing this site over any other site. It was chosen simply because it was the most suitable site. The technical committee looked at all aspects of noise impact and found that this was the site with the least overall impact. Even though it was the most suitable site, that does not mean that other sites will not be looked at in the future. Civilian helicopters such as those that would use the heliport must stay over the harbour in the helicopter transit lane and fly at 500 feet. They operate only during the day. The maximum height of 500 feet is imposed by the Civil Aviation Authority in order to guarantee safe separation from other aircraft in the Sydney control zone.

If the ceiling could be raised to 1,000 feet, peak noise levels could be reduced by about 80 per cent. Passing helicopters would be barely audible. That matter is being debated with the Civil Aviation Authority. There is a trade-off in regard to having the heliport downtown, which would take some of the pressure off Kingsford-Smith airport. So if helicopters are at 1,000 feet, it would be very difficult to argue that they had a direct impact, in terms of noise levels, on the average house in the immediate vicinity of

the CBD. While raising the ceiling of the helicopter lane to 1,000 feet is a distinct possibility,
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there are over 60 clearly defined and strict controls on the heliport that are certainties. I could not agree with the member for Port Jackson that they are inadequate. A maximum of 48 standard helicopter movements will be allowed on weekdays and Saturdays between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. or in daylight hours, whichever is the lesser. A maximum of only 24 movements will be permitted on Sundays and public holidays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. On most days the heliport will operate with fewer movements. It is expected that the average will grow to around 30 per day.

Most of the activity will transfer from other landing sites such as Mascot because the CBD heliport will be more convenient and cost efficient. These flights are already using the harbour helicopter lane and will not add to existing activity. There is all this fuss but the helicopters are already there. There is now an opportunity to have the ceiling lifted to 1,000 feet from the current 500 feet. No helicopters that give a noise measurement of more than 85dBa at Peacock's Point will be certified to use the heliport. Stories are circulating that there will be a hundred or more additional flights a day in the harbour helicopter lane. I am sure the honourable member for Port Jackson would never be associated with these fictions, these stories! Because of the noise limit the usage of the heliport will be restricted to light and medium weight helicopters. Heavier, military style helicopters will not be permitted to use the heliport. A strict formula will apply to reduce the permitted number of daily movements in proportion to the peak noise of the helicopters used. Last December the honourable member for Drummoyne talked about large capacity and twin rotor helicopters with double the sound impact of smaller aircraft using the facility. That is absolutely untrue.

Mr J. H. Murray: The thin edge of the wedge.

Mr BAIRD: That is not right. They are the guidelines and criteria that will be established. The only danger would be if the State had the misfortune of Labor being in government. Goodness knows what would be landing then. The honourable member for Drummoyne might want to tell these porkies. A great number of constituents are supposed to have telephoned with concerns. We have checked on this. There were no calls from the honourable member's electorate.

Mr J. H. Murray: Rubbish!

Mr BAIRD: Not in our reporting. Only one helicopter at a time will be allowed in the access lane and all landings and takeoffs must be at the maximum climb and descent rates to limit noise. Holding before landing at the heliport must be done east of Fort Denison, well clear of any residential area. These are easily understood conditions that can be monitored by the general public. The honourable member for North Shore took a stand on this issue before the recent election. She spoke to me at considerable length. She has expressed the concerns of people living in her area, and I respect those views. Areas extending into our electorates will be affected. The honourable member for Port Jackson is being politically opportunistic in this debate but we respect the right of any individual member to raise issues in the House which are of concern to the member's electorate.

The honourable member for North Shore has asked that noise monitoring equipment be situated at various sites around the harbour so that the noise impact may be monitored by the general public. The heliport operator must also provide a telephone complaints service. All complaints must be registered and referred to the Environment Protection Authority and the Maritime Services Board within 24 hours. The service will help identify any helicopter in the vicinity - not just those transiting to and from the heliport - by using the heliport's two-way aviation band radio. The service will be able to identify police and other emergency helicopter operations for the public. It is a significant step in ensuring that individual helicopter pilots fly with consideration for those on the ground at all times.

We are not unaware of the concerns of constituents and there will be full monitoring to ensure that people's comfort is considered. Noise testing in the first two months of operation will supplement the

extensive testing that was done for the environmental impact statement and the commission of inquiry. A special monitoring committee will be established with local representation. Its assessment of the heliport's operation and the nature and scope of any complaints will be influential in the consideration by the Environment Protection Authority of the annual noise control licence. This is a significant point that seems to have been lost in the debate. A noise control licence allows the actual impact of heliport operations to be reviewed each year. If there is any real concern about operations in practice something can be done about it. If supporters of the honourable member for Port Jackson wish to take part in such a monitoring committee they will be able to do so. The previous environment Minister, the present Leader of the Opposition, did not consult the local community when he allowed the establishment of the heliport. What monitoring committees did he have in place? What noise monitoring equipment was set up? None. What is being proposed by the Government is very different.

The honourable member for North Shore, in her extensive discussions with me on this issue, has asked that any action taken be on a trial basis. I have listened to the honourable member for North Shore and have agreed that establishment of the heliport will be on a trial basis. The monitoring equipment and the monitoring committee will be able to establish the impact of the heliport's operation. The honourable member for Port Jackson has raised furrphies, suggesting scenes from *Apocalypse Now* with masses of military style helicopters. All that is untrue. The strict operating guidelines restrict the noise levels and the number of movements. The trial will allow all involved to monitor the success or otherwise of the proposal. During the trial helicopter movements, helicopter type, noise levels, complaint recording and

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all the other controls that have been imposed will be strictly monitored and evaluated. A comprehensive report will be prepared and available to Parliament. It is hoped that a trial of a higher ceiling in the harbour helicopter lane can be arranged to coincide with the heliport trial.

The Government is confident that the heliport will operate without major controversy and within the strict conditions set down by the commission of inquiry and determining authorities. The Government has acted in good faith in this matter, following the commission of inquiry and last December's urgency motion. There is no substance in the argument of the honourable member for Port Jackson for outright prohibition of the heliport. This has been fully demonstrated by the environmental impact statement and the commission of inquiry report. We have had our commission of inquiry and it has presented its findings. The honourable member for Port Jackson simply does not want to accept the findings in the report. As we have outlined, on a number of grounds there are many reasons why we should have the heliport in the Sydney CBD, in a major metropolis - on emergency, security, medical and tourism grounds. There will be many visitors to the city in the next 6½ years to check on the progress of Homebush Bay for the Olympics. The honourable member for Port Jackson would require the many significant visitors to go out to the airport, to wait for air traffic controls before takeoff and then go back into the city at the conclusion of -

Ms Nori: Put them on one of your trains.

Mr BAIRD: With support from the Federal Labor Government we would be happy to press ahead with rail proposals. The honourable member for Port Jackson would prevent the heliport simply on the basis of the perceived needs of a few people who live on the peninsula. It is grossly unfortunate that the bill has been introduced by the honourable member for Port Jackson. It has shown Australian Labor Party members for what they are - hypocrites. They introduced a heliport in an almost identical spot. They are unwilling to abide by the rules. It was they who proposed a commission of inquiry, not us. The commission of inquiry was established and it gave the go-ahead. Now Labor members simply do not want to live with the recommendations.

The Government has indicated that monitoring will take place, a committee will be set up, test equipment will ensure that requirements are met, and limits will apply to the number of movements in and out of the heliport. The construction of this heliport should go ahead, on any criteria. It is unfortunate that

the honourable member for Port Jackson has introduced this bill, because it is yet another sign that the Labor Party is concerned not about the overall interests or needs of the Sydney CBD but rather about parochial left-wing politics. I indicate the Government's wish to proceed with this heliport and I look forward to the House supporting it.

Mr J. H. MURRAY (Drummoyne) [10.0]: The Minister claims that there is a need for a heliport in the CBD, but he consistently neglected to inform the House that there is a heliport at Mascot - which recently has been upgraded at a cost of millions of dollars to the taxpayer - which will become redundant if the Pymont heliport proceeds. The heliport at Mascot is very effective, well utilised, well monitored, and safe. It is only a short trip from the CBD by car and, more important, because of this Minister's initiatives a new rail link between Sydney airport and Central station is to be built for the Olympics - which the Minister did not mention in the debate - and travel from Central station to the domestic terminal will take 10 minutes, and to the international terminal, 13 minutes - which is just as long as it takes to travel from the CBD to Pymont.

The Minister mentioned only half of the relevant matters, and there is an alternative. He had the hide to say that his colleague the Treasurer and Minister for the Arts thinks the heliport will be wonderful. He said he has no problem with the Channel 7 helicopters, but he is not affected in his electorate by the third runway or the north-south runway. The Government intends to have a heliport in Pymont and helicopters flying along the Parramatta River, and under the existing flight paths. This will be a disaster for everyone living in the upper harbour area. The domestic rail link between the CBD and the airport will be built within the next five years as part of our Olympic preparation. Therefore, it is essential that the Environment Protection Authority and the Government reassess the Pymont thrust.

The CBD heliport at Mascot will provide a facility at a later stage for a mass lift from there to Badgerys Creek. The Pymont heliport will never provide that. Super helicopters will never travel from Pymont to Badgerys Creek, because people will not land at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport, travel to the city and then catch a helicopter to Badgerys Creek; they will land at Kingsford Smith and travel by the Mascot helicopter to Badgerys Creek. Once again, the initiative of this Minister will be used by only 123 yuppies, because the estimate is that only 123 people a day will benefit from the heliport, whereas thousands of people in the upper harbour area will be disadvantaged. The Government is hellbent on making life a misery for the residents of the inner west. It will dump about 600 semitrailers a day onto Victoria Road with the Metromix proposition.

[Interruption]

The commissioner said to go away and look at it again.

[Interruption]

I am interested in this North Shore yuppie mafia - the honourable member for Davidson, the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai, and the honourable member for Eastwood - but where is the honourable member for North Shore, whose electorate will be affected, and where is the honourable member for Gladesville, whose marginal seat will be affected? Where is the Minister for Industrial Relations and Employment and Minister for the Status of Women? They are not in the House. The Minister has lined up

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the North Shore upper harbour mafia to support him. They have never seen a helicopter. A few of their yuppie mates will benefit from it, but their electorates are nowhere near any of the helicopter pathways. The members whose electorates will be detrimentally affected are not on the list of speakers. They are hiding, because they know this heliport will be a disaster for their electorates.

The Government will make the lives of the people in Drummoyne, Chiswick, Abbotsford and Cabarita - the flight path area - a disaster. Currently there are 15 helicopter flights per day, including CareFlight,

the police, television Channels 2, 7, 9 and 10, the Roads and Traffic Authority, and other government departments. They are the official figures. There are problems with those 15 because, though the Minister says they do not fly over land, they fly over the water and into a canyon situation, causing the noise to reverberate. The foreshore area is a medium-rise to high-rise area. Many buildings are 18 to 20 stories high and helicopters often fly opposite bedroom and lounge room windows. Currently there are only 15 flights a day. But under this proposal there will be 60 a day. It will be a disaster. However, an alternative already operates at Mascot which would provide for the needs of the people of Sydney.

The Minister spoke for some time about noise levels and noise standards. That is the weakest element in the argument for the heliport, because the Minister is in pixieland if he thinks we will accept what he said about noise standards and guidelines. The initial noise standard adopted by the Government was scientifically unsound. It is clear that the Government shopped around to find a standard that would suit its purposes; it deliberately bypassed its own standard. Why set up an EPA to set standards and then deliberately not use them? The Government has decided not to use EPA guidelines but instead has shopped around. Under those guidelines a potential exists for 100 helicopter movements per day, depending on the type of helicopter used and the noise generated by it. Reference has been made to 60 flights per day, but I have been around long enough to know how public servants work. In two years it will be 90 and in three years it will be 100. That is the way it works. The Government said to the poor new member for North Shore, "It is only a trial, Jillian, we are only going to trial it". She said, "That's good; it's only a trial."

Ms Nori: A trial member.

Mr J. H. MURRAY: That is right. The honourable member for North Shore must be very gullible if she accepts that nonsense from the Minister today. The noise standard adopted by the commissioner as a result of the commission of inquiry was not arrived at by a process of public scrutiny, and is scientifically unsound. The major flaw in the commissioner's new noise standard is that it does not distinguish between people's reactions to fixed-wing aircraft and rotor blade, that is helicopter, noise. The commissioner refused to acknowledge the findings of Dr Ollerhead - an acknowledged overseas world expert - whose studies demonstrate that people's reactions to aircraft and helicopter noise are quite different and therefore a noise standard cannot be devised for helicopters based on criteria relating to fixed-wing aircraft noise. The good doctor was willing and able to travel to Australia to put his point of view, but obviously, the Government was not interested in that and he was not invited. Why?

The Government would rather knock over the Environment Protection Authority guidelines, ignore them and put in its own. Under EPA guidelines the heliport would have been restricted to approximately 20 movements a day. There is a problem in terms of the impact on the lifestyles of people living in Drummoyne. Many people living in harbourside areas are engaged in night work, for example in the entertainment and commerce industries. Many of them live in that area because of its proximity to the central business district. They will be detrimentally affected by the proposed heliport. The beneficiaries will be 123 yuppies a day.

Safety is a major concern when helicopters are flying over dense urban areas. The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai is nodding his acknowledgment of the importance of that topic, so let us talk about it. It is a major issue that the Minister conveniently ignored. He went on about the Olympic Games. The Minister and I were together at the Barcelona Olympic Games, and not too many of the helicopters flying over Barcelona were being used by those travelling to the Olympic Games. That is another furphy. Masses of people will not be travelling by helicopter to the Olympic Games. That is out. The Minister knows it, and I know it. We were both at the Barcelona Games and we both know that did not happen. For the Minister to say that will happen in Sydney and that Pyrmont has to be used is balderdash. What will happen is that people will travel in the Minister's RiverCats - which, incidentally, are wrecking the foreshores - and they will arrive at the Games site in no time at all. I have copies of press releases by the Minister in which he stated that that form of transport will be used. There is no need to have helicopters for that purpose.

The commissioner stated in his report that 80 per cent of helicopter accidents involve no serious injuries or fatalities, and that as the flight paths are over water he considers it reasonable to disregard that factor. However, a helicopter flying over water, 100 metres from either shore, might not plonk straight down in a crash. Nine times out of 10 it will go out of control and crash on to land. How often do helicopters crash? The Bureau of Air Safety - the experts, unlike the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai, the honourable member for Davidson and the Minister with their lack of technical knowledge - estimates a probability of one helicopter crash every six weeks if this heliport should proceed. I did not write that report; I am stating the opinions of safety experts. Members opposite obviously think that they know more about safety than the experts and that they do not have to listen. The report states that a large

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number of helicopters operating on a self-regulation basis over dense city areas is a formula for disaster for both users and residents. The people who will suffer will be the residents of Drummoyne, Chiswick and Abbotsford in the Drummoyne electorate.

Talks with the CAA to establish air traffic control over all helicopters flying over the city areas should be finalised immediately. The Minister will claim that most major cities have helicopters within their central business districts. However, a viable, well operated heliport already exists at Kingsford-Smith airport. In many major cities the distance from the geographical centre of their central business districts to the heliports is the same as the distance from the CBD to Kingsford-Smith airport. Who will use the proposed heliport? It will only become eventually viable with the introduction of twin-screw helicopters. The Minister wants to suggest, however, that the present decibel rating will never change. The Minister and his colleagues on the backbenches know that things change every day. That is the purpose of this Parliament and the reason that bills are introduced daily. Attitudes and commercial realities do change. There is nothing surer than that the upper decibel rating limit will change. When that rating changes, large twin-screw helicopters will be used, because they will be commercially viable.

Mr O'DOHERTY (Ku-ring-gai) [10.16]: I thank the honourable member for Drummoyne for his entertaining contribution to this debate. He certainly had members riveted on this side of the Chamber. He mentioned so-called factual contributions that he made. I understand that the independent advice that he received and quoted from - his overseas world expert, as he said - of one accident every six weeks was rejected by the commission of inquiry. In relation to helicopter safety on take-off and landing, the major helicopter accidents that have happened in Australia, as the honourable member would well know, have occurred on transmission line inspection flights by power utilities and also with helicopters used by television stations, which very often take off and land in urbanised areas where they can come into contact with power poles. That problem does not arise when taking off and landing over areas of water. That is one of the many reasons why the heliport is proposed to be located at Pyrmont.

The honourable member said much about the Mascot heliport being all that is needed for the Sydney CBD. I wish to give members the benefit of some of my experience when working in the television industry. That time-critical industry services the public throughout Australia by bringing to them important information about their society and what is happening in it. People in that industry cannot afford to spend half an hour in traffic trying to get to the airport from the Sydney CBD or, worse still, from their television station, which might be located outside that area, or wherever their crew might happen to be with its television cameras and sound recording gear. Even more important, when they land at Mascot with their hot property - a piece of Beta tape, Super-8 or the latest technology high-band 8 millimetre tape - they do not have time to get from Mascot by car back to the television station or to their city transmission centre, for instance here in the bowels of Parliament House.

For the past 15 years workers in that industry travelling between various locations have been able to chop between transport lanes. They already use the transport and chopper lanes that the honourable member for Drummoyne spoke about. If this proposal is approved, the Civil Aviation Authority will be lifting the ceiling to 1,000 feet, thereby not increasing but reducing noise for the residents of Chiswick, Drummoyne, Abbotsford and other areas, and especially for those in inner city areas. Television crews

already travel over the areas mentioned by the honourable member, at a height of 500 feet. If this proposal is passed, that ceiling will be lifted to 1,000 feet. That change will improve amenities for residents of areas presently affected by television crew movements. As we move towards the year 2000 and greater demands are made for immediate delivery of news services, a heliport in the centre of the city is well overdue for such a time-critical industry. Collection of news in the city area is delayed by time and distance and by elaborate and expensive means of transmission, which often cannot overcome the difficulties television stations experience in getting news to air immediately.

Pay television is on the verge of being introduced in Australia, although because of the way the Federal Government is delivering it and because of the time delay in getting fibre optic cables to houses, most of Australia will not have it for 10 to 15 years. Microwave digital services could have been considered, but that is another debate. Pay television will increase yet again the number of people demanding immediate access to news. Our industry demands immediate access to information about what is happening in Australia and around the world, and the finance industry wants to hear quickly of developments in commerce and the stock markets. Members know that instant access to information is necessary. In a vast industry, both in communications and commerce generally, instant access requires that there be a heliport in the city centre.

It is not good enough to tell people to catch a bus or go to Mascot or sit in traffic choking in the fumes behind the honourable member for Port Jackson, who is caught in a queue waiting to get to Mascot for her helicopter. Of course, consideration must be given to the residents in proximity to the heliport. The Prime Minister has shown an example of his regard for constituents. He decided without consultation to move the navy from Garden Island to White Bay, or wherever he chose to place it. He called the constituents of the honourable member for Port Jackson Balmain yuppie basket weavers because they complained. He really cares about those constituents!

Honourable members opposite should talk to their Prime Minister about the noise resulting from that decision, about local planning, about asking the

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Environment Protection Authority to make determinations, about holding a commission of inquiry, and about listening to the people. This Government conducted a commission of inquiry and the Minister has carefully and patiently listened to all concerns and once again gone through the proper approval process for planning in this State. The honourable member for Port Jackson has introduced in an ad hoc fashion a bill that would override existing planning powers and set a dangerous precedent for legislating to remove a proper planning process that is fully accountable and appellable.

That is a backward step as we try to move our society towards the year 2000. A city aiming to become the financial capital of this area of the world is an important interwoven part of the international economy; its stock market operates when many others are closed. Many world companies are choosing Sydney to establish their South-east Asia headquarters; Australia has been chosen for the multibillion dollar communication system headquarters. No doubt a city in the centre of the South-east Asian commercial operation needs a heliport. Residents of the central business district have all the benefits of living in the commercial heart, and we depend on them to provide heart and life in the city. A city that is devoid of residents is not a city at all. It is important to have a mix of residential and commercial areas, but one side of the mix cannot be denied to promote the other. The commercial side cannot be denied. As Sydney moves towards the year 2000 it must have a heliport as part of its commercial operations. It is almost Byzantine or Neanderthal for a modern city to require people to drive to Mascot.

When the argument of the honourable member for Drummoyne is pulled apart we realise the origins of most of his concerns. He spoke of 123 yuppies who will be using the heliport, and that is the clue to the Opposition's objection. It objects not necessarily because of noise and residents' concerns but because of the type of people who use helicopters. Who are they? In the language of members opposite, they are the silvertailed Liberals from the North Shore - and that rubbish is parroted day after day and night after night. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke at length about it last night. Where did he go to

school? He went to school on the leafy North Shore and benefited from the education he received in the electorate of my colleague the Minister for Transport.

Ms Nori: Who is that?

Mr O'DOHERTY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition attended Knox Grammar School, did he not?

Ms Nori: No, he attended school in Canberra.

Mr O'DOHERTY: It is leafy there also, and that can be added to the rhetoric. The Labor Party trots this nonsense out time and again. If it is an ideological objection, if there is a problem with people using helicopters, let us hear it. If that is the objection, is the Opposition protesting about the immense use of emergency services - police and fire brigades - during the recent bushfires across New South Wales? Helicopters are becoming an important part of our strategic communications and transport infrastructure in Australia. We cannot bury our heads in the Balmain sand and pretend that is not happening and therefore we cannot have a heliport in Sydney.

Of course noise complaints and concerns of residents must be taken into account, and the commission of inquiry and the noise pollution licence control system were established for that reason. Reviews will be undertaken by the Minister. The Civil Aviation Authority will lift the ceiling of flights to 1,000 feet. The honourable member for Drummoyne mentioned an average of 15 helicopter flights going across his electorate at the moment. He said that there will be 60 a day if the heliport is approved. He seems to be adding figures from everywhere and then doubling them to get that answer.

A heliport will not increase movements from television stations and from the city facility at Mascot - 15 flights a day will not become 60 flights overnight. The commission of inquiry said that flights would increase to 30 a day over a 20-year period. At that time there will be a new honourable member for Drummoyne to worry about that issue. In addition, those 30 flights a day in 20 years will be at 1,000 feet over many of the areas mentioned by the honourable member for Drummoyne. The member spoke about standards. The Australian standard is used for noise control measures, and if the honourable member has a problem with standards, he should raise it with the Prime Minister.

I reiterate that it was the Prime Minister who did not consult the honourable member for Port Jackson when he decided to move the Garden Island dockyard into her electorate. The Prime Minister said a new navy site would be nothing compared to Garden Island. If the Prime Minister were asked about the use of a heliport in the inner city, I am sure he would find it an advantage because, as a modern man who knows the ways of the world, he would consider it to be quite an advantage to the people of Australia and New South Wales as we move towards the year 2000.

The honourable member for Drummoyne spoke about the rail link, which is an important part of the preparation for the 2000 Olympic Games. It needs the support of the Federal Government and I urge the honourable member for Drummoyne to make representations to the Prime Minister, despite his apparent lack of concern.

Mr J. H. Murray: To Laurie Brereton.

Mr O'DOHERTY: Of course, to Laurie Brereton. He is a man who knows a lot about airports and noise. He sold out his constituents too. I ask the honourable member for Drummoyne to make representations to Laurie Brereton and the Prime Minister in order to get their support for the rail link from Mascot to the city - the proposed rail link towards the year 2000. The honourable member for Drummoyne suggested that if we get that rail link -

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and we hope we do - it would be a replacement for the proposed heliport at Pyrmont. Imagine travelling

with members of a television crew: they would have to get off the chopper at Mascot, with all their gear - the tripod, the camera and the sound recording equipment; an honourable member may have a hot tape in his hand, the one that will bring down the Government - and they would have to stand in the queue to get on the train.

The crew would travel by train to Central; then get on another train and travel to Artarmon before the tape was put to air at Channel 9. That is absolutely ridiculous. The honourable member for Port Jackson has quite reasonable concerns with respect to her constituents' wishes. I would never take away from that. In my view, the reason behind this bill is an ideological concern. We have heard from the honourable member for Drummoyne that 123 yuppies would use the heliport. Let us look at its wider use - for transport and communications in a sophisticated and developing society. We need that heliport in Pymont. And it is time that we got it. [*Time expired.*]

Ms MOORE (Bligh) [10.31]: The people in urban consolidated areas, the people in our cities, are constantly asked to pay, pay, pay the Federal Government and the State Government. The State Opposition gives lip-service to encouraging people to live in high densities, to utilise existing services, for better transport and communication and access to facilities. For the past 13 years I have represented the people in those urban consolidated areas at council and in the Parliament. I have spent most of that time fighting on their behalf, defending their right to get on with their lives in some measure of peace and quiet. The constituents of many members of this House will be asked to pay even more if this proposal proceeds.

Pymont is meant to be a major urban renewal area; it is the jewel in the crown of the Federal Government's better cities program. The Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing has supported bringing residents back to the Pymont area. No one would agree that a casino and a heliport are the best things for residential amenity. I challenge any honourable member of this House to say they would like to live in close proximity to a casino or a heliport. The major renewal project in Australia's leading city will have residents who are asked to live close to a casino and a heliport. It is absolutely extraordinary.

Are we getting representations from the Minister for Planning in this debate? He is the one who should be concerned. I spent over an hour with officials of the Department of Planning. They argued with me about the benefits of a casino for those proposed residents of Pymont. Frankly, I was appalled. The people who will live in Pymont and other electorates will be affected. That is why I have reservations about the heliport. The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai has told us that instant access is the thing of the 1990s. He reminded us that Sydney is a sophisticated and developing society, and that we are getting the Olympic Games. I have expressed reservations about the Olympics in my capacity of representing an inner urban area. The Minister knows that. I asked for a social impact study because of all the evictions following the bicentenary.

Honourable members know that I have reservations about the Olympics. It is wonderful if we do not have to pay, pay, pay for the Games; it is wonderful if the Games raise the morale of people and help industry. However, I represent people who are under incredible pressure from traffic - because of the Sydney Harbour Tunnel they are subjected to an extra 10,000 to 20,000 vehicles every day. There are also tremendous development pressures. Will the whole of Rushcutters Bay foreshore have buildings on it? These things worry me. I put the heliport in this category. That is why I have to support the bill today.

We are told by the Minister and his bureaucrats that the heliport is important for us - Melbourne has three, and goodness knows how many Atlanta has. I asked the Parliamentary Counsel whether an amendment could be prepared to allow a heliport in the central business district, not in the residential precincts surrounding the CBD. Apparently, that is not possible. I understand that the Federal member for North Sydney thinks that a building rooftop could be used. Perhaps that could be investigated, if there is an essential need for a heliport. I am not convinced that there is a need; nothing that I have

heard today has convinced me there is. When something will have a disastrous impact on people's daily lives, in the most densely populated areas in Australia's leading city, I have to come down on the side of the people whom I believe are already putting up with extraordinary pressures.

What really worries me is that the Premier and Minister for Economic Development keeps going on radio and television saying that the terrible Independents keep putting a handbrake on him. The people of New South Wales should be grateful to the Independents because we do not have a Kennett's Victoria and because we have not had the disasters of Western Australia. I worry that if the coalition or the Labor Party gets a majority after the next election we will get this heliport in a residential area. Apparently the flight path will be over the Woolloomooloo-Surry Hills area and Pyrmont. All the other electorates we have heard about today will be affected. That is what really worries me. Perhaps the handbrake is in the interests of not only the people in the inner city area, but also the people of New South Wales. For those reasons, I support the bill.

Mr HUMPHERSON (Davidson) [10.36]: The honourable member for Port Jackson has been supported this morning by the honourable member for Drummoyne. It is a blatant political stunt aimed at buying votes through deception and misleading the residents of their electorates. The honourable members know that they have no chance of achieving anything through this bill; it has absolutely no chance of success; it will have no impact in avoiding a

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heliport in the Sydney central business district and the Pyrmont area. The honourable members know that. Whilst the bill might aim to preclude a heliport within a one kilometre radius of pier 8, they know that even if the bill passes through the lower House, it will not pass through the upper House. It will have absolutely no impact on the planning for the CBD heliport or a heliport in Pyrmont.

The honourable member for Port Jackson and the honourable member for Drummoyne have misled the voters and residents of their electorates. Those members have given people the impression that they will be able to delay or avoid this particular heliport. They will not achieve that. The greatest irony is that the Leader of the Opposition privately does not support them. His previous position on this heliport is well known, as the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads said earlier. The Leader of the Opposition knows that despite the protestations and theatrics that have gone on in this House this morning, at the end of the day there will be a heliport in the electorate of Port Jackson. The honourable member for that electorate also knows that.

The Leader of the Opposition originally approved a heliport in the Darling Harbour area. When Darling Harbour was developed a new location for a heliport had to be found. The Leader of the Opposition and the majority of the members of the Opposition know very well that there is no chance that Sydney can survive as a viable city in the South-east Asian region without a heliport in close proximity to the CBD. This exercise is about buying votes and shoring up support for the honourable member for Port Jackson and, particularly, the honourable member for Drummoyne - which is why he spoke. The honourable member for Drummoyne is under a significant amount of pressure for his much sought after re-election in March next year.

A heliport has always been part of the planning for the Pyrmont area. There is much more logic in locating a heliport in the Darling Harbour-Pyrmont vicinity than building it in the central business district. To land helicopters on the top of the higher buildings in the CBD, with some of the wind effects and consequent safety implications, makes that district a much lower preference than a location that is close to the water, close to Darling Harbour, where flight paths will not expose any of the population of Sydney to significant risk. I note the honourable member for Drummoyne cited a quote from an expert who allegedly said that there was risk of a helicopter accident or crash every six weeks. The honourable member was unable to verify or substantiate that particular quote. One wonders whether it was more of the fiction that this House heard during debate this morning.

The residents of the Port Jackson and Balmain areas do have concerns; it is more than

understandable that they should be interested in what is happening in their vicinity. Much of their concern now, after the commission of inquiry and debate on the issue, has been exaggerated and beaten up. It is proper for people to be interested in what goes on in their local area. While this is referred to as a NIMBY attitude, an automatic objection, people are entitled to be aware of what is happening and to have the opportunity to comment.

This proposal is that the heliport be constructed one kilometre from the nearest residence with flightpaths no closer than three-quarters of a kilometre from the nearest residence. At that distance and at a height of 500 feet - this may be increased to 1000 feet - the impact on people in their homes, going through their normal day-to-day lives, will not be noticeable. Most people inside their homes will not be aware of the maximum 10 flights a day which will be permitted under the commission of inquiry recommendation. We are hearing an exaggeration of the scare tactics, the politics of fear being portrayed by the honourable member for Port Jackson and the honourable member for Drummoyne.

The honourable member for Port Jackson has a particular interest in this issue because she has some political mileage to gain from it. The honourable member opposed with some vengeance this particular heliport proposal since it was first mooted in 1991. In May 1993 she finally agreed to an impartial inquiry with public input and to have an independent umpire. The honourable member said she would accept the outcome and recommendation of the arbitrator. She further stated that the inquiry would not delay the heliport proposal by more than nine months. What happens now? That inquiry has been conducted - and what a waste of time it was.

A thorough investigation of all the issues relating to the heliport in Pymont was published - some 100-odd pages - which I am sure the honourable member for Port Jackson and the honourable member for Drummoyne have read in detail. The inquiry has been held, some criteria have been set and some conditions have been recommended, but the inquiry did recommend proceeding. Now the honourable member for Port Jackson and the honourable member for Drummoyne are saying that they will not accept the umpire's decision, simply because they do not like it. At the outset they said they would agree to have an independent arbitrator but now that inquiry has been concluded and the recommendation made - which was not a cheap exercise in itself, leaving aside the nine months' delay - they do not accept the result.

The inquiry concluded that the noise impact for those who had raised concerns would not be significant. Because of the distance involved from the homes, the flight paths were not impacting on the homes. In adopting the Australian noise exposure forecast the commission of inquiry considered that those criteria were most appropriate for use, not only in Australia but for residential areas such as those at Peacock's Point, which I understand is the closest residential dwelling to the proposed heliport. Based on the Australian noise exposure forecast, there are 10 reasons why the criteria should be adopted and applied in this particular case.

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The inquiry recommended a condition of approval which permits 48 movements Monday to Saturday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and 24 movements on Sundays and public holidays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Those hours are the standard according to guidelines which the Environment Protection Authority applies to residential lawnmower noise. From 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. is a reasonably significant noise constraint period for any form of noise; people are entitled to mow their lawns within that period of time. Likewise on a Sunday, the hours have been constrained to the period between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., which is even more restrictive than what applies to someone operating a lawnmower.

The arguments against the location of a heliport adjacent to residential areas have been grossly exaggerated, along with a number of other issues. To cite one, there is concern about the impact on land value. The Balmain and Rozelle Chamber of Commerce, through a number of residents, contended that the heliport would seriously devalue some Balmain properties. Various residents obtained opinions

from real estate agents which cited up to a 40 per cent loss in value of some residential properties nearby. After thorough investigation the commissioner concluded that the research and database evidence in regard to the likely impact of the heliport at pier 8 is unlikely to adversely impact on the property values in Balmain and Pyrmont.

Given what I have said and taking a fairly logical look at the issue, it really is hard to sustain an argument that there would be an impact on home values in those residential areas. The need for the heliport for police use, fire use, or emergencies of one sort or another has been outlined in some detail by the Minister and by the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai. The media have a justifiable need for a heliport and for a variety of business applications as well. Sydney is a significant city, even more so on the world map following the successful Olympic 2000 bid last year.

In this city, one of the largest and most significant cities in South-east Asia, in which a lot of investment has occurred, many international and multinational companies are looking to establish their regional national headquarters. However, Sydney does not have a CBD heliport. There is a crying need for a heliport in the Sydney CBD. It is a furphy to allege that the proposed rail system between the Sydney CBD and the airport will overcome this deficiency. That proposal has merit but it is at least five years down the track. There is a significant amount of development work involved in getting that rail system to the airport; it will take a substantial sum of money. It is clear that the Federal member for that area, Mr Laurie Brereton, is opposed to the construction of that project.

The project needs Federal Government funding to overcome the shortfall of some \$100 million and make the project viable. The ball is in the court of the Federal Minister, and he is refusing to support that particular project. There are significant gains for the Federal Government because of the large tracts of land it owns along that particular rail system, but the Federal Minister is neglecting to support it. Unless he comes to the party, construction of that rail system is potentially even further off. That proposed rail link to the airport may well reduce journey time to 10 minutes in the year 2000 but at present the journey takes between 20 and 30 minutes. Therefore, the rail link proposal does not cut across the very great demand for a heliport close to the central business district.

Another scare tactic used to oppose the heliport proposal is unsafe fuel storage. There is safe storage proposed on this particular heliport site. The storage would be of such a nature as to reduce to an absolute minimum the risk of spoilage of the wharf itself or the waterways from fuel spillage. Those sorts of issues and many others have been blown out of all proportion and are not in accordance with reality. The honourable member for Bligh made a number of brief comments. Basically, she said that Pyrmont, as with most of her electorate, has high density living. But she has not acknowledged that the location of this particular heliport is at least one kilometre from the majority of residents in the Balmain area. If she learns the facts, she will know that particular argument carries no weight.

It is interesting that the Sydney Football Stadium, which is within her electorate, is the venue for a number of sporting events which attract helicopter flights to the stadium. But I would bet she does not get many complaints about those activities. The reality is that the flights are at such a height that they do not impact on the people who live in that particular area anyway. The honourable member also referred to the role of Independents in placing a handbrake on government. The question that she should answer is: does she have a mandate to oppose a heliport? As a candidate for Bligh in the 1991 elections she did not say she would oppose a heliport for all of Sydney and dismiss all the benefits which go with it to the commercial centre. *[Time expired.]*

Ms NORI (Port Jackson) [9.51], in reply: I am glad this debate has finally taken place but I really thought that the Government would be able to come up with a better contribution. In fact, all the Government speakers have tried to attack me personally, claiming this is just an act on my part for the sake of political gain. I have fought this issue for five years. It has been, in fact, the bane of my political life. I can assure honourable members that I could have done without it. So too could my children have done without it, with all the meetings to which they have been dragged along and all the times that I have

not been able to be at home.

Minister, I did not get into Parliament in order to fight a heliport. I thought I would be fighting for things like improved hospitals and schools. It is your Government that has consistently tried to foist this unacceptable activity on the people of Pymont and the people who may not live in Pymont but who would be affected by it. Has the Minister read in the

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bill the provision which precludes the heliport within a one kilometre radius of Pymont wharf? That does not exclude a CBD-based heliport, though I make it perfectly clear that I will oppose any heliport in the central business district at any time. That may not be the view of others.

This bill provides that the Government or anyone else who wants to put a heliport within a one kilometre radius of Pymont wharf will have to convince this Parliament that my bill should be amended, if it is carried. I accept that this Parliament would not have to go through that procedure if we had a reasonable government operating in the first place, but we have not. I have been forced to do this because of the kinds of activities the Government has undertaken behind the scenes. I notice that officers of the Maritime Services Board were here today and not the EPA.

Mr Baird: These people are not from the MSB; they are from the Department of Transport.

Ms NORI: I notice they are not from the EPA, but I will come to that. I really object to what this Government has done in trying to shop around for a noise standard. Indeed, it has stood over the EPA. That is why I introduced this bill. It is to make sure that never again will members of a government be able to trot around and find a noise standard in relation to helicopters that suits their mates when they want to give them a commercially viable activity to operate. As I have said before, just imagine if EPA guidelines on clean water and clean air levels could be distorted and manipulated just to ensure the commercial viability of a business activity that someone wants to set up. That is the real issue here, and that is what I am trying to get to the bottom of.

I do not deny I have not been able to actually get this matter totally sorted out because the commission of inquiry did not look at it. Commissioner Simpson specifically refused to look at submissions that I raised before his inquiry, so do not tell me about the commission of inquiry report being the umpire's decision. The commissioner refused to look at a range of issues that I think are incredibly important to the way in which the noise standard was developed. He did not take into account, with respect, the evidence of the leading expert on this matter in terms of noise standard, Dr Ollerhead from Great Britain. Do not tell me about the umpire's decision when the inquiry does not look at the leading advice available internationally at the time and when the commissioner absolutely refuses to look at a whole range of other issues that impacted greatly on this issue.

This bill is designed to ensure that any government or future Parliament that wants to put a heliport in the Sydney central business district will have to come back to this Parliament. Then the Parliament will discuss the noise standard, the number of movements, the fire standards and so on. I have told the Minister before and I will say it one more time, as this might well be the last time we debate the heliport: I have never understood why EPA guidelines were not adopted. I have tried and tried, through debates in this place, the commission of inquiry, freedom of information searches and so on, to find someone willing to tell me what happened after the New South Wales Cabinet was handed some draft guidelines from Ansett Australia.

Ansett was trying to develop national uniform noise control guidelines for helicopters based on the kinds of principles on which the EPA guidelines are based. In other words, we are talking about a Pymont heliport with 20 movements a day. That is the bottom line. How is it that when that report went to the New South Wales Cabinet it got ditched - it never saw the light of day - and suddenly the two New South Wales representatives on that national committee were withdrawn? Why is it, Minister? I have made a number of attempts to get documents from the Government under freedom of information

legislation, but to no avail. Even when the commission of inquiry was trying to get these documents they came back marked confidential.

Let me identify for the Minister some of these documented attempts to secure that information: one a State Pollution Control Commission memorandum from Mr Iser of the Environment Planning Authority; a memorandum to Mr Warwick Forrest, the assistant director of the central business district telephone communications; a memorandum from Mr Forrest to the Minister regarding the national guidelines; a letter from Dr Shepherd to Mr Forrest; and a letter from Premier Greiner to Minister Moore at the time regarding Ansett helicopter national noise guidelines. The attempts go on and on.

Mr Humpherson: On a point of order. The remarks of the honourable member are irrelevant to the bill before the House. In fact, she is more or less introducing new information and material into the debate. Much of what she is saying in relation to Ansett has not been debated by Government members and was touched on only briefly by Opposition members.

Ms Nori: On the point of order. I have talked about this issue dozens of times in this Parliament and certainly during my second reading speech. I cannot help it if the member was not listening.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sure the member for Port Jackson is aware of the restrictions on this debate. I ask her to be conscious of those restrictions and of the fact that she is in reply.

Ms NORI: The only other letter that I want to refer to is a letter from the Premier's Department to the State Pollution Control Commission stating that the commission's noise guidelines were too restrictive. This brings me to the point that I have made on many occasions. There is no doubt that this Government tried to stand over people in the EPA to get the EPA to change their noise guidelines. I think that ought to come out in public. Why are people from the Premier's office and the Cabinet Office going to the EPA having haranguing matches with bureaucrats to try to get them to change their noise guidelines? To their credit, the authority did not relax its guidelines.

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So off went the Government to Standards Australia to try to get a noise standard that suits the Government - an horrendous standard. In the end the Government had to back away from its approaches to the Standards Australia standard when that organisation wrote stating its standards were not meant to have any relevance to the Pymont heliport, despite the fact that it was called an EIS based on that noise standard. The left hand does not know what the right hand is doing on the Government side.

The point I am making is that the Minister shopped around to try to get a noise standard to suit him rather than one that has been based on the good work of our people in the EPA, and this document I have proves it. The Minister will never own up to what he did, and we will never get to the bottom of it, but I think there is enough evidence to suggest what really took place. The Minister wanted the EPA to cave in. I repeat, it is to the credit of the EPA that it did not. The minutes of a meeting of the board of the Environment Protection Authority earlier this year record the moving of a motion that the chairman write to the Minister for the Environment indicating the board's disquiet regarding the proposed Pymont heliport.

Mr Baird: On a point of order. Instead of answering the points that have been raised in the debate, the honourable member in her reply is opening new areas of debate as if she were simply delivering a second reading speech. I ask you to direct her to return to her primary function, which is answering comments made by other speakers.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have already indicated to the honourable member for Port Jackson that she is speaking in reply and should, therefore, touch only on matters raised during the debate. At this

stage she has no latitude to introduce fresh material. I ask her to return to those matters that are genuinely matters of reply.

Ms NORI: I accept your ruling, Mr Speaker. The issue of safety has been mentioned in this debate. In my second reading speech I made reference to concerns I had about the potential for fire should a helicopter have the misfortune to crash into the wharf. I note that those concerns have not really been addressed by Government speakers in the debate, so I shall reiterate my concerns. In his report the commissioner recommended that a standard known as NFPA 418 should be adopted as the fire standard to protect the wharf if there was a fire or a crash. That is a United States standard from the National Fire Protection Association. It is my understanding that that recommendation will not be adopted in its entirety, so that there will be a problem on that wharf in that there will not be sufficient firefighting equipment there. I understand the Helicopter Association of Australia has not met the minimum requirements of that code, for example the fire rating of timber support structures, the placement of fuel tanks in relation to the landing area, the adequacy of the fire equipment carriage, containment of the fire, and water and fuel spillage.

Mr Baird: Where is that information from?

Ms NORI: From another expert. I will introduce him to the Minister. If the Minister wants to contest the information, he can do so. I made reference to it in my second reading speech.

Mr Humpherson: On a point of order. This information has not been specifically referred to in the debate. The information from this so-called expert has not been drawn from the second reading speech; it has been drawn from external sources. It cannot be introduced at this point. If the information has not been referred to, Government members will not have an opportunity to respond to it.

Ms Nori: On the point of order. The information is in my second reading speech. Obviously the honourable member for Davidson did not read it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the information is in the honourable member's second reading speech and, by her own admission, was not referred to by other speakers, perhaps she could merely emphasise those matters referred to in the second reading speech that were unanswered by Government members. However, the fact that the matters were not referred to does not give the honourable member the opportunity either to repeat the second reading speech or to introduce additional material based on some starting point in the second reading speech. The honourable member has no latitude to introduce fresh material in reply.

Ms NORI: Bearing in mind the contents of my second reading speech, I am amazed that the matter was not referred to by Government speakers. That indicates to me that they have not understood the issues or they do not care. If there is a helicopter accident on that wharf, if 30,000 litres of Avgas go up in smoke or go into the harbour and the wharf catches fire, if the Maritime Services Board tugboat cannot get there on time, if there is blowback and so on and there is a major catastrophe on the harbour, be it on the shoulders of Government members. The Minister talks about these helicopters as though they will save us from every catastrophe under the sun. I hate to say it, but the potential for the helicopters being involved in more accidents than they solve is, unfortunately, too great. The Minister spoke about the Olympic Games. It is clear from discussions I have had with people involved in the Olympics that a heliport is not needed at Pyrmont from now until the year 2000.

Mr Baird: Which people?

Ms NORI: People who do not wish to be named. They do not trust the Minister not to sack them. I concede that perhaps for the duration of the Olympic Games there may be a need for a heliport. However, I have made it perfectly clear that many of my constituents would offer their backyards or rooftops on which to land helicopters if that would help. The citizens of Sydney and the citizens of my

electorate would certainly cope with a heliport for the duration of the Olympic Games. But that is different from the Government's proposal. The Minister is suggesting that these people have to be shovelled out from Pymont to Homebush Bay for the next six or

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seven years. I do not believe that. The Minister should put them on one of his RiverCats or on the wonderful public transport system he claims he has and let them see how that works, instead of burdening the people of Port Jackson with helicopter noise.

Much was made of the role played by helicopters during the recent bushfires. I and every other member of the Opposition congratulate all those who were involved in the rescue and emergency work during the bushfires. However, I point out that a magnificent job was done without one helicopter landing at Pymont. How on earth will having a heliport at Pymont help people fight bushfires in the Blue Mountains; that is beyond me. I do not accept that to be the case. I have lodged an application under the Freedom of Information Act to ascertain whether all the helicopter pilots used during the bushfire emergency were volunteers. It is my understanding that perhaps some of them were paid. I point out also that 30 military helicopters and 400 personnel were used during the bushfires. At least another 10 military helicopters and two C130 aircraft were on standby but they were not required. Apparently the State Government did not take up all the offers of assistance made by the Federal Government. I assume there were good and cogent reasons for that, but I point out that many more military helicopters were available to help fight the bushfires and they could have been brought in at any time. Perhaps they should have been, but the inquiry that is now proceeding will inquire into that.

Much has been made of the fact that the present Leader of the Opposition sanctioned a heliport in the 1980s. That did happen; a heliport operated for a brief period of time around Darling Harbour. However, I also point out the obvious: that it was cancelled by a Labor Government. It was cancelled during the term of office of Neville Wran, and the Labor Party has not been associated with establishing a heliport since the mid-1980s. That is about ten years ago, so the Minister's lesson in ancient history was not particularly edifying.

Mr Baird: It is true.

Ms NORI: The heliport was sanctioned, the then Government realised it would not work and cancelled it. Some people learn from their mistakes; obviously the Minister is not one of them. I should also like to mention the loss of income to the Fahey Government. The Minister has never given a satisfactory explanation as to how the taxpayers of New South Wales can tolerate the fact that about 200 units of housing, at a cost of \$20,000 to \$30,000 per unit, will be forgone in the Pymont area. It has been realised that helicopter noise will compromise the amenity of that area to the extent that those units of housing cannot be built. In a further 400-metre radius around the heliport, a whole range of other commercial and residential activities will have to be reduced because of the noise emanating from the heliport.

All these matters represent forgone opportunity costs, income that will not go into the coffers of the State. I have pointed out to the Minister that many people opposed to the heliport are not residents of Balmain or Pymont. I refer to organisations like Lend Lease, which has a commercial interest in the Pymont area and does not want the area to be ruined and jeopardised by this unnecessary and limited activity. Who will use this heliport? Who is so important? The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai would have honourable members believe that the media is so important that they have to zap here and zap there. Is that what this is about? Are these people so important that they cannot wait in a queue like the rest of us? What is wrong with driving to Mascot, getting a bus or, perhaps one day, getting a train to Mascot? These people have managed perfectly well so far. I do not accept that they need to be able to land in Pymont. In any case, we all know that by the time the City West project is finished and Pymont is all developed it will take them at least 20 minutes to get into the city from Pymont. It takes 10 minutes now. I do not accept the arguments about time saving.

In conclusion, the bill is necessary because this Government refused to accept what was in my urgency motion in December. I asked that contracts not be signed until such time as my bill had been debated. If the Government had followed the advice of its own Environment Protection Authority and not tried to stand over it and compromise its integrity, my bill would not have been necessary. The Government wanted to ensure that the heliport could be established in the CBD in a manner that was commercially viable. The very minimum the Government could do, if it does not like the bill, is to set up an inquiry to genuinely investigate the alternative sites around the CBD and come up with a noise standard that has the backing of the Environment Protection Authority. Then maybe we would look at it.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 46

Ms Allan	Mr Markham
Mr Amery	Mr Martin
Mr Anderson	Mr Mills
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Ms Moore
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr Moss
Mr Carr	Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Clough	Mr Nagle
Mr Crittenden	Mr Neilly
Mr Doyle	Ms Nori
Mr Face	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Gaudry	Mr Price
Mr Gibson	Dr Refshauge
Mrs Grusovin	Mr Rogan
Mr Harrison	Mr Rumble
Mr Hatton	Mr Scully
Mr Hunter	Mr Shedden
Mr Irwin	Mr Sullivan
Mr Knight	Mr Thompson
Mr Knowles	Mr Whelan
Mr Langton	Mr Yeadon
Mrs Lo Po'	
Mr McBride	<i>Tellers,</i>
Dr Macdonald	Mr Beckroge
Mr McManus	Mr Davoren

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Noes, 44

Mr Armstrong	Mr Morris
Mr Baird	Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Beck	Mr O'Doherty
Mr Blackmore	Mr D. L. Page
Mr Causley	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 Schultz
Mr Fahey	Mr Small
Mr Fraser	Mr Smith
Mr Glachan	Mr Souris
Mr Griffiths	Mr Tink
Mr Hartcher	Mr Turner
Mr Hazzard	Mr West
Mr Humpherson	Mr Windsor
Dr Kernohan	Mr Zammit
Mr Kinross	
Mr Longley	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Machin	Mr Jeffery
Mr Merton	Mr Kerr

Pairs

Mr Bowman	Mr Chappell
Mr Iemma	Mr Schipp
Mr Newman	Mr Yabsley

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time and passed through remaining stages.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES OF SUBCONTRACTORS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 April 1993.

Mrs CHIKAROVSKI (Lane Cove - Minister for Industrial Relations and Employment, and Minister for the Status of Women) [11.20]: I rise to speak against the bill. The Government is sympathetic to the plight of employees who, through no fault of their own, stand to lose their unpaid entitlements owing to the insolvency of their corporate employers. However, the bill does not address the issue in the way the honourable member for Londonderry would really like it to be addressed. The bill clearly does not provide any meaningful solution to the problems of those employees placed in this position. It is not equitable to the parties concerned. As I will show, the Government believes that the bill is a cruel hoax on the employees because it fails to address and provide solutions to those problems and it is harsh and unconscionable to other innocent parties.

Until now, the provisions of section 154 of the Industrial Relations Act 1991 and its predecessor, the Industrial Arbitration Act 1940, have been seldom used by employees to recover unpaid wages. However, that section recently became prominent as a result of a Building Workers Industrial Union campaign at the Singleton army camp and Richmond TAFE sites to retrieve unpaid wages due from a bricklaying subcontractor, Dionfield Pty Limited, when that company became insolvent. Members of the BWIU picketed the Singleton site in an effort to claim their wages from the head contractor, Stuart Bros. Dionfield Pty Limited was wound up by order of the Supreme Court on 11 December 1992. This case involves complex issues such as the contractual relationships between head contractors and subcontractors on building sites, the insolvency of corporate employers, and the legal obligation of head contractors to pay the unpaid wages of a subcontractor's employees.

Unfortunately, the bill adopts a sledge-hammer approach to these issues. Proposed section 151(7) is harsh and inequitable because it has the effect of making directors and persons concerned in the management of the corporation personally liable for any underpayment of wages due by the corporation, regardless of the circumstances of a particular case. In addition, it does not contain a defence provision to ameliorate those unfair provisions. This is in direct conflict with a proposal by the former Labor Government in the Industrial Arbitration (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 1986, which made directors and persons concerned in the management of a company liable for a penalty for the same breach. That bill did not make them personally liable for the amounts due and was only applicable where these people knowingly or willingly authorised the breach to be committed.

Consequently, even by the standards set by the previous Labor Government, proposed section 151(7) is draconian. The harsh and inequitable nature of proposed section 151(7) is highlighted by examples that could easily occur. What happens if the director or person concerned in the management of the company does not take part in the management of a company at the time of an alleged offence because of illness or some other good reason? What happens where a managing director of a company refuses to pay the current wage rate and either coerces a person involved in the management of a company into accepting that position or ignores that person's objections? The inequity of this situation is compounded by proposed section 151(8), which provides that if two or more persons were caught by proposed section 151(7) they would be jointly and severally liable under the order.

Proposed section 153A deals with the personal liability of directors and persons concerned in the management of insolvent companies, which is a matter currently dealt with by the Corporations Law. Clearly, the provisions of proposed section 153A transgress the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth in the area of corporate insolvency. Yet this fundamental jurisdictional issue does not even appear to have been considered by the honourable member for Londonderry or by the Opposition. Proposed section

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153A is not, and in all likelihood would not be, approved by the Ministerial Council for Companies and Securities, as is required by the terms of the heads of agreement made on 28 June 1990, which provides the constitutional agreement underpinning the Corporations Law.

Further, proposed amendments to section 154 of the Industrial Relations Act 1991 are incompetent and draconian. Section 154 currently requires that a person, who in the case of the building industry is usually the head contractor, is liable for the wages of employees of a contractor - in the building industry, a subcontractor - unless, on each payment made by the person, or head contractor, the person receives a written statement signed by the contractor, or subcontractor, in respect of the work at the time of payment. The proposed amendment to section 154 requires that the "written statement" be "in the prescribed form". But the amendments provide no hint of what should be in the prescribed form. Since the written statement is crucial to the question of the head contractor's liability, the failure to say what is in the proposed prescribed form is an invidious omission. Consequently, the proposed amendment to section 154 is dangerously incompetent.

A proposed amendment to section 154(4) makes the head contractor liable even if the head contractor receives a written statement if he or she is aware, or ought reasonably to suspect, that the statement is false or misleading in a material particular. The provision is obviously vague and unsatisfactory. In what circumstances "ought" a head contractor "reasonably" suspect the statement is false? What is a "material particular". This provision therefore places bona fide head contractors in an invidious position. Under proposed section 154(5) the liability of the head contractor is extended by the inclusion of a definition of "wages" which includes all wages and entitlements under any award and all matters or other moneys that have accrued in relation to those wages and entitlements. Currently, section 154 relates only to wages, not entitlements. This amendment therefore is an important extension of the liability of a head contractor under section 154.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It being 11.30 a.m., pursuant to sessional orders the debate is interrupted.

FALL OF SINGAPORE

Mr COCHRAN (Monaro) [11.30]: I rise today to conclude a saga of almost two years since I first moved a motion in this House on the fiftieth anniversary of the fall of Singapore. The motion is:

That this House in commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore records its appreciation of the bravery and sacrifice of thousands of the residents of New South Wales in the Singapore and South East Asian campaigns from January to March 1942.

It is regrettable that it has taken two years to get this matter on the agenda of the House and before this Chamber, but it is important that we record those historic events which have had a great bearing on the future of our nation. It is necessary to go back 52 years to relate the activities occurring around the world in the midst of World War II. Singapore was a well established British colony, the battle was raging in the Middle East, and the Australian seventh division was fully occupied in that battle.

A significant day in the history of World War II was 7 December 1941, the day that the sleepy giant of America was awakened at Pearl Harbour. Some 70 United States fighting ships, 24 auxiliary vessels and 300 planes were resting in Pearl Harbour when it was attacked by the Japanese in an unprecedented ambush. Eight battleships were sunk, two destroyers and 140 aircraft were lost, 2,330 servicemen were killed and 1,145 were wounded, as were approximately 100 civilians. The impact was significant. That attack, along with the battle of the Coral Sea, was thought to be a turning point in World War II.

The day after the ambush of Pearl Harbour, the Japanese struck the Philippines. They struck the airfields of Clark and Iba and destroyed approximately 50 per cent of the United States army's first fleet. The result was catastrophic for the military capabilities of the United States. All of this had an effect on World War II in the southeast region. We have to remember that the British assumed that Singapore was almost impenetrable and that it was recognised as an impregnable fortress by many historians - who were subsequently proved wrong.

The British military strategists had considered that the Malay Peninsula was defensible, and that the island of Singapore was an impregnable fortress. Along the Malay Peninsula were British forces and settlers. It was almost an impenetrable jungle: from the seaward advance of Singapore there were 15 inch guns on one side and the British defence forces had strengthened the numbers on the island. It was thought that no forces, Japanese or any other, were likely to invade. Apart from that, the Japanese and Chinese had been at war since 1937 and there had been no threat to Singapore at all.

By October 1941 there was a very real threat. The advance of the Japanese forces had continued into Indochina - now known as Vietnam. The naval advance and the air superiority of the Japanese were providing a definite threat to the British and allied forces on the island of Singapore. On 1 December 1941 a state of emergency was declared. On 2 December 1941 the British ships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* arrived. It was thought that they would strengthen the position of Singapore to a degree where it was unlikely that any attack would occur.

The allied forces did not take into account the skill of the Japanese soldiers and their ability to live in the jungle while surviving on very little sustenance. Like the Vietnamese, they were able to live on a pocketful of rice a day. They were skilled in camouflage, stealth and survival; they carried the bare minimum of equipment; they were highly trained and skilled jungle fighters. In retrospect, it is easy to make assessments of what should and should not have been done. At that time the allied forces believed that

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Singapore was impregnable and they took little account of the advancing forces until the middle of December 1941.

At that time the status of the opposing forces was something like this: the British and allied forces had about 80,000 troops under General Percival, but they had no tanks; and the Japanese advancing down the Malay Peninsula had 60,000 troops under General Yamashita, 150 tanks, and air superiority. The British did not take into account the fact that the Japanese had stretched their supply lines and were running into considerable difficulty in maintaining basic supplies for their soldiers - such as food and medical supplies. If the British had been able to continue the battle they may well have survived.

One of the saddest things history records about this entire event is the effect it had on the civilians on the Malay Peninsula. The Japanese were absolutely ruthless in their attack: they slaughtered British and Australian business people, and the women and missionaries working in the area. Some honourable members will recall the film "A Town Like Alice", which emanated from those tragedies on the Malay Peninsula. The Japanese military machine was unquestionably superior on the mainland of Malaysia. Honourable members may recall the events of Slim River, where there was a major defeat of allied forces. Some 4,000 soldiers were killed or captured and equipment was destroyed. The soldiers were Australian, British, Chinese and Indian; they were a part of that magnificent force.

The advance continued through December and into January. On 31 January 1942 the retreating British blew a 50 yard gap in the causeway linking Singapore and the mainland of Malaya. The showdown was on. The Japanese air attacks continued with machine guns, cannons and bombs. There was a tragic loss of civilian and military life. By January more reinforcements arrived from Britain, Australia and India, but to no avail. By this stage General Yamashita's supply lines were almost drained, but the British were unaware of this. The British reached the point where they decided that surrender was the only course left open to them.

On 5 February Churchill issued orders that they were to fight until the bitter end. General Percival, however, requested surrender, considering that his position was hopeless. Had the British known that they had to last only another 48 hours in their defence of Singapore, the Japanese supply lines - like those in Kokoda - would have been exhausted. In fact, the British would have been able to repel the attack of the Japanese and would have turned the battle around. We are of course all very wise in retrospect. We should also record the considerable bravery of the British forces in this event. It saddened me to hear Paul Keating say at some stage:

I tell you this. I learnt about self-respect and self-regard for Australia; not about some cultural cringe to a country, to a country which decided not to defend the Malaysian Peninsula, not to worry about Singapore, not to give us our troops back to keep ourselves free from Japanese domination.

I do not know whether the Prime Minister has read any of the events of World War II, but 7,000 British died defending the Australian people.

[Interruption]

I am interested in the interjection of the honourable member for East Hills. If he goes to the Bomana war cemetery he will find that 386 British engineers died on the Kokoda Trail in defence of the Australian people. The honourable member should learn his history. I find it disappointing that we have only 10 minutes to put on record the significance of this event. Many Australian, British, Indian and Chinese forces died during this historic event, all in the defence of Australia. For anybody, whether it be the Prime Minister or anyone on the Opposition bench, to suggest that - *[Time expired.]*

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [11.40]: This motion records our appreciation of the bravery and sacrifice of thousands of residents of New South Wales. I advise the House that the first soldier in Malaya to fall for Australia was my uncle - my father's brother. I will read to the House some of the letters my uncle wrote to his family and the letters that were written about him. I read these letters with the permission of the family. On 16 August 1941 he wrote to his wife, Maisie. The letter states:

Maisie, My Dearest,

The bright spot of Singapore is Raffles Quay - here were parked rows and rows of cars much after the manner of Bondi Esplanade with the Quay on the right and magnificent flat topped buildings of modern design and architecture . . . and the good looking homes . . .

I am reading this out of context.

One building in particular which I took to be was Raffles Hotel, the exclusive place of social activities, open, as far as the Army is concerned, only to men of commissioned rank.

Again, on Christmas Eve 1941 in a lengthy letter to his wife he said:

I am so pleased to be reassured that you are being very sensible and taking every special care of yourself and doing everything possible to keep the foundations for March 1942, and as you say, Sweetheart, there could be nothing which I desire more or would give me greater happiness than to be home with you on or before that month. But not feeling pessimistic I am afraid that nothing short of a miracle can bring that about, although I can, with confidence, see us home before Xmas and 1942.

He continues at the end of that letter to talk about how the Axis powers were to be overthrown. I now read to the House a lengthy letter from his commanding officer dated 27 May 1946:

Dear Mrs Nagle,

. . . I would like you to know, Mrs Nagle, that Athol's death was a great shock to me and that I suffered a very great loss - certainly I don't try to put it on a plane with your sad loss! But, please believe me when I tell you that Athol's loss was the one that I felt most heavily of all and one which I really will never forget. I thought of him a lot just after it happened and I could never get it out of my mind during my long period as a P.O.W. and found myself constantly thinking about Athol and wondering how he would have faired in all the misery, sickness and upsets of

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P.O.W. life. Sometimes when I saw suffering - drawn out death from starvation and disease I was thankful that if Athol had to go, that he had died a quick clean painless death - a warrior's death on the field of battle - not the long drawn out miserable broken down slave's death that so many of our fine boys did suffer. Athol - Mrs Nagle, was the first man of the A.I.F. in Malaya to give his life on the field of battle in the hour of his country's need. He lost his life in the jungle on the 14 January about a quarter past 5 (pm) just after we had successfully ambushed some 600 to 800 Japs. Athol, brave soul, was with me and a small party of my company (some 30 odd in number) that had lost contact with the remainder and we were making our way slowly through very thick jungle when we heard Japanese in the vicinity. We could not see them and hoped to avoid them as we feared that we would be heavily outnumbered and had some wounded men with us. I was afraid of our small party being ambushed and tried to lead my party away from the direction in which we heard the Japs when suddenly wild firing broke out and it was then that brave Athol lost his life. It was a chance bullet that got him out, at least it was swift and clean for it was reported to me that he had been hit and I went across to him only a matter of 10 or 12 yards and he had already passed away. I must confess that I was quite stunned as I sat beside him there and held him in my arms - the light was not good as it was only about $\frac{3}{4}$ hr to darkness and the light in the enclosed jungle was feeble at the best of times. To describe my sensations at the time is somewhat difficult as I found it difficult to believe that Athol had left us - hard to believe that it was Athol - for not only was it my first casualty but I always regarded Athol as a close personal friend and thought a great deal of him and was in fact very fond of my quiet, loyal, orderly room Sgt. I made quite sure that it was Athol, took his discs from around his neck - took his rifle and paybook and lay him so that he looked as though he was sleeping peacefully. I would have liked to have either got his body back with us or to have buried him there but time and the conditions that we were placed in did not permit it as I had wounded men with

me - another man having been struck in the knee during the same firing in which Athol lost his life - and as I had my responsibilities to the living I had to content myself with saying a hasty prayer over him, commending him to God's mercy and care.

The letter goes on. Again in a report he wrote to his commanding officer on 16 February 1942:

Dear Bill,

. . . Wal. Coleman . . . mentioned poor old Athol's death and it will be interesting to you and yours; what Wal. said: I will quote Wal's own words:- I was very sorry to hear of Nagle's death, he was about one of the first Australians killed in action, his company was out, and was in some very heavy fighting and accounted for about 1500 Japs killed and taken prisoners. Our casualties was fairly light. Nagle was up a tree shooting and got shot through the neck.

He wrote to my father one letter only, on 19 December 1941, in which he said:

Dear Hylton,

. . . You are still involved in politics I see. You know you cannot trust those politicians.

In 1950 we saw my uncle's wife for the last time and my father never saw his three nieces. One day the honourable member for Bathurst telephoned me and invited me to his room to be introduced to someone. He introduced me to Jim Casey who said, "Did you know Athol Nagle?" I said that he was my uncle, although I did not know him. Jim Casey said, "I have a death notice here. It is not Athol's daughter, it is the daughter of Maisie from her second marriage. She has died". I took that notice, and lucky for me it had an unusual name, there are only five people with that name in Australia. I was able to track down my three cousins, my father's nieces. We were able to re-unite here in this Parliament. Maisie, who is still alive and in her eighties, and her three daughters were re-united with our family. One of my cousin's sons is a member of the Liberal Party and was working in this Parliament, but I did not know until all this eventuated.

I went to university with Mike Bailey, the weather man for channel 2 and radio station 2KY broadcaster, and a good mate of mine for 20 years. I was telling Mike about how the honourable member for Bathurst was able to re-unite me with Athol Nagle. Mike said, "You know that my father and my two uncles joined with Athol Nagle the same day. My father used to ask me whether Peter Nagle was related to Athol Nagle." Mike had never mentioned that to me in 20 years. Of course, the tragedy is that Maisie lost her husband, and my cousins lost their father when he gave his life. In 1941 the *Northern Rivers* paper stated:

Sergt. Nagle in private life was the teacher of Hydes Creek school and in every way as teacher and as a citizen he was held in high esteem. Showing the true spirit of patriotism with the realisation of a man's duty in view of the cause of the fight for Liberty and Justice at an early stage in the war he enlisted with a serious understanding of all that was entailed, but withal, with a cheerful heart. Courage is the common thread that binds the race, and he exhibited it in the great hour when he sacrificed love, joy, pride, position and life itself for something that is more than all. He had enjoyed the greatness of learning, and in every way played a splendid part.

He was a great-great-grandson of an Irish man deported to Australia because of political activities in Ireland. He fought for his country and he went because he wanted to go. He was a pacifist by nature but he said that other men had to fight and so he had to fight. Lest we forget.

Mr KERR (Cronulla) [11.48]: This is an important matter. As the honourable member for Auburn said: Lest we forget. I regret that the time allowed for this debate will not permit full justice to be given to this important topic. It is impossible to sufficiently emphasise the significance of this matter to Australia.

The fall of Singapore was a tragedy for the Australian nation and for the western and allied war effort. What should never be forgotten is the heroism and determination of those Australians, British, Indians and Malays who fought to stop that Japanese aggression.

It was particularly unfortunate that the Australian Prime Minister made those remarks about the British in effect leaving Australia in the lurch. It would come as news to the tens of thousands of British soldiers who fought alongside Australians, including the uncle of the honourable member for Auburn; the tens of thousands of British troops who endured unimaginable suffering in those prisoner of war camps about which the authors of the letters read by the honourable member for Auburn wrote so eloquently and accurately. What bonded us as nations was not a

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cultural cringe; it was a determination to fight the forces of evil. In that regard the distinguished military historian Liddell Hart, speaking about the surrender, had this to say:

Food stocks were running low and the water supply was liable to be cut off at any moment.

General Percival was the British Commander-in-Chief:

That evening General Percival went out under a white flag to capitulate to the Japanese commander. For a brave man it was a bitter step, but surrender was inevitable, and he chose to go himself in the hope of obtaining better treatment for his troops and the population.

Those troops included Australians. There was no betrayal by the British in this regard. One has to appreciate just how significant the Australian contribution was, and in the Official War History, Volume 1 of the War Against Japan, an objective chronicle of the conflict, members will see many references to the Australian contribution and the courage with which those troops fought. As Liddell Hart wrote, the failure to repel the Japanese attack was not, however, the primary cause. The surrender of Singapore was the sequel to naval defeat two months before. In fact, before the attack on Singapore significant reinforcements had been given to Singapore. It was unfortunate that the time available did not provide for the training of those troops. It is a matter of record that large reinforcements were sent but, as is admitted in the official history:

The defence of an island always presents a difficult problem for the soldier. The first aim of the defence is to prevent the enemy from landing by hitting him when he is most vulnerable - on the water. Should he succeed in gaining a foothold, the object must be to prevent him establishing a bridgehead which would enable him to bring in his reinforcements, tanks and artillery.

The official history goes on to say:

In the case of Singapore the problem was more than usually difficult. The enemy had complete control of both the sea and air and was thus able to attack at any point. The island had some seventy miles of indented coastline much of which was difficult to defend, and it was therefore probable that the enemy would succeed in landing somewhere. Moreover the country inland did not lend itself to defensive action.

None should not forget the suffering endured and the sacrifices made on our behalf to enable us to enjoy freedom and to enjoy parliamentary democracy. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ROGAN (East Hills) [11.53]: I did not intend to speak to the motion, but I should like to take the opportunity to make two points. First, this is a motion that should have, and indeed will have, the overwhelming support of every member of this House. I have no doubt whatsoever about that. But it is a pity that on a motion that has such support, the mover, the honourable member for Monaro, introduced a discordant note by taking what I thought was a pretty cheap shot at the Prime Minister. What the honourable member quoted the Prime Minister as saying is not correct, in the sense in which he put it

today.

The Prime Minister had great respect for, and spoke in glowing terms of, the sacrifices and the fighting ability of all the forces in Singapore - those in the British Imperial forces and those in the Australian forces - and of the heroism of the civilians who were trapped in Singapore at its fall. I have never before witnessed such respect by a Prime Minister for those who gave their lives by way of sacrifice, those who were injured, and those who served in the conflicts in World War II - and this is directed particularly at Singapore. I have not in my lifetime known a Prime Minister to kneel on and kiss the ground on the Kokoda Trail as a mark of the respect in which he held those people who made the great sacrifice in that conflict.

It ill behoves the honourable member to introduce a discordant note into a debate such as this. I do not want *Hansard* to merely show the remarks of the honourable member for Monaro without a correction of the misinterpretation he has placed upon the Prime Minister's words. The members of this House and all members of the community have the utmost respect for and appreciation of the great sacrifice that our servicemen and servicewomen made when they enlisted at the outbreak of World War II, which involved both Germany and Japan.

I support the comments of the honourable member for Monaro about the conflict of Singapore, the people who were involved and the fact that if the surrender had been delayed for another 48 hours, perhaps history would have been different for Singapore. The Prime Minister directed his comments not at those who served in the conflict but at the leadership and the politicians of the day. I believe it is appropriate that he should have made those comments.

In debating a motion such as this, it is timely to reflect upon the folly of war, and the needless sacrifice of those who served and those who lost members of their families. The honourable member for Auburn has referred to one of his relatives and read the moving letters that were written by his uncle to his family - one letter on the eve of his death in the Singapore conflict. I travelled to Singapore and across the border into Malaysia to visit the museum that depicts the surrender of Singapore. I do not often get a chance to read a book but I recently read one about the sacrifices made, and the torture and hardship suffered, by those who were made prisoners of war as a result of the fall of Singapore.

As I said, this is an opportunity to reflect upon the folly of war and we should all be absolutely dedicated to the task of ensuring that the events of Singapore are never again repeated with such loss of life. The sacrifices that were made should not occur again in our lifetime or the lifetime of our children, and hopefully their children. As well as paying our respects to those who served in that conflict, it should also be an opportunity to dedicate ourselves to greater efforts to ensure that nothing like it ever happens again. [*Time expired.*]

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Mr MERTON (Baulkham Hills) [11.58]: For generations Australians had been led to believe Singapore was a virtually impregnable fortress. History was to prove them tragically wrong, with the fall of Singapore in 1942. This was not only a severe blow to the Allies who were also fighting vigorously against the Nazis in the war in Europe; it was indeed a strategic victory for the forces not only of Japan but also Germany. The effect of the Japanese onslaught in drawing up substantial forces from the war in Europe had been perceived with gratification by Herr Hitler.

Indeed, it was commented that the contribution it made to the Nazis' campaign in Europe was of magnitude, and that was perceived at the time to be the beginning of the end, because to follow it was the fall of many other countries. "Rangoon, Singapore and most likely also Port Darwin will be in Japanese hands within a few weeks," were the cries. "Only weak resistance is expected, while Java will be able to hold out longer. Japan plans to protect this front in the Indian Ocean by capturing the key position of Ceylon and also plans to gain control of the sea in that area by means of superior naval forces." The war

was at Australia's doorstep. It was John Curtin who said on 16 February 1942, "The fall of Singapore opens a battle for Australia". Indeed, it was true. Darwin was bombed shortly thereafter.

I support this motion with great pride, and yet with humility in so far as I feel inadequate to record my appreciation of the bravery and sacrifice of thousands of people in New South Wales who made their contribution to the Singaporean campaign. In fact, the campaign was of such a magnitude in Singapore that the Australian share of the lost was 1,789 killed, 1,306 wounded and 15,395 captured. Those figures show the Australians were pre-eminent in their willingness to fight and die in the attempt to stop the Japanese. Though Australian Imperial Force provided 14 per cent of the Empire's land forces. 73 per cent of the total deaths came from Australians. In terms of total casualties, this was by far Australia's most costly campaign of war. About one-third of those captured died in captivity. We all know about that. We know the story and the facts from people who returned to Australia war torn. Some of them could hardly walk; they were under-nourished. About one-third of those captured died in captivity; most of the others suffered terribly.

Some measure of the intensity of the fighting can be gleaned from the fact that the number of Australians killed over the four weeks of the Singaporean campaign more than doubled the number of casualties for the Australian Imperial Force contingent of four brigades which defended Tobruk for about five months. In something like 14 days of the Singaporean campaign more people were killed than perished in the Battle of Tobruk, which lasted four to five months. One-quarter of all Australian soldiers who died in combat against the Japanese lost their lives in those four terrible weeks.

Reflect on the graphic description of the despair, disaster and tragedy during the last days of Singapore. There was devastation everywhere. There were holes in the road, churned up rubble lying in great clots all round, tangled masses of telephone and telegraph wires, with electric cables strewn across the streets. Here and there were smashed cars, trucks, electric trams and buses that once carried loads of passengers to and from their peaceful daily toil. The shops were shattered and deserted. There were hundreds of Chinese civilians who refused to leave their homes. Bombs were falling in nearby streets. Then, of course, there is a story of one Chinese man who grimly searched for his family, only to find his wife and four children on the bottom of the rubble, all dead. War has a legacy of tragedy. War also has a legacy of glory. We cannot reconcile the two. The reality is that the people of New South Wales paid dearly for their tremendous contribution to the war.

Mr COCHRAN (Monaro) [12.3], in reply: Let me thank honourable members on both sides of the House who have taken the opportunity to contribute to this motion today. I thank the honourable member for Auburn, Mr Nagle, for his contribution and acknowledge the sincerity of his address and his obvious respect for his late uncle, killed in action in Singapore. I thank also the honourable member for Cronulla, who accurately portrayed the courage, the heroism and ultimate commitment of those who served in the conflict, and the honourable member for East Hills and the honourable member for Baulkham Hills for their contributions.

I make one final comment on a matter mentioned by the honourable member for East Hills. It was not I who first raised this issue in a political context; it was the Prime Minister. I have been to Kokoda, and I have walked the Kokoda Trail. The natives of Kokoda considered the act of the Prime Minister, Mr Keating, in kissing the ground a despicable act of sacrilege. It was referred to in the ex-servicemen's newspaper, *The Reveille*, as a gross breach of protocol and hypocrisy. I will leave it at that.

Can I suggest that we need to commemorate these events, these fiftieth anniversaries, as they occur and in the year they occur. The House should set aside time in the year of commemoration to ensure that we pause to recognise the commitment of Australian and Allied forces to these particular actions. These battles were in defence of this country. They were not in some remote area unconnected with the events of Australia, they were directly in response to an attack on Australian shores. In 1992 I had the good fortune to indulge my interest in Australian military history by walking the Kokoda Trail in the company of some young Queanbeyan police officers and members of the Royal Australian Air Force

reserve. We spent eight days walking 130 kilometres, experiencing firsthand the tortuous elements, the weather conditions and the rugged terrain. One certainly gains from that experience a far better understanding of the commitment of the Australian troops who fought in that battle.

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I will long remember the day that we held our commemorative service at the Bomana War Cemetery, looking out across the graves of 3,500 young Australians, many unidentified, who had given their lives as a direct result of their response to a commitment to protect Australia from the invading Japanese. I reiterate that I witnessed the memorial at the Bomana War Cemetery; buried in that cemetery are 386 British engineers who fought along the Kokoda Trail, a fact unknown to many people. The Papua New Guinea natives have a very high regard for Australian servicemen. The feeling, of course, is mutual. The fuzzy wuzzy angels involved in that conflict certainly proved themselves to be outstanding allies of the Australians.

In 1995 or earlier I will be putting before the House a motion to commemorate the Sandakan death march of 1945. Of course, 1995 will be the fiftieth anniversary of that event. In June 1995, regardless of the outcome of the 1995 elections, the same group of people who walked the Kokoda Trail will be going over to complete a re-enactment of the tragedy of the Sandakan death marches, on which some 1,800 young Australians died or were executed by the Japanese for failing to be able to complete the march. We are hoping that three of those survivors will be able to join us. I plan on being around in 1995 to bring on a motion such as this to commemorate that enormous and tragic loss of young Australian lives. I feel that on that occasion I will enjoy the support of all members from both sides of the House. In conclusion, I join the honourable member for Auburn in reciting those honourable words "Lest We Forget".

Motion agreed to.

PROPOSED SELECT COMMITTEE UPON ELECTRICITY COMMISSION LAND RESUMPTIONS

Motion

Mr ROGAN (East Hills) [12.9]: I move:

- (1) That a Select Committee be appointed with the following terms of reference to consider and report upon:
 - (a) Elcom's practices in relation to the resumption of land for the construction of Elcom high voltage power lines in New South Wales;
 - (b) in particular, to consider and report on the manner and methods used to resume land for the construction of a high voltage power line between Mount Piper and Marulan;
 - (c) the manner in which Elcom offered or failed to offer compensation, and the value of that compensation, to land owners; and
 - (d) any other matter relevant to the committee's inquiry, including any actions taken against any of the land owners.
- (2) That the committee consist of Mr Clough, Mr Glachan, Mr Merton, Mr Nagle, Mr Rogan, Mr Small and Mr Windsor.
- (3) That at any meeting of the committee three members shall constitute a quorum.

(4) That such committee have leave to meet during any sitting or any adjournment of the House; to adjourn from place to place; to make visits of inspection within New South Wales and the Commonwealth of Australia; and have power to take evidence and send for persons and papers and to report from time to time.

I hoped it would not be necessary to move this motion but events that have occurred since this House debated a matter of public importance on 22 September 1992 have made it necessary. On 22 September 1992 I moved:

That this House notes as a matter of public importance legal proceedings taken by the Electricity Commission of New South Wales against Oberon farmers relating to the construction of the 500kV Mount Piper to Marulan power line.

I will not repeat the history of the powerline. Suffice it to say that construction of the powerline started in the period of the Wran and Unsworth governments and continued during the terms of office of the Greiner and Fahey governments. When the matter of public importance was debated in September 1992 I said that if the former Labor Government had listened more closely and been prepared to consult more widely with the farmers and general members of the community, perhaps it would still have then been in office. Unfortunately, at that time the Electricity Commission was a power unto itself. If it decided on a particular route for a powerline, that was the way it would go.

That is now history. The motion seeks to establish a select committee to investigate the hardship that has been imposed upon Oberon farmers - particularly one farmer, Mr Malcolm Rich - as a result of injunction proceedings taken against them in relation to events the Electricity Commission believed occurred, but in fact did not. In my contribution to the debate on the matter of public importance, I referred to the alleged interference that supposedly required the draconian legal action taken by the Electricity Commission. The acts which were alleged to have occurred were interference by digging out gateposts, removing pegs and the placement of a dead cow. Mr Rich has been involved in legal proceedings which have now cost him something in the order of \$95,000 and, indeed, have almost put him into bankruptcy.

In relation to the decision I and the Opposition made to divide the House on the motion regarding the matter of public importance, I said, "When the House divides on this matter it will be saying in no uncertain terms that the actions of the Electricity Commission had been oppressive in the extreme". I said also, "Let there be no doubt that a vote on this motion will mean that the Government should direct the Electricity Commission to withdraw the action that is causing the bankruptcy of these farmers and to compensate them". I commend the Minister for Energy because part of the commitment has been fulfilled. Legal action against the farmers was in fact withdrawn. However, the proposed select committee would seek to examine the legal costs incurred by these farmers as a result of certain actions the Electricity Commission perceived they would take. I have outlined the proposed committee's other terms of reference and I will not repeat them.

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The way in which land has been resumed for easements has been mishandled by the Electricity Commission, not only on this occasion but for years and years during the terms of office of previous governments. I shall now quote from a report to the former Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy, the Hon. R. J. Webster. The report is headed "132kV Asset Transfers to Rural Councils" and is dated 29 November 1991. Under the heading "Unresolved Matters" on page 49, easements are referred to. The report then reads:

The Groups have emphasised the contingent liability upon them as a result of failure by the ECNSW to acquire easements over much of its 132kV systems. The cost of acquiring easements

could be considerable.

The report then refers to a great percentage of transmission line easements throughout New South Wales having never been properly legally acquired. The report details that matter and then reads:

The potential exists for land owners to seek the removal of lines for which no legal easement exists. It is also possible that, should the situation become well known, a snowballing effect could eventuate and considerable sums of money may well be sought from the Groups by land owners should these circumstances prevail.

The ECNSW has further assured the RSTC that in cases where lines are being constructed, action is in hand to obtain easements.

One would have to question the actions taken in this instance. I have a copy of a transcript of what occurred at a meeting between the Oberon farmers - Mr William Gilmore, Mr Jack Arrow and Mr Malcolm Rich - the Deputy Registrar of Plans, Mr Bob Sloane, and the Chief Surveyor, Mr Neil Ryan. When talking about these easements Mr Sloane said:

I think Elcom would have a lot of trouble arguing that they built it here.

That is, where it was supposed to be built:

They would have a lot of trouble really saying that they want it over this spot over here, I think when they build it there would no doubt that that should be where it is, isn't it.

If that sounds confusing, that is exactly the way this matter has been dealt with by the Electricity Commission. Malcolm Rich said:

Have you seen it done this way before?

He was talking about the way in which the easements were surveyed. Mr Sloane replied:

No - this is very irregular - I have not seen it before.

Mr Neil Ryan then said:

The Electricity Commission approached us and got special permission.

Malcolm Rich then said:

Did you know that Elcom has no statutory authority to enter private property for the purpose of survey without the owner's consent?

Neil Ryan said:

No, I did not.

So it goes on. The simple fact is that the Oberon farmers did not really know where these easements were when they were supposed to be impeding the construction of the powerline, in relation to which the Electricity Commission took legal action, which was expensive to the commission as well as to the farmers. Discussions have been held with the Minister. I commend him because he has always acted in an honourable and commendable way in relation to this matter. He has endeavoured to fulfil the commitments given as a result of the debate on the matter of public importance. The Minister, the honourable member for Bathurst and I have agreed that when I have completed my contribution the

Minister will adjourn this debate so that the parties can consult further and ascertain whether a resolution can be arrived at to resolve the perplexing and traumatic problem that faces the farmers in the Oberon region, particularly Mr Malcolm Rich, to whom I have referred. I hope the matter can be resolved because it is regrettable that it has continued for so long and has caused so much anguish and hardship.

Mr CLOUGH (Bathurst) [12.20]: I support my colleague the honourable member for East Hills in this matter and join him in saying that it is a shame that the problem has gone on for so long. As he stated, the Minister for Energy has made a suggestion to us that is acceptable; he will move for the adjournment of this debate to give the parties an opportunity to confer. The Electricity Commission has been extremely difficult to deal with for a long time in respect of this matter, which I have been closely associated with for many years. I know all of the farmers involved personally and I believe they have been very badly treated indeed. A number of affidavits have been sworn that are diametrically opposed by people of good standing, including an inspector of police and a medical practitioner.

An Oberon shire councillor, fulfilling his duties as a councillor and not as an individual, in my opinion has been singled out for treatment that has placed him in a position in which to survive - not to make any money; just to survive - he has had to dispose of his stock. For a short period he was in receipt of unemployment benefit. He is a well-regarded, well-respected and well-known citizen of the Oberon district. He and his wife have had to carry this matter for many years. I pay very sincere tribute to the Minister for Energy because over the time that we have been discussing this matter with him he has shown a genuine attempt to resolve the matter to the benefit of the farmers concerned. I believe that the undertaking given to the shadow minister and me by the Minister this morning is a firm, genuine undertaking. It is the first positive step that has been taken over all this time to resolve the problem.

The community of Oberon has been divided on the issue for some time. It has caused a lot of unpleasantness in the district. But the unpleasantness and the division are only a fraction of the deep concern, worry and sadness that has affected three of my constituents generally and one of them particularly. I feel that today with the offer by the

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Minister we have taken a giant step forward in the resolution of the problem. I believe that should we be able to meet with the Electricity Commission without the benefit of legal practitioners being present a solution to the problem may be forthcoming. I thank the Minister again and I thank his staff for the help they have given. Mr Greg Brown has been extremely helpful in the matter.

I also express my thanks to the Independent member for Tamworth, Mr Windsor. He is a farmer himself and he knows the difficulties that have been placed in the way of my constituents. It was suggested that, should a committee be formed, he should chair it. I can think of no better person to chair such a committee than the Independent member for Tamworth, who has made his livelihood in the area of farming. All in all, I am extremely happy with the situation to this point. I look forward to a quick resolution of the problem so that before this parliamentary session is finished the matter will be behind us and one family at least will be able to get on with its livelihood without the continuing and enormous worry of what they are going to do with a property that, through the actions of the Electricity Commission, they look like losing along with everything else the family has. Once again I thank the Minister and his staff.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr West.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REFERRAL ON HOSPITAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Dr REFSHAUGE (Marrickville - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.27]: I move:

That this House refers the following terms of reference to the Public Accounts Committee -

To inquire into and report within six months on hospital financial management with particular reference

to:

- (a) the accounting and financial methods of public sector teaching hospitals to ensure they comply with accounting standards;
- (b) the reasons for the alleged budget overrun at the Central Sydney Health Service;
- (c) the adequacy of the existing budget to ensure the viability of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's continued tertiary referral, teaching and local community roles.

To some extent this debate has been heard in a previous session of the Parliament. Major turmoil was occurring because the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital was seen to be about \$40 million over budget - one of our most important teaching hospitals serving a major part of the State. There is no doubt that when a hospital of that size and importance gets into financial difficulty it is not good enough to hide it under the carpet. It is not good enough to say, "Oh, let them get out of their difficulties by closing 100 beds". It is not good enough for the Government to say that having an inquiry will cause problems.

It is good enough to say, "Let a parliamentary inquiry look at the finances of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital". That is what this motion is basically about, but it goes further than that. If one of our most important teaching hospitals can get into financial trouble, what is to stop any of our other hospitals getting into financial trouble? That is why it is important that we make sure that our teaching hospitals have appropriate financial and accounting methods and procedures that will highlight earlier any potential problem with their budgets.

In the past five years we have seen the way in which this Government has treated the health portfolio. It has been downgraded time and again. The Federal Government has attempted to do as much as it can to increase the health budget for the people of New South Wales, and in each of the past five years there has been an increase in Federal contributions through hospital funding grants, the financial assistance grants and the Medicare agreement. There has been increasing funding through the Federal Government to our public hospital system. What has been the response by the State Government? Its proportion of funding for hospitals, or even its proportion of funding for the whole of the health budget, has fallen and in actual dollar terms the funding of our public hospitals by the State Government has decreased every year that the Liberal-National coalition has been in power.

Mr Acting-Speaker, I am aware how you as the member for Lismore view and value the hospital services in the electorate you represent. I have heard you speak in this House about the quality of services provided and about the dedication of nurses, doctors and other health workers in that electorate. I believe that you, Mr Acting-Speaker, like many other members of this House, want more to be spent on the public hospital system. However, it is unfortunate that you are locked into a Government whose only aim is to degrade the public hospital system, close hospitals and force people on to the waiting lists. A precarious situation has arisen in that the financial status of some of our major teaching hospitals is under a cloud. The \$40 million overrun estimated by Prince Alfred Hospital to require massive cuts of more than 100 beds and the putting off of many staff was not merely a budget overrun. A major reason for cutting services was the Government's policy to reduce hospital budgets by making so-called productivity cuts. A major slice of that \$40 million overrun was a result of Government policy to take money away from the hospitals. It is no wonder that hospital got into financial trouble.

Many area health services, including specific teaching hospitals throughout New South Wales, this year are facing budget overruns. It was timely when the motion was initially moved, and it is timely now, to examine what is happening in those teaching hospitals and establish whether financial systems can provide material that will put pressure on the Government to ease up on its productivity cuts. Our hospitals, and especially our teaching hospitals, need adequate funding. The end result of the Prince Alfred Hospital \$40 million blow-out was an acknowledgment that a major cause was Government policy requiring cuts - and it was not a budget overrun. It was

certainly a major budget overrun as a direct result of the way in which computerised financial control was implemented and the fact that it was all going wrong. I emphasise that the Government has taken the wrong course of introducing a \$900 million program for computerisation of public hospitals, wiping out systems that were usable though perhaps not completely up to scratch.

The Government has introduced \$900 million worth of untried systems, which are supposed to be up and working now. No area health service or hospital has full computerisation of its financial, pay and clinical systems up and working. The pilot projects are still not working properly. An amount of \$900 million has been spent on information technology. A disaster could occur if these projects are not done properly. A massive problem has arisen for one of our major teaching hospitals in potentially overrunning its budget by \$40 million leading to closure of more than 100 hospital beds. The Minister does not mind that 100 hospital beds will close because his policy is to close hospital beds. That is his policy. He does not mind closing hospital beds.

Mr Phillips: What is your policy?

Dr REFSHAUGE: The Minister interjects and says he wants to close more beds.

Mr Phillips: Liar.

Dr REFSHAUGE: The Minister wants to close 5,000 beds.

Mr Phillips: On a point of order. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is obviously lying to this House about the comments I have made. I ask him to withdraw them because I find them offensive.

Mr Harrison: On the point of order. The Minister is being quite offensive. He presented his point of order, accusing the honourable member with the call of lying. The only lying in all of this has been done by the Ministers in the present Government. Only three or four days before the last elections, the Hon. Peter Collins, Minister for Health at that time, lied when he said that Kiama Hospital was not going to close. These are the sorts of lies we have come to expect from the Hon. Peter Collins and the present Minister.

Mr Kerr: On the point of order. Present sessional orders allow members to make an explanation if they have been misrepresented. I was present when the Minister made his interjection, which was, "What is your policy going to be?" The Deputy Leader of the Opposition must have misunderstood what was actually said. I think the Minister was endeavouring to make an explanation to the Chair but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was still addressing the House.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Rixon): Order! The question whether matter is factual or otherwise is not for the Chair to decide, but should be a matter for discussion during the course of debate.

Dr REFSHAUGE: I wonder that the Minister who lies to the department now tries to bend the standing orders just to try to get himself off the hook. He has said time and again that he wants to get rid of 5,000 public hospital beds, yet at the same time he is prepared to let the private sector go rampant. No wonder our public hospitals are having major problems. I note that the honourable member for North Shore has arrived in the Chamber. The heliport proposal has been debated but she was not present for it. She got up in time for this debate on hospitals but did not appear when the heliport was being debated.

Mr Phillips: On a point of order. I ask that the honourable member be drawn back to motion No. 9 before the House, which is about hospital financial management and the reference to the Public Accounts Committee. The honourable member for North Shore has a great deal of interest in that matter and has demonstrated a great deal of support for the hospitals in the electorate she represents and in other areas.

I am sure she will contribute much more to this debate than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have ever thought of.

Dr Refshauge: On the point of order, Mr Acting-Speaker -

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! In view of the time I think the point of order can be dispensed with as academic. I am sure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was about to return to the topic of the debate.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Phillips.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PRIVATE HOSPITAL BED LICENCES

Dr REFSHAUGE (Marrickville - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.37]; I move:

That this House calls on the Government to hold public hearings before the granting of private hospital bed licences.

The motion does not include reference to a private heliport, but it is nice that the honourable member for North Shore is present to participate in this debate about private bed licences. It is good that members of Parliament do turn up for debates on issues of importance to the electorates they represent. It is obvious that Opposition members hold a passionate view about whether bed licences should be granted in closed session or whether there should be public hearings - unlike the honourable member for North Shore who was not in the Chamber to vote on the motion for the granting of a heliport licence for the Balmain peninsula. I am sure all constituents want to know how we vote.

Mr Acting-Speaker, I know that your constituents in the electorate of Lismore take an interest in your performance in this House. I am sure the honourable member for North Shore will be very keen to see what happens in this House today, to see what votes are taken, who turned up and who did not

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have the guts to turn up for a vote. The issue of public hearings for the granting of hospital bed licences is important. In a number of instances the establishment of private hospitals has been mooted, particularly teaching hospitals. Previous Ministers and the present Minister have paraded the great reforms of the Liberal Party-National Party in allowing the private sector to get on with it.

The honourable member for North Shore would know a lot about the Royal North Shore Hospital of Sydney. I note in passing that almost every medically qualified member of Parliament in Australia has had some contact with that hospital, either as a student, a registrar or a visiting medical officer. It is a fine hospital. A private hospital has been allowed to develop beside the Royal North Shore Hospital. It is one of the big, trumpeted, exciting things of the new look Greiner and Fahey Liberal-National conservative line. What happened when it was left to the market? They walked away. They said, "We don't like your stinking policies and we are not going to build a hospital there". The previous Minister for Health was honest when he opened the plans - not the hospital. He said if he had any spare cash he would not invest in private hospitals. At least he was honest enough to say that. What has happened since? Those in the Australian market of private hospitals have decided that they are not interested in building private hospitals; there are a few little ones here and there -

Mr Phillips: What about Hollywood hospital in Perth?

Dr REFSHAUGE: We are talking about New South Wales and the Government's hopeless policies. The Government went out to the private sector and said, "Please help us". The private sector said, "Get stuffed".

Mr West: Lovely language!

Dr REFSHAUGE: Well, that is what they said; and they said it loud and clear. We have an American company with a track record that would make your hair stand on end. It is being allowed to start building a new hospital. When we look at the American company's history, we worry about whether we want it to come in here. These are people who have kidnapped patients; they have gone out and taken them off the street and forced them into hospital. Honourable members opposite are laughing. This has been proved in the United States, yet Government members laugh about it. They think it is hilarious.

Mr Phillips: Has it been proved?

Dr REFSHAUGE: Yes, it has been proved. Not only have they kidnapped patients, but they have held patients in hospital until their health insurance has run out and then discharged them - whether they were well or not they held them; whether they were well or not they discharged them. They actually kidnapped patients and held them only for their health insurance. They attempted to get doctors to forge documents to say that the patients had to be there, just to get their health insurance. This is the parent company that has bought into what was a very fine private hospital company in Australia, Markalinga. It has now insidiously moved into the Australian system.

What does the Minister for Health do when these issues are brought up. He says, "It is not my problem". Well, it is his problem - and it is also the problem of the people of New South Wales. The Minister has walked away and said, "We will get someone else to make the decision". The Minister is paid a fat salary to make difficult decisions; if he does not want to make the difficult decisions, he should get out of the job. The Minister is basically a gutless wimp - like his visionless leader, who thinks he is the policy genius; if he is the policy genius I am worried about what is happening on the Government's side. The Minister is not prepared to take the tough decisions and say, "This company stinks. Get out of New South Wales". The Minister wants to bring these people into New South Wales when they have a track record of kidnapping patients, medifraud, et cetera. Those opposite may think that this is tedious repetition but if they were a kidnapped patient trying to get out of hospital, and the hospital was refusing to let them out, it would not be a laughing matter.

This company also has another hospital in Singapore. It is not a psychiatric hospital, but a general hospital. A young lad died there recently because he received lousy treatment. Unfortunately, that sometimes happens in even the best of circumstances. Occasionally a series of mistakes are made. What did that hospital do? Instead of saying, "What a tragedy, let's try to fix it up and see what went wrong. Let's find a way so that it will never happen again", the hospital went out of its way to hide and cover up. It tried to undermine the credibility of those who tried to bring this issue to light. The person who was running that hospital is in Australia on the board of the Markalinga-NME (Australia) Pty Limited owned hospital.

The Minister has said, "That's okay with me". He is a gutless Minister who is not prepared to take the tough decision. He can make the decision about whether he gets into the back seat or the front seat of a white limo and be chauffeur driven around the place, and he can make the decision about taking a fat salary, but he does not have the guts to tell these people to butt out of New South Wales. The Minister does not have the guts; he is a gutless wimp. He is quite happy to have rampant capitalism of the worst American kind come into this country, come into this State, beside one of our potentially greatest teaching hospitals at St George, and allow it to take over a major part of the private hospital system. What did the Minister do? He dumped it on his departmental head, who put it on to somebody outside - somebody unelected and unchallengeable so far as his future is concerned. He said, "Okay, you make the decision". What a gutless way of behaving. If the Minister does not want to be in charge of the health care system, he should get out of the job.

Mr Phillips: Why don't you read the Act?

Dr REFSHAUGE: If the Minister does not like it, change it. He has not asked us whether we would support a change. He is not prepared to make the decisions; he just wants to hide behind it.

Mr Phillips: We have already announced that we are going to change the Act, you dope.

Dr REFSHAUGE: Yes, but the Act is not being changed before there is a chance to knock this lot out. The only way to bring this to light is through public exposure. It is important that we have a hearing before the granting of licences, especially when we see the insidious American surgical mafia, medical mafia, and psychiatric disaster. The Minister hides behind anything he can find to hide behind, and he lets them in. I would have thought that as the area health service in his electorate is preparing to let this lot in, he would at least start thinking about his constituents. He is basically telling us that he is happy for any of his constituents to be under the management of this disgustingly shonky, absolutely obscene, American company. He is happy to do that, with no public hearings about whether the licence should be given. I hope this is a salutary lesson to this Minister. He has indicated that he will change the legislation, and if he changes it so that he can get rid of this lot he would get the support of this side of the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Phillips.

COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Evidence

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [12.49]: This important report is the collation of evidence by the Ombudsman committee. I congratulate the committee for its ongoing work. The function and role of this parliamentary committee is the linchpin of the Ombudsman's operation in this State and is the envy of other States. The role and function of the committee is of vital importance. The Ombudsman's role has been called into question, complimented and condemned by a variety of individuals and authorities. This collation of information enables the Parliament and its members to see at firsthand the direct evidence from people being examined, particularly by the Ombudsman, Mr Landa, before that committee. The role of the Ombudsman's report is essential to ensure that the operations of the Ombudsman are monitored and that the ideas emanating from the community are forwarded to the Ombudsman. They may ultimately be introduced into legislation. I indicate to the House the value of that report.

Of particular relevance is the operation of the Ombudsman in relation to police; it has been the subject of great conjecture. I look forward to the collation of all the evidence in relation to that matter and likewise the Ombudsman's report on visits to juvenile institutions. I would like to see the details of a report and collation of evidence dealing with investigations by the committee on their visits to inmates in gaols awaiting trial - remandees pending a trial. The issue is of such serious moment and great consequence that it is beyond party politics. My information is that several hundred people have been incarcerated in prison and are not able to raise bail because of increased bail sanctions or media publicity. Society has a problem concerning the number of people in gaols who have pleaded not guilty but who are unable to raise bail. It is incumbent upon the Ombudsman's committee to investigate more fully those details.

It is often a tragic circumstance that gives rise to an Ombudsman's inquiry, for instance the Rigg inquiry which led to review by the Ombudsman of the actions of police. I had the privilege of being on the police committee. It was opportune - not politically opportune - that the correct authority to investigate the role of the police in the Rigg affair was not the police committee but the Ombudsman's office. The police committee, of which I was a member, was able to refer that matter to the

Ombudsman's office with full confidence in his ultimate investigation. I commend the ongoing good work by the Ombudsman's committee and ask them to take into consideration the matters that I have mentioned.

Report noted.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report: Financing Infrastructure Projects

Mr TINK (Eastwood) [12.54]: This is a report of a seminar conducted in December last year by the Public Accounts Committee. It was interesting in as much as we took quite a risk holding the seminar by paying the air fares of the managing director of Standard and Poor's and the assistant director of Caltrans, the Californian department of transportation. The Parliament was at risk to the tune of \$50,000 as a result of that. The success of the conference exceeded our wildest expectations. We had to move the venue from Parliament House to the Opera House. A profit of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 was made from the conference. I hesitate to use that word but it will be paid as a dividend to the Parliament.

There is scope for doing more of this type of thing in the Parliament. At all times there was a strong bipartisan approach to the conference, and every member of the committee was happy with the nature of the material, the speakers and the spread of speakers over the program. No particular barrow was pushed. Other committees may benefit from conducting projects along these lines. Suffice it to say we had a lot of fun and hopefully stirred up interest in the subject we were concerned with; and that seems to have been the case. So far as the American guests were concerned, the conference also helped them to obtain a better understanding of what is being done in New South Wales, particularly in line with the recent Olympics 2000 win. I commend the report.

Report noted.

Report: Seminar on Internal Audit

Report noted.

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Report: Expansion of Hawkesbury District Health Services

Report noted.

Report: Financing Infrastructure Projects, Volume 2

Mr TINK (Eastwood) [12.56]: This is the committee's final report on infrastructure management financing in New South Wales. This report is produced pursuant to terms of reference given by the former Premier, the Hon. Nick Greiner, to my predecessor as chairman of the committee, the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for the Ageing. In the interim we have produced six reports of which this is the final report. I thank the staff of the committee for their time and hard work in getting these reports together; it was quite a formidable task. For example, last weekend Patricia Azarias, the committee director and Ian Clarke, the senior project officer, came in on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. to produce the report. Patricia Azarias has worked particularly hard on all the reports in this series.

The support of Jozef Imrich, Wendy Terlecki and Caterina Sciara has been tremendous; they also have worked very hard. On occasions we have had to order food in at night when the House has shut

down. It is a case of all hands to the deck. I am not too useful with word processing machines and I drew the job of washing up. It was very much a co-operative effort and the outcome has been tremendous. I mention also Paul Guilfoyle and the printing staff special crew who came in at 3 a.m. Monday morning to print this report. I thank them for their help and the resulting product.

Report noted.

REGULATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Animal Trades - Swimming Pools

Mr CRUICKSHANK (Murrumbidgee) [1.0 p.m.]: I wish to briefly mention two matters dealt with by this report. The first concerns the Animal Trades Regulations. These comprise four regulations which separately license animal boarding establishments and pet shops, kennels, livery stables and riding schools. The regulations were repealed by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Repeals) Regulation 1990 but were revived on the disallowance of that regulation by Parliament on 10 April 1991.

Each of these regulations, which have been the subject of previous examination by the committee, has as its objective the proper care of animals in the particular trade establishment. It provides a licensing scheme under which it must be demonstrated, through a report of a health inspector under the Local Government Act, that the premises are suitable for the particular purpose. The Minister has a discretion to refuse to issue a licence if the applicant has previously been guilty of an offence under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979. Inspectors have the right to enter most premises and the licence can be made subject to various conditions.

In April 1991 the merits of these regulations were the subject of detailed debate in both Houses, each of which passed a motion of disallowance of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Repeals) Regulation 1990. However, notwithstanding the action taken by Parliament to specifically keep in operation the Animal Trades Regulations, it remains the policy of NSW Agriculture not to enforce the regulations. Volume 1 of the public discussion paper dated November 1992 prepared by the ministerial review team of the department, while acknowledging that Parliament had disallowed the repeal of the Animal Trades Regulations as a result of community objection to deregulation, nevertheless states that the regulations have not been enforced since the disallowance action in 1990 and will not be enforced until after the departmental review of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and regulations has been completed.

The statement that the regulations are not being enforced is of grave concern to the committee as the Parliament, in disallowing the repeal of the regulations, conclusively decided that they were to be enforced. Departure from this intent is contrary to the will of Parliament. The further statement of the review team that "no change is proposed until the review is completed" exacerbates the situation as any implementation of the conclusions of the review team will require major legislative changes, which will clearly take a substantial period to put in place. NSW Agriculture has confirmed the statements of the ministerial review team. In fact, no new licences have been issued since the disallowance of the repeal regulation. As these were annual licences, there is now not a single animal trade licence in force in New South Wales even though the ministerial review team concluded in its report that the regulation of animal trades was justified and necessary. The failure to enforce the regulations could seriously compromise any proceedings that might be taken under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act against persons carrying on animal trades.

The stance taken by NSW Agriculture must also undermine Parliament's most important safeguard on the abuse of delegated legislation, that is, its power of disallowance. It is also contrary to the order made by the Premier and published in the *Government Gazette* of 25 June 1993 at page 3131 postponing the repeal of these regulations under the automatic sunset provisions of the Subordinate

Legislation Act. The current non-enforcement of the existing licensing regulations by NSW Agriculture would seem unsupported either on legal grounds or in the context of the conclusions reached by the ministerial review team. On 1 March 1993 the committee sought advice from the Minister on the action he proposed to take in respect of these matters. On 10 May 1993 the Minister wrote to the committee as follows:

I have carefully considered your letter of 1 March 1993 regarding the enforcement of certain regulations subordinate to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 commonly known as the Animal Trades Regulations.

As noted in your letter, the current Regulations are widely regarded as outdated and ineffective. My interpretation of the Parliament's rejection of the
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Government's repeal motion in April 1990, was that the Parliament believed that enforcement of these Regulations should not be continued in their present form, and that the Regulations should be remade. Accordingly, I have initiated a review of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Regulations which, as you know, is now in progress.

Rather than re-instate the enforcement of these outdated Regulations, which had not been enforced for some time prior to the transfer of responsibility for this legislation from my colleague, Mr Gerry Peacocke, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Co-operatives to myself, I instructed officers of my Department not to recommence the enforcement of these regulations pending the report of my Ministerial Review Team. As you correctly state, licences have not been issued for some time, since the rejection of the repeal motion.

It is my intention to take no action to re-instate the enforcement of the statutory instruments until the current review of the legislation has been completed. When I have received the final report of my review team later this year I will consider what action is appropriate in the light of their final recommendation.

Should your committee require any further details on this issue please do not hesitate to contact me again.

The committee sees no reason to depart from its conclusion that the current ministerial policy and departmental practice on this matter is contrary to the specific decision of Parliament. During December 1993, in the television program "A Current Affair" it was stated that there is an increasing incidence of animals dying within days of their purchase from pet shops. In that program Mr Charles Wright, head of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, called for stricter laws to regulate the sale of animals.

The program made out a substantial case that existing laws were failing to give adequate customer protection. It mentioned the frustration of the RSPCA and gave one example of a person still legally able to sell animals even after being convicted 19 times of offences under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. If the licensing regulations had been enforced it is quite likely that such a person could have been compelled to cease trading. During the program the statement was made that New South Wales does not require the licensing of pet shops. That is certainly not my understanding of the law and it is not the intention of Parliament. It is rather a case of NSW Agriculture deciding to go its own way regardless of the wishes of this Parliament.

The continuing non-enforcement of these regulations, contrary to the wishes of Parliament, is now likely to remain the situation for possibly another 12 months. This arises from the advice to my committee by the Minister in a letter dated 25 January 1994 in which he states that he has recommended postponement under the Subordinate Legislation Act of the Animal Trades Regulations because of the ongoing ministerial review. That means that the department will be able to take a further 12 months to

complete the review of these regulations before they will become subject to the automatic review and repeals provisions of that Act.

I would mention one other significant matter dealt with in this report. It concerns the Swimming Pools Regulation (No. 2) 1992. The Swimming Pools Act 1992 required owners of swimming pools to install child-resistant barriers around the pool, and to suitably restrict access by children to a pool from any residential building. The function of the regulation was to prescribe the relevant standards of design and construction of those barriers and restrictions on access. Under the Subordinate Legislation Act a regulatory impact statement was required. As the regulation was almost wholly concerned with the prescription of standards, this statement should have contained a comparison of the respective costs and benefits of applying different standards of construction.

However, when the regulation was made and the committee received the regulatory impact statement, it found that the RIS concerned matters that had already been determined by the Act. Instead of assessing alternative standards, it considered alternatives to the Act that had already been well canvassed in public and parliamentary debate. The committee's report puts on record the fact that no assessment was carried out in the regulatory impact statement of the merits of the mandatory pool fencing standards adopted in the regulation. Although this was pointed out to the Minister, he has declined to get his department to do a supplementary regulatory impact statement to bring it into line with the requirements of the Subordinate Legislation Act. I commend the report.

Report noted.

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Hazzard) left the chair at 1.8 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

AIRPORT RAIL LINK FUNDING

Mr CARR: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Did the Government recently write to the Prime Minister requesting that the Federal Government contribute \$120 million towards the airport rail link? Does this private sector project require a total of \$474 million in public funds? When will this project, announced by the Minister on 13 occasions, proceed?

Mr BAIRD: I am amazed that the Leader of the Opposition wants to raise anything about transport after the debacle of yesterday with allegations in relation to transport. There was egg all over the face of the honourable member for Kogarah. During the parliamentary recess the Leader of the Opposition went around the State announcing, as did the honourable member for Kogarah when he was in the country - they were everywhere - the promises that they would keep. We remember the honourable member for Kogarah and his promise to do some underground work at Newcastle for \$1.2 billion. He has got more.

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

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Mr BAIRD: During the recess he promised that the eastern distributor, at a cost of \$180 million, would start six months after the Labor Party attained government. The Leader of the Opposition announced a new rail service for \$500 million.

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

Mr BAIRD: I am sure honourable members opposite do not want to be reminded of their promises. In the last couple of months they have made promises and, at the same time, the honourable member for Kogarah is saying that there will be no reduction in staff levels. Yet we will have \$500 million spent on the rail line between Parramatta and Hornsby as announced by the Leader of the Opposition. He says that the eastern distributor will cost \$180 million and there are all the other proposals which are promised without any attempt to make hard decisions. The hypocrisy of these people! The latest promise announced by the Labor Party - this is in the last month - as the Minister for Administrative Services knows, is to have a separate rail line to Badgerys Creek circa \$1 billion.

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

Mr BAIRD: In the last month the Opposition has totalled up about \$3 billion worth of transport promises whilst at the same time saying that there will be no more reduction in State Rail staff levels. How the Opposition will afford this I do not know. And this on top of saying that it will take the tolls off all toll roads.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the chamber. I call the honourable member for The Hills to order.

Mr BAIRD: I turn to the request of the Leader of the Opposition. For 12 years the Party of the Leader of the Opposition was in government. I am sure he does not want to know, but it is true to say there is nothing -

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

Mr BAIRD: - to be proud of in his achievements in transport or in State Rail. His electorate is in the eastern suburbs, but he has made no effort to build a rail line to the airport.

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

[Interruption]

Mr BAIRD: I am glad I was asked about the Harbour Tunnel because we all remember that project. We are pleased it is there but we will never know how much extra it cost us. The Labor Government never called for tenders or for expressions of interest. Legislation was brought into this Chamber at midnight and, because the Labor Party did not want the press to know, the legislation was rushed through. There was no inquiry. At that time there was no Independent Commission Against Corruption which was just as well for many people.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection from both sides of the Chamber. I ask members to extend courtesy to the Minister in the interests of having an orderly question time. Honourable members without the call should remain silent.

Mr BAIRD: As I said, the Harbour Tunnel project was a shonky deal.

Mr Carr: On a point of order. The question was specifically about the airport rail link, not about the Harbour Tunnel. The airport rail link was promised by the Minister on 13 occasions. The question was specifically: when does it start?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I presume the Leader of the Opposition is making a point of order on the

basis of relevance. However, there were elements of the question of the Leader of the Opposition which invited comment along the lines that the Minister for Transport was making. I draw the attention of the Minister to the nature of the question and ask him to make sure that his remarks are relevant to the question that was asked.

Mr BAIRD: I had some discussions with the present Federal Minister for Transport about possible Federal support for the airport rail link. I am waiting to see whether the Leader of the Opposition will support us in our request to the Federal Government for assistance. Despite the fact that the rail link will pass through the electorate of the Federal Minister, he has said in an off-the-cuff comment that it is a State project and he would not look for Federal money for it.

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

Mr BAIRD: The Premier wrote to the Prime Minister and we have recently received a reply which stated that the Federal Government would consider what possible assistance could be given to the project. I think the letter arrived yesterday or within the last couple of days. It is true to say that the way in which we have reviewed the project has changed. I look forward to the Opposition outlining what it did towards getting an airport link when it was in government. It did nothing at all. The Government has called for expressions of interest in the project.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Heffron to order for the second time. I call the honourable member for St Marys to order. I call the honourable member for Londonderry to order. There is far too much interjection.

Mr BAIRD: The Government called for expressions of interest in this project, and there was significant interest. As honourable members know,

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Transfield and CRI eventually combined to put forward proposals. Because of Federal Government guidelines the whole approach to the airport rail link was changed. The proposal was that the actual infrastructure be developed by State Rail. The capital works committee considered the proposal of State Rail developing and owning the infrastructure and Transfield and CRI developing the railway stations involved in the project. That proposal was considered and was ready to go. I am sure that if the Leader of the Opposition were so interested he would not be talking among his colleagues. The reason for the delay is that the nature of the concept changed. The Independent Commission Against Corruption was asked whether the project should be tendered for again because of the change in approach. The ICAC said the Government would need to go through the process again to ensure its legitimacy. Of all people, the honourable member for Heffron should not smile.

Mr A. S. Aquilina: On a point of order. I submit that the Minister has gone considerably beyond anything to do with the question. I do not say he has answered the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Because of the excessive interjection in the Chamber, it is extremely difficult for me to hear what the honourable member for St Marys is saying. However, nothing he has said so far leads me to believe I can uphold his point of order. Unless he can add some pertinent point additional to what I have heard, I rule no point of order is involved.

Mr BAIRD: In short, the process of the airport rail link is proceeding. It has only been at the request of the ICAC that the companies have been asked to put in competitive tenders for the development of infrastructure.

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

Mr BAIRD: I know the Opposition does not like dealing with the Independent Commission Against Corruption, but this side of the House believes in integrity.

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

Mr BAIRD: That is to be contrasted with the way in which the previous Government carried out its deals. Proposals were put through the House in the middle of the night. Deals were stitched up with the Government's mates. Expressions of interest were not called for. Everyone opposite knows what I am talking about. They should be ashamed of the way in which the tunnel project was undertaken. No expressions of interest or tenders were called, so honourable members will never know how many more hundreds of millions of dollars were paid for that project. What was the deal that was done for that project? No one opposite should criticise what is being done on this side of the House. If there are delays, they are occurring because the Government is meeting the guidelines for integrity and probity. The Government makes no apology at all for complying with those guidelines and for making sure that the integrity of the system is maintained. If the ICAC says the Government should again call tenders for the project, the Government will do so. We will not go out like the Opposition did, get its mates in, and tie them up in major projects without ever revealing how much more was provided to them.

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

Mr BAIRD: This Government is about integrity and it will follow that line. I make no apology to this House for doing so and for making sure we get the best possible deal and the lowest possible price. The taxpayers of this State require that. The money saved by the Government as a result of getting the best deal will be put into hospitals.

[Interruption from gallery]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the House to come to order and not to take unexpected interruptions as an excuse for behaviour which I am certain those in the gallery do not regard with approval.

SYDNEY OCEAN FLOOR SANDMINING

Mr KERR: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for the Environment. What action is the Government taking over the proposals to extract building sands from the ocean floors off Sydney beaches?

Mr HARTCHER: I commend the honourable member for Cronulla, the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and the Minister for Health for their continuing interest in environmental issues affecting their electorates. They are three first-class members who have stood up and loudly declared their particular interest in this issue. They have strongly voiced the concerns of their constituents.

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

Mr HARTCHER: The plan to extract sand from the ocean off Sydney beaches draws strength and support from Regional Environmental Plan No. 9. REP No. 9 was, of course, promulgated by a Minister for Planning who is still a member of this House.

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

Mr HARTCHER: Can honourable members believe that an environmental vandal would still sit in this House?

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

Mr HARTCHER: Yet the man who promulgated REP No. 9 is absent when question time in this House takes place. He does not even attend to his duties in this House at question time. We all know his name. He glories in the title of Bob Carr.

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

Mr HARTCHER: Bob Carr had no interest in the beaches off Sydney: he promulgated REP No. 9. This Government, however, does have a keen interest in our beaches. They are a fundamental part of the Australian way of life and we are determined to protect them. Australians love their beaches; this Government will protect them. We will not see our beaches put at risk -

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

Mr HARTCHER: - in the way that Labor put them at risk.

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

Mr HARTCHER: We will not put our beaches at risk in the way that beaches in Queensland, the Tweed River and northern New South Wales were put at risk. We will make sure that Sydney's beaches remain available and accessible and are great for the people of Sydney.

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

Mr HARTCHER: The Leader of the Opposition, in his remarks about this application, has shown the essence of environmental hypocrisy. He promulgated the plan when he was Minister and then as soon as he became Leader of the Opposition he sought to attack it. We all saw what happened yesterday, his superb performance at question time and his magnificent performance on the urgency motion! It was such a performance that the Colong Foundation for Wilderness -

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

Mr HARTCHER: - said that Bob Carr will have to be better if he wants to get any brownie points.

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

Mr HARTCHER: The Colong Foundation, which encouraged him to move the motion yesterday, said he botched it. It was not Government members who said this, although we certainly noticed that Bob did not perform up to his usual bad standard; Mr Muir from the Colong Foundation issued a statement from the foundation today saying that Bob Carr botched it, that he better lift his game if he is to have any credibility with the conservation movement in this State. That shows the level of appreciation of Bob Carr in this State and in the community.

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

Mr HARTCHER: I am not often wrong but I was wrong in something I said yesterday, and I wish to correct it now. Yesterday I called Bob Carr Mr 27 per cent. I was wrong. I have checked the figures and the figure should be 28 per cent. I hope that Hansard will record that correction on my part. Mr 28 per cent is not with us. He is in the Parliament only 28 per cent of the time.

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

Mr HARTCHER: Nonetheless, he is entitled to have the record corrected. The Government has

resolved, as part of its program to protect the beaches of Sydney, that it will not, through the Environment Protection Authority, issue any licence under the pollution control Act or under the Clean Waters Act to any sandmining proposal off our Sydney beaches. This will ensure that Sydney beaches remain as they always have been, great beaches for the people of New South Wales. The Government has cleaned up the beaches through its sewage outfall program. The beaches now are cleaner than they have ever been. It is a testimony to our determination that they remain so. We have set up the stormwater task force to look after the problems that stormwater causes to our beaches. We have set up the environmental monitoring program to make sure that the outfall program continues successfully.

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

Mr HARTCHER: We have ensured at every level - through Beachwatch and Harbourwatch - that Sydney's beaches remain of international standard, the best beaches in the world in any major city built upon the water. That is the promise of this Government. It is something we have attained and will continue to maintain. I am informed by my colleague the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Mines -

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

Mr HARTCHER: - that he has determined to reinstate the mining reserve off our coast under section 367 of the Mining Act. This will have the effect of voiding any existing mining lease applications, any assessment leases, any mining leases and any mineral claims. I thank my colleague for his determined assistance. His action will also prevent any further mining lease applications being lodged. The Minister, to ensure that Sydney has a good supply of sand for future years, will assist any company interested in the process in seeking to locate alternative sources of sand. This typifies the broadminded, effective and workable approach of this Government to achieve a balance between environmental conservation and adequate development. The Government will ensure the protection of our sensitive environment but will also co-ordinate and protect industrial development and activity in this State.

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

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Mr HARTCHER: Further to that announcement, the Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing is to complete a review of REP No. 9, Bob Carr's REP.

Mr West: RIP.

Mr HARTCHER: As the Leader of the House said, it is RIP Bob Carr. Mr Speaker, Bob Carr may not be in the House to hear this but he is sitting outside in the Speaker's corner all by his lonesome little self. He will not even come into the House to face the music. That is the Leader of the Opposition of this State. He will not even face the Parliament. Labor Party members are not concerned. They know that the little Liverpoolian is in the wings. He is ready to move as soon as admin committee says so. When Bob Carr was asked, "Are you liable to be challenged? Is your leadership at stake?" he did not say, "I have the numbers", he said, "State council rules do not allow it. No challenge is permitted; State councils will not permit it". This shows the state of the New South Wales Right.

When the admin committee decides that Bob Carr's head has to go, admin committee will dispense with the rules and there will be a challenge from the little Liverpoolian so fast that we will not know where we stand. The Minister for Planning has stated that he will review REP No. 9 to ensure that our beaches remain magnificent and fully protected. As well as that, the Government has announced its program of beach protection. It will register the people of New South Wales on the title of all our public beaches. It has guaranteed through its coastal policy accessibility to all public beaches across the State. Mr Speaker, Bob Carr in his short term as Minister left a legacy for the environment. REP No. 9 stands -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members should be addressed in this House by their titles and not by their names. I ask the Minister to adhere to that principle from now on.

Mr HARTCHER: The present Leader of the Opposition gave us REP No. 9. It stands as his tribute to the environment of this State alongside the Lucas Heights megatip, which he transferred from four councils to 23 councils; alongside Castlereagh waste tip, which the honourable member for Londonderry would know received 205 tonnes of liquid waste a year under Bob Carr; alongside his allowance of the dumping of spoil off Bondi Beach; and alongside his emasculation of the State Pollution Control Commission, which he reduced to a staff of fewer than 200 people. These are part of his overall contributions to environment protection in New South Wales. He is an environmental vandal whose memory will ever be remembered. The figure of 28 per cent does not stand just for his popularity rating; it is his commitment to the environment in New South Wales.

PRINCE HENRY HOSPITAL AND Mrs TUCKERMAN

Dr REFSHAUGE: I address my question without notice to the Minister for Health. Is the Minister aware that an 82-year-old woman has been waiting three weeks in Wollongong Hospital for an urgent angiogram at Prince Henry Hospital? Is the Minister aware that Mrs Tuckerman has had at least 12 threatened heart attacks while waiting for the angiogram at Prince Henry's privatised cardio-catheterisation unit? Will the Minister now admit that there are patients on this year's record waiting lists who need urgent, not elective, treatment?

Mr PHILLIPS: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his question. I became aware of this issue just prior to question time. In the short time available I have had the matter investigated and have asked for urgent information. On the information available at this time, Mrs Tuckerman will be admitted to Prince Henry Hospital either this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: Mrs Tuckerman will be admitted into that hospital for her angiogram. I stress that in the management of decisions on priorities for people who need angiograms or cardiac catheter tests, et cetera, those decisions are made on clinical grounds by the doctors and clinicians based on that need.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: I have asked for a full report about why, based on clinical need, Mrs Tuckerman was asked to wait for that three-week period. I wish to stress a couple of other points. First, under this Government there has been a huge increase in investment in the treatment of heart disease in this State. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in that area. Those processes have been distributed around and away from the inner city to areas such as Westmead and St George, where a wonderful new unit has been established, together with units at Westmead.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: That program has been put in place under this Government. Under great difficulty I have approved the establishment of a cardiac catheterisation laboratory, an angiogram facility, in Wollongong. They have it in writing to proceed to develop that unit, because Wollongong needs that unit. However, that is no thanks at all to the local members. In every part of this State, around Sydney and the other two major cities, health care is broken up into 10 major areas, each of which has developed a strategic plan for development of its health services. Some areas had to make fairly tough decisions. Those in the east and in central Sydney had to go through major restructuring to do it. In the Hunter area and in Newcastle they had to make difficult decisions to improve their health services. Health services in

all those areas are humming along.

In one area in this State, in Wollongong and the Illawarra, local members have kicked, screamed and made personal attacks. One member was ejected

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from a meeting by police. Those decisions have been made by an area board and area administration under a new chief executive officer from Adelaide - one of the leading administrators in this State. They have undertaken a public consultation process in an attempt to gain community support in improving health services and facilities in that area. But could he get the co-operation of local members? Absolutely not. They were just useless. Those Labor members do not want to participate in the consultative process, just as the Labor Party was the only party in Australia to refuse to participate in the Concord-inner west restructuring. Though their Federal Labor colleagues, the Labor Council and unions participated, those opposite did not want any part of it. The same has occurred in Wollongong.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: The Government is going to proceed in Wollongong with public consultation. That will be done professionally through the area board. We will come up with an improved plan for that area. We will take the tough decisions because we know that in the end that will improve the health services of that area. That is the bottom line. Labor members representing that area, with their union mates who are determined to scuttle any plans for improvement of health care in the Illawarra, will not stand in our way. Those members are letting down their constituents badly. I want a full clinical report about that delay. Those decisions are taken clinically, not by administrators or politicians. I want to know why that delay occurred. Mrs Tuckerman will be in hospital today or tomorrow. Under this Government Wollongong will get a cardiac catheterisation laboratory, without thanks to the years of neglect by those opposite.

HOMEFUND ADVISORY SERVICE

Mr FRASER: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Has the HomeFund Advisory Service been established as required by the HomeFund Restructuring Act? Are borrowers receiving assistance through this service?

Ms MACHIN: I thank my colleague the honourable member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He has had a long-running interest and most constructive involvement in the HomeFund issue. It is important that members know the facts about the HomeFund Advisory Service. Last year the Parliament passed the HomeFund Restructuring Act. That involved much negotiation on all sides, including the Independents and all parties in this House. Section 14 of the Act requires:

Provision of financial counselling and legal assistance to HomeFund borrowers

14. It is the duty of the Minister to ensure that HomeFund borrowers who are eligible to participate in the restructuring scheme, but who are not yet participating in that scheme, are given access to impartial financial counselling and legal assistance services.

Since 14 February this year the HomeFund Advisory Service has been doing just that. To last Sunday that service had worked 14 days straight, 10 hours a day, and had taken about 2,500 telephone calls and held 38 face-to-face interviews. In fact, whilst the honourable member for Heffron was at Plumpton on Sunday misleading the crowd, eight people were actually in the office at that very time receiving face-to-face interviews and counselling. So much for her statement. Impartiality and experience are the key words. The Government went to great pains - in a great hurry, as required by Parliament - to set up that service. The service was put in place quickly and with the appropriate people. It is a shame that the honourable member for Heffron has chosen to go out and bag it publicly without knowing what is going on.

Fifteen people were selected through a public advertising process that started in mid January. Between them, they have 151 years of experience in the banking, financial counselling and legal worlds. Ten of them have financial expertise, and the other five have legal experience. A further nine people have been interviewed and are on hold for additional counselling work to cope with the very large demand that service has received. Throughout the establishment of the service key bodies such as the Financial Counsellors Association, the Legal Aid Commission, and the HomeFund Support Coalition were consulted and advised and asked to make input. In fact, the Financial Counsellors Association was involved in training some of the advisory staff now working in that service. I also invited the honourable member for Heffron to be part of the process before it got up and running. I wrote to her in the week before the service began. I quote my letter of 11 February:

In order to be able to properly respond to any complaints about the partiality, time limits or quality of services provided by the HomeFund Advisory Service, I would like to establish a process by which details of such complaints can quickly be brought to my notice.

I thus invite your suggestions as to how this can be achieved.

What did we hear? What reply did we get? Nothing. There was deadly silence. I have to get advice from the honourable member for Heffron via press releases or some carping speech in the Chamber. The honourable member has consistently refused to provide me or the Government with any evidence of problems in the system or with specific complaints from borrowers so that we may address them. I assume that we are meant to be clairvoyants and read the mind of the honourable member for Heffron to find out -

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

Ms MACHIN: The honourable member's real agenda is pretty obvious - she may or may not have some complaints; I do not know because she will not tell me - she just wants to keep the issue boiling. It is in her interests to keep it going as long as possible.

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The honourable member for Heffron is simply using HomeFund borrowers as her personal political playthings. She is misleading them on this issue. I refer to the meeting which was held at Plumpton last Sunday. It was originally called by Mr Isaacs, one of the HomeFund borrowers. He verbally approached my department - not me - to see whether someone would speak to the borrowers. Mr Isaacs then sent a letter, which I have here, stating that the borrowers wanted to have an impartial, non-political meeting about HomeFund.

Shortly after, another letter was sent to all members of Parliament, some of whom forwarded it to me. That letter had quite a different tone and used phrases such as, "The Government is seeking to bandaid the futures of some 5,000 borrowers". That was very different to his approach to my department. At the meeting a pro forma letter was handed out which was very similar in tone. It became fairly apparent prior to the meeting that it was not an information exercise; it was simply another political exercise. It is a telling point that the three or four letters signed by Mr Isaacs are exactly the same as the letters signed by the honourable member for Heffron, typed by Mr O'Keeffe, and sent to me - funny that they should all have the same typewriter.

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

Ms MACHIN: I have a handwritten letter from Mr Isaacs, which is somewhat different in tone to the letters circulated. The honourable member for Heffron quite clearly had a great hand in setting up the meeting last Sunday.

[Interruption]

The honourable member for Kogarah agrees that the honourable member for Heffron helped set up the meeting. So much for the borrowers getting impartial information. I think it just goes to show how much the honourable member for Heffron and her sidekick are trying to politicise this issue and sabotage the process that is obviously constructive for a lot of HomeFund borrowers. One of my officers rang the so-called organiser, Mr Isaacs, and his answering machine gave the number for the honourable member for Heffron and Mr O'Keefe.

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

Ms MACHIN: The Government has pulled out all the stops in a very short space of time to get an advisory service up and running very quickly. A very complex piece of legislation was passed by the House last year. I defy any honourable member here who might have expertise in that area to sit down and give lucid, quick advice to someone who rings up and asks, "What should I do?" That legislation was passed by this Parliament; it was not only of the Government's making. If it is difficult to deal with, that is the decision of the Parliament. Finally, we have had a few complaints about the service - there have been five complaints to the department. If the honourable member for Heffron or any other honourable member has more complaints, they should pass them on.

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

Ms MACHIN: Of the five complaints, two were resolved so satisfactorily that the people called the advisers to thank them for their help; another two were resolved quite quickly; and one is still being finalised. If honourable members are fair dinkum about getting the service working properly, they will stop playing politics and will put forward any genuine complaints with respect to the service and let us fix them.

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

Ms MACHIN: The honourable member for Heffron is trying to sabotage the restructuring of a lot of borrowers' loans and lives. She is casting a great slur on the integrity of 15 very hard working people who have a great deal of expertise in this area. They are doing a terrific job.

DEVLIN STREET, RYDE, UNDERPASS

Mr LANGTON: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. In June 1989 did the Minister announce that the construction of the Devlin Street underpass at Ryde would commence in 1991 and be opened in 1993? Has the Government re-announced this project on three further occasions? Why has construction not yet commenced?

Mr BAIRD: This is day two of what was supposed to be the great attack by the Opposition. We have had all these questions today from the Opposition, and every question has been a dud - just like the group sitting on the other side of the House. We all know that they are worried about their pre-selection and that they have other things on their mind, particularly the honourable member for Ashfield, who has not got the numbers at all.

They are trying to get the seat of the honourable member for Lakemba, who is probably one of the best Labor members in this House. The honourable member used to work for the State Rail Authority, which is why he knows a little more about transport than the rest of the Opposition combined - certainly more than the honourable member for Kogarah. The honourable member for Kogarah brings new

meaning to the words, "Brian told me so". He is out there asking again. I am delighted to assure the honourable member for Kogarah that the work on the Devlin Street underpass will commence in the next financial year.

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COALMINERS' STRIKE

Mr SMALL: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Mines. Has the Minister received advice on the effect the nationwide coalminers' strike will have on the coal industry and the economy of New South Wales?

Mr CAUSLEY: I am surprised that I have had to wait for the honourable member for Murray to ask me a question on coal, when honourable members opposite are supposed to represent coalmining areas. The coalmining industry is worth \$3 billion to this State. It exports 50 million tonnes a year.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: We have heard nothing from members opposite who are supposed to represent the coalminers.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: We can all remember the bad days of the 1980s and the Wran Government. We had Wran's navy off Newcastle - 34 ships were sitting off the port waiting for coal.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members wishing to converse will do so outside the Chamber.

Mr CAUSLEY: The industry has fought long and hard to gain a reputation in the world market-place since the 1980s. With this strike 15 ships are sitting off the port because the coal supply has run out. There is no doubt in my mind that honourable members opposite are so blinkered by their past and their support for the union movement that they cannot see the importance of this industry to Australia. The honourable member for Keira has been in the industry; he should know its importance to the State and to the miners. This strike is costing \$14 million a day and \$50,000 in wages to the miners.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: If that is a contribution to the miners, it is hard to understand exactly where their contribution is coming from. The excuse I heard on television from the leader of the miners, Mr Maitland, was that they were going on strike because all the concessions that they have given over the past few years to improve the efficiency of the industry have been handed to the Japanese. Let us examine the excuse and the facts. This was a negotiation for coking coal. Australia is not the only producer of coking coal in the world; there is plenty of competition.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: The Canadians were the first to sign a contract with the Japanese, and Australia was left in a very difficult position. Even under the present contract the Japanese are paying more than any other Asian country for Australian coal; they are paying well above the spot market price. Australia cannot say that it is receiving a poor price for coal under current market prices. Of course we would like more for coal, but the Japanese -

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

Mr CAUSLEY: The honourable member for Newcastle, the very person who should be supporting miners in New South Wales, interjects. Last night the honourable member for Lake Macquarie said that he is not interested in coal mining, he does not want coal mining in his electorate. The honourable member for The Entrance similarly moved motions in this House opposing coal mining in this State; the biggest industry that we have. The Australian people should know exactly what is happening in this case.

When it comes to productivity gains in the industry, the Federal Government's enterprise bargaining agreement proposals should be looked at as well as the Australian Council of Trade Unions' benchmark. There is no free enterprise agreement in the coal industry; there is a bench mark. Negotiation on penalty rates and leave loading is not allowed. What then happens, of course, is a grab for wages from the coal mining industry. Honourable members should remember that the average wage in the coal mining industry is \$1,200 a week - double the average wage.

Mr Martin: Have you been down a mine?

Mr CAUSLEY: I have been down a mine. I went down a mine last week.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: Miners receive \$1,200 a week, so they are not underpaid; they are well paid. Honourable members need to look closely at what is occurring in this strike. The strike is about union muscle, to show how powerful it is. The union is destroying the very industry that it is supposed to be supporting. No doubt the reputation of Australia will go down in this particular strike, the reputation of being a reliable supplier of coal. Finally, the Federal Government has done something. I received a phone call from Minister Beddall, who is to call the Australian Coal Industry Council together to discuss this matter. An enormous change in attitude will need to be undertaken to achieve some common sense in all this. Yesterday honourable members heard about the waterside workers, and now the miners; we are back to the bad old days of the 1980s and it is about time Australia woke up.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: Australia has to adopt world best practice; if not, Australia cannot compete. There is plenty of competition out in the world, from South Africa, from Indonesia and from South America.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: This House should realise that the Opposition has no interest in coalminers and no interest in New South Wales or Australia.

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

Mr CAUSLEY: The Leader of the Opposition has inherited the mantle of the Leader of the Labor Party who knows nothing about coal and never talks about coal in this House. He is more interested in looking up the history of American presidents or visiting Venice. He certainly knows nothing about the coalminers in New South Wales. It is time to use common sense to protect this valuable industry and the workers instead of allowing it to be dragged down by union delegates.

CAMPBELLTOWN LIGHT RAIL SERVICE

Mr McMANUS: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. In January 1992 did he announce a feasibility study into a light rail service linking Campbelltown, Appin, Wilton and Maldon? Why after two years has he not released its findings? When will it be released?

Mr BAIRD: I am glad to discuss this with the honourable member. I have no memory of this matter.

STATE BANK FURNITURE SALE

Mr ZAMMIT: I address my question without notice to the Treasurer and Minister for the Arts: Is he aware of statements by the Opposition this week that the sale of used office furniture by the State Bank will affect the sale price of the bank?

Mr COLLINS: I am aware of the statement yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition in another place, the Hon. Michael Egan. He was in the precincts of this Chamber a short time ago, and I regret that he is not here to hear my comments. Yesterday morning the Hon. Michael Egan put out a press release and the people of Sydney awoke to his claim that taxpayers will lose millions of dollars on new decor for the State Bank. His press release stated:

New South Wales taxpayers will lose millions of dollars when the State Bank of New South Wales flogs off tens of thousands of high quality pieces of office furniture, the State Opposition claimed today.

He went on to say:

It appears that this fire sale is a result of the Bank's decision to relocate 900 staff from the Sydney CBD to Parramatta.

And instead of taking the existing furniture with them, the Bank has opted for an all-new vogue interior.

Mr Egan said the furniture being sold was of excellent quality and in first class condition.

I am glad he is now here to hear this. Yesterday morning on Radio Station 2UE he said words to the effect that it will make the buying price worse because the assets of the bank will be diminished that much further, and that the sale price for the bank will be that much higher. There is a member of Parliament with a sense of humour! He is not the shadow minister for jokes and levity; he is the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council; he is the shadow minister for finance and state development. Let us hear about furnituregate. He claims that the bank is going to lose millions over selling a bit of furniture. What is the truth? Today I received a letter from the State Bank about the sale.

Mr Carr: Please pay your debts.

Mr COLLINS: I am pleased to hear from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members who have been less than composed and courteous during this question time that I have a substantial list of members who have been called to order on one, two or three occasions. I warn all members who have been called to order that they are now deemed to be on three calls to order. Any of those members who attract my attention again will leave the Chamber forthwith.

Mr COLLINS: I had intended to leave the Leader of the Opposition out of this but because he is back in the Chamber and paying a visit to question time I will take the opportunity to remind the House and the people of this State just how good his financial predictions are. We have heard about the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council; let us look at the Leader of the Opposition in this Chamber. In June 1992 he said that the deficit would be \$2 billion in two years time, referring to the 1993-94 Budget. Of course that Budget has been forecast as a \$890 million deficit, less than half of his prediction. That is typical of the exaggeration factor, the lie factor, that the Opposition run; the bigger the lie the more likely they are to tell it, whether it is the Hon. Michael Egan in another place or the Leader of the Opposition in this Chamber. In a letter today referring to this great furnituregate the State Bank had this to say:

Even if old furniture was used at Parramatta, the bank would have had a significant amount of furniture to dispose of.

The letter concludes:

Given the age and type of furniture involved, we have no great expectations as to the extent of the proceeds from the auction.

Clearly, the bank's view was and is that it makes better sense to dispose of the furniture than to retain it in storage. In other words, the cost of dismantling and reassembling some of the furniture would have exceeded the cost of the new furniture which has been purchased. That shows the type of mathematics that the Opposition peddles through the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council and the Leader of the Opposition in this House. Their mathematics

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are completely flawed and nonsensical. There is a lot more I would like to say about the Hon. Michael Egan but, being conscious of the time, I will save it for another day if there are any questions that the Opposition wants to direct to me about the sale of the State Bank.

Some outlandish and ridiculous claims have been made by the Leader of the Opposition in this House. Yesterday, I think it was, he said that the State Bank would not be sold under a Labor Government unless the sale price was at least \$1.5 billion. It is about time that the Opposition woke up - I exclude the Labor backbench who are obviously looking very carefully at the Leader of the Opposition and whether or not he should remain in that position. He says \$1.5 billion. Where did he get that from? It is a figure he has plucked from the air as did his counterpart in the Legislative Council. It is a figure with no basis in substance at all and the Leader of the Opposition knows it. It is about time that this person who claims to be putting forward some type of alternative government was brought to book for the figures that he is prepared to run in this State and in this Chamber. They are nonsense and bear no relation to reality. I look forward to the remainder of this session to proving that point again and again.

WYNYARD STATION UPGRADING

Mr THOMPSON: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Transport. On 17 October 1989, when announcing his plan to spend \$1.5 billion on Wynyard station, did the Minister describe the plan as "an opportunity to transform the shabby Wynyard area into a show piece"? Why has nothing happened in four years? Why is Wynyard still shabby?

Mr BAIRD: A question was asked of me earlier about the light rail network from Campbelltown to Baulkham Hills. I have received absolutely nothing about it. If he can produce something, fine. My office has checked the records and there is nothing there. The honourable member for Rockdale has emerged out of nowhere. We are talking about road projects. The Government has nothing to be ashamed of in terms of the projects it has up and running in this State. In real terms the Government has spent 50 per cent more than the Opposition on road funding, and we do not make any apologies for that.

This is the first occasion I have heard anything from the honourable member for Rockdale and what does he do? He puts his head up to knock the M5 proposal which would relieve traffic congestion in his electorate. All the Opposition does is knock, knock, knock. The Opposition is a group of knockers.

A transport proposal for a heliport was mentioned here today and what did the members opposite do? They knocked it. It is the same with everything. The honourable member for Penrith knocked the M4 proposal. She ran around with pamphlets and knocked the proposal for all she was worth. It was the Government that got it up and running, as it got the M5 up and running. Now the Opposition is talking about the Wynyard redevelopment, which is a private sector development. As honourable members opposite may remember, it was not a project being carried out by the Government; it was being carried out by the private sector. It was their mates in Canberra who caused the recession so that a number of these projects went bust and the Opposition well knows it.

The Opposition should produce its list and start looking at what happened to the national economy. I have seen the little list; it relates to the state of the economy in this country. That is why the project went broke. The Opposition can talk about the east-west city tunnel, which was a project of the Kumagai group. They took it over and it is still a hole in the ground. The national economy went bad and that is why they did not get up and why the Wynyard project did not get up. It was the recession that we had to have, according to Mr Keating. The Opposition keeps rolling out such things as the proposal of the honourable member for Bulli for light rail, which my office has absolutely no record of having received. It is absolutely amazing that the Opposition would want to do this. We have been through the recession. The project at Wynyard was a private sector proposal and related to the state of the economy.

SCHOOL CLEANING ARRANGEMENTS

Mr RICHARDSON: I address my question without notice to the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services. Can the Minister inform the House about the arrangements which are in place for schools and cleaners following the sale of the Government Cleaning Service?

Mrs COHEN: I thank the honourable member for his question. If anything is shameful it is the stories that have been peddled by the Opposition in the past few weeks. The sale of the Government Cleaning Service took place on 28 January and school commenced on 31 January. Honourable members will well remember what took place before the sale when the Opposition peddled the lie that the savings would be illusory and every cleaner would lose his or her job. Honourable members will know how wrong the Opposition was about that.

The savings are \$250 million and no regular cleaner has lost a job. It now appears that, having lost dismally on this ground, the Opposition has now decided to change tack, and with the help of the New South Wales Teachers Federation - and I think it should be noted that it is the Teachers Federation and not the cleaners union - it is now waging the latest campaign of misinformation about the cleaning service. The Opposition was wrong about the sale and it is wrong about cleaning standards.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I repeat my warning about members being on three calls.

Mrs COHEN: The interesting thing about the misinformation campaign was that it was obviously planned long before the sale took place. It appears

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that as far back as last October the Opposition was planning to find cleaning problems in State schools whether they existed or not. That was the date when a series of Opposition members began putting questions on the notice paper about the numbers of cleaners in their electorates and at which schools they were located. So it came as absolutely no surprise to me when, practically as soon as the sale took place, Opposition members began to issue press releases complaining about the effect on schools in their areas.

The honourable member for Wallsend is a case in point. He put his questions on notice on 12 October last. He waited no more than five days after the sale took effect before he complained of the cleaning standards. This little miracle worker who said he had personally surveyed half the number of schools in his electorate issued a press release on 4 February. He published his results and he was rapidly followed by the honourable member for Newcastle who trumpeted the results of his quickly conducted survey. What a disappointment it must have been for them. What did they find when their surveys came out? The worst they could find from their surveys was that there was a reduction in hours, not horror stories about cleanliness. Even then, they got the hours wrong.

I ask members of the Opposition: what is the fixation they have about hours? I would have thought it would not be too difficult for even them to understand that it is standards of cleanliness we are talking about, not hours worked. I know most members opposite would not have heard of productivity increases. I suggest they get in touch with their little mate, Laurie Brereton, in Canberra to get him to run a few classes for them so that they might understand what productivity increases are. Honourable members may be interested to learn of some of the ways that cleaning contractors have been increasing productivity. Members opposite should listen to this example in the hope of understanding what we are talking about.

At Tighes Hill TAFE six cleaners were spending three hours a day cleaning the carparks and the surrounds with a manual push sweeper. The contractor did a really extraordinary thing; he brought in a large motorised carpark sweeper and saved 15 work hours a day - that is productivity savings. The contractors are assisting cleaners to be much more productive through special staff training programs. But, of course, none of these details would have been of the slightest interest to the Opposition. On 15 February they must have been absolutely thrilled to see a photograph in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* of a parent with a broom in hand getting ready to become Mrs Mop. Had she actually carried out any cleaning work in the schools? No, but she was willing to do so in case she should be needed. But who was the woman in question? What a surprise to find out that she is none other than the daughter of Labor MLC the Hon. Delcia Kite.

Next, we had the Leader of the Opposition and the Teachers Federation trying to stir things up in the Parramatta High School - with the aid of more surveys of course. And we can guess whose surveys they are. Soon after that we saw a photo in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of students picking up papers in what was inferred to be Parramatta High School. Unfortunately, what the paper neglected to mention was that the photo was taken at a Parramatta park. Strangely enough, our cleaning contractors just cannot take full responsibility for cleaning up the public parks.

Perhaps now is the time to look at the facts of the matter. The truth is that the private sector companies are contractually obliged to maintain the high standard of cleaning which has always prevailed. According to the terms and conditions of their contracts, they must meet set cleaning specifications as laid down, not by me, but by the Department of School Education - standards which include such things as cleaning toilets every day, and the details are very specific. The Government has a special contract monitoring unit in place to monitor the contract. However, experience has already shown that wherever there is a problem and cleanliness has been questioned, the contractors are out there immediately to attend.

The House might also be interested to learn that no regular cleaner has had a reduction in take-home pay, even when they have had their hours changed more or less than 10 per cent. The sale of the Government Cleaning Service has been a massive exercise. It does involve 7,000 cleaners and 3,000 sites. We expect some initial teething troubles and we would like to deal with them. But may I say to honourable members that if they are so critically concerned about your schools and their cleanliness, it is a lot quicker to ring the contractor than ring the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

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**.

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**.

Cringila Primary School Reading Recovery Program

Petition praying that the special needs of children attending Cringila Primary School are met through subsidisation of the reading recovery program, received from **Mr Sullivan**.

Canterbury Hospital

Petition praying that Canterbury Hospital be retained and upgraded on its present site and that the services it provides continue during upgrading, received from **Mr Davoren**.

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Bulli, Coledale and Port Kembla District Hospitals

Petition praying that the present level of services be retained at Coledale, Bulli and Port Kembla district hospitals, received from **Mr Sullivan**.

Shellharbour Public Hospital Children's Ward

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

Warilla Police Station

Petition praying that more police be allocated to Warilla Police Station, received from **Mr Rumble**.

Ingleburn and Macquarie Fields Police Stations

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

Sexual Assault Counselling Services

Petition praying that more financial resources be made available to provide counselling, supported accommodation services and community education for adult and child sexual assault victims, received from **Mr Anderson**.

Home and Community Care Program

Petition praying that the Home and Community Care program be allocated growth funding in the 1993-94 period consistent with increasing community need, received from **Mr Fraser**.

REGULATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Twenty-fifth Report

Mr Cruickshank, as Chairman, brought up the Twenty-fifth Report of the Regulation Review Committee, dated March 1994.

Ordered to be printed.

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT MAJOR TRANSPORT PROMISES

Consideration of Urgent Motion

Mr CARR (Maroubra - Leader of the Opposition) [3.28]: I move:

That this House condemns the Minister for Transport for his repeated failure to meet major transport promises over the last six years including his failure to implement an integrated transport strategy for the greater Sydney region.

Today in this Parliament the Opposition releases a comprehensive analysis of the record of the Minister since he was sworn in on 25 March 1988. The survey supports two conclusions - and they are damning conclusions. First, no operational plan exists that integrates road, rail, bus and ferries despite a promise made 4½ years ago to deliver one. In other words, we have no integrated transport strategy for this city of 3.7 million. Second, the Minister for Transport has announced and re-announced 16 major transport projects, one on 13 occasions. Our survey shows not one has been commenced, let alone completed. In other words, this Minister has treated the media and the public as fools. But today it has all caught up with him.

We all lived in expectation, the expectation that maybe the metro-west underground system or the northern beaches light rail, or the Chinatown station, or the new north shore line, or the Hyde Park tunnel, or the Macquarie rail link might actually be constructed. But five years after the first promise of the east-west city tunnel, four years after the promise of a \$100 million tilt train, 4½ years after the first announcement of the Devlin Street underpass, five years after the promise to remove country rail services from Central Station, not one of them having been started, it is time for this House to say enough is enough. He has promised 150 kilometres of additional city rail line. He has promised commitments worth \$5 billion. There has been no greater dishonesty connected with railways since Ronald Biggs.

Opposition analysis released today shows that of these 16 major transport projects, six have been announced on no less than 30 occasions. The Pyrmont to Central rail link was announced eight times - Grimshaw got so sick of writing this he left the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* and joined the Minister's staff as press secretary. The tilt train has been announced eight times. The Northern Beach light rail has been announced ten times. But the winner is the city to airport rail link, which has been announced 13 times and, as you heard from the first question today, has no prospect whatsoever of proceeding without a massive injection of public money. The Minister for Transport has written to the Prime Minister saying, "The ball is in your court. We need \$120 million from the Federal Government to get this started".

Kaiser Wilhelm II wanted to build a railway from Berlin to Baghdad, but not even the Kaiser or the Prussians made the promise 13 times. He would not have got away with that in Imperial Germany. None of these projects is completed; none is under way. The Park Street tunnel was announced five

times, almost as often as Liz Taylor has been married, and the announcements have meant as much. In the words of our analysis, all of these projects are schemes that remain dreams. The serious tragedy of all this is the failure of the Minister, while making announcement after re-announcement after announcement, to bring forward the integrated transport strategy needed by this city. I could talk about the Chinatown station, which was soon to be completed when the Minister announced it back in 1990, and which was going to be completed in 1993.

I could talk about the City Circle revamp at Wynyard, a \$1.5 billion development. When the Minister announced that project there was no qualification that it all depended on there being no recession and that it all depended entirely on private sector funding. The Minister bobbed up at a press

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conference and said, "Sydney, this is on its way". Nothing has been heard about the removal of country rail services from Central station. That was announced back in August 1989. They were the good old days. Nick Greiner was Premier. Wal Murray still had to make his first appearance before the Independent Commission Against Corruption. That is how far back it was. The reintroduction of double-decker buses was announced in August 1989 and was not heard of again. The St Marys-Campbelltown rail link was announced on 2 January 1990. The light rail service from Campbelltown to Maldon was announced in January 1992. The Minister forgot about that when he was asked about it today. The clippings are turning yellow and nothing has happened.

Two announcements were made about a privately funded underground rail link between Epping and the lower North Shore, which was to be called the Macquarie rail link - no commencement date, no contract signed. Where is the new North Shore line that was promised on 14 October 1990 in the *Sunday Telegraph*? Two years and two months later that was the subject of the inevitable re-announcement. This time it was to be an underground rail link from Redfern to the Haymarket and an extra level on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Then there was the announcement about the metro-west underground rail link. The Minister said then, "Unless we take some action we are going to be caught short badly in the years ahead". Precisely, Bruce! That is our point. On 6 January 1992 the Minister announced in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* that the Government was examining a proposal to proceed with a new underground rail link from Redfern, through Central station to the Haymarket and Wynyard.

The Minister is jammed on rewind. While the city needs a new integrated transport strategy - a plan that brings roads, rail systems, buses and ferries together in an integrated way - all the Minister can do is announce and re-announce the same projects. We have given him time, but we have done the analysis of the number of times he has announced each project. In our analysis, they are "Schemes That Remain Dreams". Every statement made by the Minister is in there in black and white and, for those who want it, the analysis is supported by a whole file full of cuttings. Not one of these projects has even been commenced, let alone completed, and the city goes without the integrated transport strategy to which it is entitled.

The Opposition is talking about an integrated transport plan that weighs up decisions for transport based on the relative merits of road and rail. We are not talking about a contest between road and rail and, of course, authorities have to learn how to cost social and environmental factors. If they focus purely on financial performance, they risk neglecting broader benefits. The Minister has one achievement, one vision, one focus in transport. That is tollways and more tollways. That is the end of the Minister's vision; that is the end of his thinking. Any announcement he has made that does not relate to a tollway represents a promise that has not been fulfilled, has no feasibility and has not been given a starting date.

The cost of the promises referred to in the Opposition's analysis totals \$5 billion. We have added them up. Promises worth \$5 billion have been made and not one cheque has been signed, not one contract has been issued, no progress has been made. Perhaps we are being unfair in judging the Minister so harshly. He is a sensitive artiste; he is a poet. He should not be judged by the standards one would apply to transport planners. This man is a fantasist; this man is a poet. He does not seem to

care. He has committed his future to the placement boys. They have been looking for a job for him in the private sector for a year. He may be gone by Christmas, but one thing is certain. By the time any of these projects is started, he will not be the Minister. He will not be around to cut the ribbon at the opening. He will not even be around to fire the gun at the start of excavations.

Inter-urban commuters are still travelling on lousy carriages. People are still being killed on urban level crossings in this city. Sydney is one of the few cities in the world where no single daily ticket can be purchased by commuters to travel on trains, buses and ferries. Stations have been left unstaffed and unattended. Pensioners complain about that, while the Minister busies himself with announcements and re-announcements of his favourite schemes. He has no plans to rid the city rail system of dangerous level crossings. For his neglect of basic services, for his failure to develop an integrated strategy, for leaving Sydney dependent on a tollway future and for playing games with the public - games that have now caught up with him - the Minister deserves the censure of the House.

Mr BAIRD (Northcott - Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads) [3.37]: What a pathetic effort! All honourable members know that the Leader of the Opposition is under siege. The word is out that the Opposition wants to replace him because he is failing in the polls. He does not have a hope and the Opposition is looking for a new leader. By moving this motion he has tried to bolster his flagging support. First, he claims that the Government does not have an integrated transport strategy. I present exhibit 1, "Integrated Transport Strategy for Greater Sydney". The requirements go on and on.

Mr Beckroge: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that the Minister threw a document across the table of the House and it landed on the floor. No attempt was made to ask him to behave properly. It is an absolute disgrace. I ask you to direct him to pick it up.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sure the honourable member for Broken Hill would recall past incidents which could fall into the same category. The action of the Minister is not necessarily an action that the Chair looks upon with any favour. However, the practice has developed over the years. The document was placed on the table with a little more force than is usual. I deplore the practice, but no point of order is involved.

Mr BAIRD: There is then the matter of the announcements made by the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Kogarah - on

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16 February, "The State Government should complete the northern distributor, Molloy Street, Bulli"; on 14 February, "A \$500 million rail link linking Hornsby, Parramatta and Liverpool will be built under a New South Wales Labor Government"; on 26 January the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, "We should look first at making Badgerys Creek the major airport and constructing a decent rail link there, rather than constructing to an airport which should be winding down"; on 8 December, "A better alternative to Pymont light rail would be an underground system which fully integrates the existing rail system and which would not interfere with traffic or pedestrian amenities"; on 21 February, "A Labor Government will give a firm commitment to build the eastern distributor within six months of gaining office". So it goes on. The Opposition has in fact made three pages of announcements up and down the country, billions of dollars worth of projects, with no hope of being able to afford them. They are merely announcements, and the Opposition knows that.

The motion has been moved because the Opposition is embarrassed about the number of announcements it has made. The honourable member for Kogarah has been embarrassed by his claims in the past. He knows the reforms this Government has carried out, saving \$1 million a day on costs incurred under the Labor Government. We have saved a cumulative \$1.8 billion in operating expenses. On-time running has never been higher because we have re-equipped State Rail. Sleepers have been replaced in the system and signalling systems have been rebuilt. Right across the network we have introduced new trains, sleeper XPTs, the new Xplorer trains and the new Endeavour trains will be coming on line. The new JetCats going to Manly provide a 98 per cent higher performance than ever before.

There are RiverCat services to Parramatta. On and on it goes. In real terms road funding has increased about 29 per cent in the past three years compared with funding provided in the last three years of Labor administration. The figure compared with the last year of Labor administration shows a 50 per cent increase.

Capital works expenditure on State Rail has been \$2.3 billion. We have no reason to apologise for anything we have done in regard to transport. New South Wales leads all other States in transport reform and savings. The other States ask our advice. Queensland and Western Australia are copying our initiatives in relation to the Passenger Transport Act and operations. The reforms start here. We have achieved savings and improvements in the performance of State Rail. Graffiti has been removed and equipment has been refitted. The red rattlers have been removed. It is a record of which this side of the House can be rightly proud. I turn to the specifics of the claims made. Many of them are simply untrue. Every question on the notice paper and in *Hansard* and every letter to the editor is claimed as an announcement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai to order.

Mr BAIRD: There is no record of announcement about the light rail link anywhere. The honourable member for Kogarah should tell me when the announcement was made.

Mr Langton: I will.

Mr BAIRD: Present it to us. When the honourable member's mate asked a question I asked, "When was the announcement? Where is the copy?"

Mr Langton: There you are.

Mr O'Doherty: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, I would have thought that in light of your previous warning about throwing material across the Chamber the action by the honourable member for Kogarah was a deliberate and flagrant breach of your wishes and the conventions of this House. I would ask you to pull the honourable member up, if not eject him, for gross disorderly conduct.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House well knows my opinion, which I gave just a short while ago. The honourable member for Kogarah will note the great indignation expressed by the Opposition Whip at such behaviour. I would have thought that would have acted as a salutary message to him. It is unfortunate that he should repeat the behaviour so quickly after my warning. I shall leave the matter at that.

Mr BAIRD: A number of fine projects are under way at the moment: among them building the M2 Castlereagh Freeway, the M5 project and the eastern distributor project. We are hopeful that all agreements will be signed by the end of the year. The honourable member for Kogarah wants the light rail proposal put underground. The agreement for that should be signed within the next six months. The airport rail link is in process. These things cannot be delivered overnight. The right-wing New South Wales Labor approach is to sign up mates and not call for tenders. All the projects we have acknowledged - not the ones the Opposition has made up - are under way. Because of probity requirements, the calling for expressions of interest and tenders, and projects being worked through - and the desire for a process that has integrity and probity - we do not simply sign up our mates. It will be a couple of years yet before the final process for the airport rail link is signed up. But it is important to get the project right. We make no apologies for that. That also applies to the other projects.

The Pyrmont-Central rail link will be signed up within the next six months. The east-west city tunnel was a private sector proposal that bit the dust because of the recession. We cannot be blamed for that. The Devlin Street underpass will be under way this year. The metro-west underground rail system is proposed for the longer-term future. This is what the Opposition does not say. The project was always

said to be for the longer term. Another line is needed for the North Shore. It also will be built in the longer term. We do not make any apologies for that. The Government has had the imagination and the vision to bring these projects in. We have reformed the rail
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system that we were left, built many new roads, removed black spots, redeveloped our public transport system and had a vision for new projects involving the private sector. A number have been signed up and are under way. I look forward to announcing their completion.

Mr LANGTON (Kogarah) [3.47]: The Minister for Transport clearly did not hear the motion and does not understand what it is about. It is about the Minister continually, over a period of nearly six years, announcing and reannouncing major projects, many of which he knows full well never had a chance of getting up. The Minister would have to be the most publicity hungry Minister the State has ever seen. He wants to announce projects but he knows that they will never take place. The Minister's unprovoked behaviour involved throwing a document across the table which he claimed was the Government's integrated transport strategy. He misled the House. It is not an integrated transport strategy. He did not show us what was inside the cover; it is "a first release for public discussion". The motion clearly refers to the Minister's failure to implement an integrated transport strategy. The Minister has had six years to do that. What does he have after that time? A first release for public discussion.

Integrated transport means very simply the co-ordinated planning and delivery of transport with each individual transport project being part of an overall transport plan. Integrated transport maximises efficiency in the carriage of people and freight. It means time and money saved travelling. All the Minister has done is announce and reannounce the same unconnected and unrelated projects. He is totally concerned with good news press releases and totally unconcerned with the needs of the people and the businesses of this State. In the Minister's own transport strategy -

Mr Baird: You said we did not have one.

Mr LANGTON: You have not implemented it. Why do you not listen? You are a fool, Minister. The report states:

Present capital investment strategic planning processes focus on specific projects which are developed without reference to an overall transport strategy.

That is from the Minister's own paper. It continues:

Continuation of the present transport capital investment process with no overall co-ordination is unsustainable.

Further on it says:

Without reform it will be increasingly difficult to take advantage of opportunities for transport enhancement.

The Minister and his department arrived at this revelation in 1993, a full two years after the Labor Party, in 1991, released its transport policy in which we said on page 1:

The aims and objectives of the Labor Government are to develop a fully integrated land transport policy for the State and to set a clear direction for the overall development of land transport policies in New South Wales.

That is the basis of our transport policies. The coalition Government, on the contrary, in six years has been unable to provide Sydney with anything other than ad hoc announcements which were never fulfilled. It even eroded some of the features of integration which existed under Labor. While this

Minister continues to chase tomorrow's headlines with his proposals commuters in western Sydney continue to chase late trains and wait for hours for bus services whose timetables are not co-ordinated with train services.

New homes are being built every day in suburbs which barely have sealed roads let alone public transport. Elderly people travel in misery on CountryLink services, transferring from trains to coaches and sometimes even to taxis. The State Rail Authority is even sending ballast by truck from its quarry at Bombo to Lithgow - 25 trucks a day! New South Wales at the very least is being recalcitrant in joining the National Road Transport Commission, adding further burden to the road freight industry. The Minister boasted about finally completing the Parramatta RiverCat service. However, passengers are not allowed to buy return tickets because they cannot be guaranteed a seat on the return journey.

On New Year's Eve - the one time of the year when many people in Sydney turn to public transport - the Minister and the State Rail Authority could not manage to provide enough trains. The Minister's pathetic attempt to blame the drivers rebounded on him badly. That was just another case of poor planning. The Minister's mind is concerned not with planning but with publicity. He has said he wants a career in public relations after he leaves this place. This process is the Minister's training for that career. The Minister is not interested in transport. The fact that commuters throughout Sydney waste precious hours each day changing trains and buses in their attempts to get to work does not seem to have struck the Government as a target for its microeconomic reform. The Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads is only concerned with his own career. The people of this State are sick and tired of hearing the Minister's promises but seeing no action. The people of New South Wales deserve better. I believe the Minister deserves the condemnation of this House. [*Time expired.*]

Mr TINK (Eastwood) [3.52]: The Leader of the Opposition commenced this debate by referring to Kaiser Wilhelm. His colleagues should be aware that he is the Kaiser Wilhelm of the Australian Labor Party. He had better keep a lookout for signs of what happened to Kaiser Wilhelm and all his followers during World War I. After the performance today by the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Kogarah, that is where the Opposition is heading. The Government has been attempting to make up the 15 years of neglect, most of which was due to the former Labor Government. This Government has been struggling to put in place basic infrastructure that should have been available 15 years ago. What is more, the honourable member for Bligh is well aware of that because she and all her

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constituents have been fighting a through traffic mess and have suffered because of a lack of traffic connections. The proposed eastern distributor should have been in place years ago. Labor, when in government, rejected that project, which is only now coming up to speed. Many members opposite were part of the former Labor Government and in a position to do something about that neglect.

The honourable member for Bligh faces a situation similar to that faced by me in the Eastwood electorate. The Opposition spokesman just goes around bagging. If he wants an example of an integrated transport strategy in a bite-size area, there is no better example than the proposals being put forward for the Eastwood electorate. In that electorate a desperately needed road has been proposed for precisely the same reasons a road is needed in the Bligh electorate. To suggest there should not be such a road is to deny that volumes of traffic are going down local streets. I, for one, am sick of it. I represent people who have to tolerate through traffic on their residential streets. I am sure the honourable member for Bligh is in the same situation.

But the Government has not closed its eyes to other forms of transport. In the Eastwood proposal the Government, for the first time in New South Wales, is integrating exclusive bus lanes which in the future can be further integrated with light rail. That is not a pipe dream; it has actually happened. The runs are on the board in Western Australia and the same can happen here. Furthermore, the Epping scheme integrates with the main northern rail link, providing a bus interchange at Epping for the main heavy rail line. As the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice knows, a link is provided to ferries travelling up to Parramatta and down to the city. The service

has been such an outstanding success that 50 per cent more ferries have had to be put on to cope with demand. If that is not an integrated transport strategy in the making, I do not know what is.

That service has practical runs on the board. Yet the honourable member for Kogarah spends all his time bagging it, and then has the hide to bag the Government in this House. The Government is trying to make up for time lost during 12 years of Labor administration when nothing was done. During that time Neville Wran ran around refusing to face reality, thus creating conditions that I, the honourable member for Bligh and other members have to face. The Government, in trying to get on with the job and make up for 12 years of neglect, has put in place important missing links in the M4 and M5 projects. On looking at those projects I have found them to be much better structured than the Sydney Harbour Tunnel project, which was said to have been bunged through this House in the middle of the night when no one was about. The Government could not know whether it got a decent deal in that project because no one will ever know what the competitive market might have delivered.

The Minister has been working flat out to update existing infrastructure, a necessary task after 12 years of Labor neglect. Bringing railway stations and overpasses, pedestrian overpasses and similar facilities up to scratch has been a major job. The Minister was responsible for getting rid of the last red rattlers. Those carriages were a feature of Labor's period in office, when little was done to make substantial changes to rollingstock or to encourage further patronage of public transport. Barrie Unsworth, at the end of his time as Premier, got around to introducing a few Tangaras, but this Government has brought such projects forward and carried them on in a meaningful way. That work is crucial to attract more support for public transport. The Government has been making up for lost time and is grappling with 12 years of neglect. If ever Labor is returned to office, and if the eastern distributor is not in place, the honourable member for Bligh should watch out. [*Time expired.*]

Dr MACDONALD (Manly) [3.57]: I support the urgency motion. I shall not rant and rave about it because I do not think such behaviour contributes to debate. However, I would like to provide facts and statistics in an attempt to put flesh on the bones of the debate. This is a most serious matter. Manly-Warringah is one of the most poorly serviced areas in Sydney, especially from a land-based perspective. Absolutely nothing has happened there in six years. No improvements have been made to mass transit for the Manly area. I am prepared to substantiate my comments. For two years much recycling of news has occurred. Manly, incidentally, heads other areas in the recycling of domestic garbage. The Government, however, seems to excel at recycling old news. I was provided with details of the number of reannouncements of a mass transit and light rail system between January 1992 and February this year. That issue has been announced time and time again. Finally, it has stalled once more and ground to a halt. It is not vehicles that have ground to a halt but the whole question of a public transport mass transit system.

What transport do we have? The Minister knows that so-called better buses were introduced in 1991. They are now called worser buses. The introduction of that system was hopeless. It met with enormous community opposition. All non-profit services are being cut. In some places in the electorate people have to wait an hour for a bus service. The Department of Transport regards it as acceptable to have to walk 800 metres to a bus stop. In certain areas we have no services at weekends. The bus service is a farce, particularly out of peak hours. It has been a disaster. Ferries have been cut back, as the Minister would know from my correspondence with him. We now have one-hour evening ferry services. Our need is desperate.

The Minister should talk to those living in the so-called Liberal heartlands. They are fairly angry. A journey from Seaforth roundabout to Spit Junction sometimes takes 23 minutes. A recent report indicated that a journey from Balgowlah to Spit

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Bridge took 30 minutes. The Government has not done anything to relieve those problems. Of a morning queues stretch 5 kilometres up Frenchs Forest Road. The system is hopeless, and the problem should be resolved. People need to be encouraged to leave their cars at home. An integrated public

transport system, preferably a mass transit system, is needed right now.

I do not need to remind the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads of the fact that cars are the enemy of the city - they contribute to air pollution, to smog, to delay and they take up 30 per cent of the facilities in cities, including parking facilities. I have attended numerous public meetings in my electorate in the past couple of years over a wide range of issues. The meetings that get the best attendance rate are those that relate to public transport issues. Transport is a matter at the heart of people's concerns. The Government has not done anything for land-based transport systems in my area for many years, going way back before the time that I became a member of Parliament.

We urgently need an integrated, comprehensive, mass transit system. The Government is pushing a policy of urban consolidation. The honourable member for Eastwood, who has just spoken, knows that urban consolidation would affect his area. It puts a strain on infrastructure, not only on transport but also on things such as sewerage, community facilities, et cetera. The Government cannot have it both ways. If it wants urban consolidation it should provide us with a decent transport system.

The Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing announced that the Government wants to put 30,000 new homes into the Manly-Warringah area, without any integrated public transport system at all. The Government wants dual occupancy in all of these areas - that is an uncomfortable word in this place. It results in an increase in population and creates the need for extra transport facilities. Only in the last week development applications have gone before the Warringah Council. They want to put an extra 500 people in Manly Vale. That is fine for urban consolidation, but let it be associated with a decent mass transit system, one that takes the burden off the road, reduces waiting times on the roads and gets people integrated into new development areas. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CARR (Maroubra - Leader of the Opposition) [4.2], in reply: This is the day that it has all caught up with the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. It is one thing for the Minister to slip little exclusives to Peter Grimshaw of the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* and score friendly articles about grand plans for tilt trains, east-west tunnels, the Devlin Street underpass, the metro-west underground rail system and all the other projects. This was policy making by press release - no strategy, no planning, just slipping out little exclusives and promises.

Mr Baird: How many times have you made announcements?

Mr CARR: The Minister asks how many times he announced these. The best example is the one that we exposed today during question time: the Minister's proposal for the city-airport rail link.

Mr Baird: And it is still going, too.

Mr CARR: It is still going, is it? After 13 announcements it is still going; it still has life in it. Today we exposed for the first time that the Minister is dependent on Federal Government funding. When did the Minister announce that? When was that the subject of a public announcement? The Minister did not always say that. There was no qualification that this was dependent on Federal Government funding, or indeed on State Government funding of, from memory, \$300 million. This was touted by the Minister as a classic example of private sector investment in infrastructure. Now the mystery unravels: it will only go ahead with a massive public sector input - indeed, if the Federal Government decides to give New South Wales \$120 million. In May 1991 the Minister said in a letter to the *Eastern Herald*:

. . . the big difference between Airportlink and Dr Paxinos's light-rail proposal is funding. Airportlink will not require one cent of Government money . . .

That letter is signed by Bruce Baird. Let us go through the list - all of them repeatedly announced, all of them trotted out, and all of them re-announced until public credulity is strained to the limit. The one that the Minister is most associated with is the tilt train; that project has been announced eight times. I am

told that no one in the transport bureaucracy endorses the tilt train; there is nothing like having a feasibility study for it. The Minister is the only enthusiast, and as I say he has announced it eight times. Does the Minister think people are stupid? He keeps serving this up. Talk about vision! Helen Keller had more vision. This Minister is lost; this Minister is hopeless.

Is the Minister going to tell us that the document he threw across the table a moment ago represents an integrated transport strategy? It is merely a study. The heading is, "A first release for public discussion". A strategy is not a document for public discussion; a strategy is a set of proposals that are actually implemented and guide planning. It is not a strategy when it has "A first release for public discussion" stamped on the front cover. The Minister says that the thing which slowed down a few of these projects was the need to go through them carefully in regard to accountability and to meet Independent Commission Against Corruption guidelines. It did not worry the Minister with respect to the M2 project; it did not slow him down on the M2 project one little bit. There was no hand wringing about accountability and an ICAC watchdog when it came to the M2. That one slipped through pretty fast. There was no great worry about probity on that one.

What a transport visionary the Minister is; what a transport strategist he is when he cannot even get rid of the level crossings in the Sydney urban areas. He

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cannot even manage that. He is all very bold when it comes to the thirteenth announcement of the east-west city tunnel, when it comes to running the Devlin Street underpass five times or talking about the Chinatown station - I think that deserves the prize for being the most brazen. Under this proposal a person would be able to see "Miss Saigon" and then be at the Bondi surf in 30 minutes. There is to be an interchange under Chinatown which will put people on to the eastern suburbs line. That project was due for completion when? 1993. [*Time expired.*]

Question - That the motion be agreed to - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 45

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

Dr Macdonald

Mr Davoren

Noes, 47

Mr Armstrong

Mr Merton

Mr Baird

Ms Moore

Mr Beck

Mr Morris

Mr Blackmore

Mr W. T. J. Murray

Mr Causley

Mr O'Doherty

Mr Chappell

Mr D. L. Page

Mrs Chikarovski

Mr Peacocke

Mr Cochran

Mr Petch

Mrs Cohen

Mr Phillips

Mr Collins

Mr Photios

Mr Cruickshank

Mr Richardson

Mr Downy

Mr Rixon

Mr Fahey

Mr Schultz

Mr Fraser

Mrs Skinner

Mr Glachan

Mr Small

Mr Griffiths

Mr Smith

Mr Hartcher

Mr Souris

Mr Hatton

Mr Turner

Mr Hazzard

Mr West

Mr Humpherson

Mr Windsor

Dr Kernohan

Mr Zammit

Mr Kinross

Tellers,

Mr Longley

Mr Jeffery

Ms Machin

Mr Kerr

Pairs

Mr Iemma

Mr Schipp

Mr Newman

Mr Tink

Mr Ziolkowski

Mr Yabsley

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Second Day's Debate

Debate resumed from 2 March.

Mr BECKROGE (Broken Hill) [4.14]: The publicity given recently to the Premier's Department officials commenting on the effectiveness of the Governor of New South Wales appalled not only me but would appal most of the citizens in my electorate. In the short time that Rear Admiral Sinclair and Mrs Sinclair have been resident in Government House they have spent a lot of time travelling around New South Wales, including my electorate. Rear Admiral Sinclair and Mrs Sinclair do not fly around in a flash aeroplane provided by the Government; they travel on scheduled aircraft. Sometimes they stay at people's houses, not always in the best accommodation. They have conducted themselves in a most exemplary manner. I would like to see the Governor and his wife remain in their positions for a long time

because they genuinely care for, and are well regarded by, the people of my electorate. I would like that message to be conveyed to the Governor and his wife.

In my electorate an unsatisfactory situation has arisen with water allocation, quality and quantity. The administration of the water policy in New South Wales is also less than satisfactory. The remarks I make today do not refer only to the present Government. I have been a member of Parliament for 12½ years and in that time I have seen many different changes in policy. I have seen inefficiencies throughout the Department of Water Resources and its predecessor. Living in rural New South Wales and depending on the Barwon-Darling system as a life blood, I find that the policies that have been put in place have produced a wretched situation. No government can make it rain. Governments should look towards a better allocation of the scarce resource of water. No one can live without water, and especially not the people who live in the bush.

Certainly in western New South Wales water is a highly regarded commodity, and some places in my electorate do not even have completely filtered water, and certainly do not take for granted that water will be there when a tap is turned on. The actual lifeline of western New South Wales, the Barwon-Darling system, is in a tragic situation. My colleague the honourable member for Barwon last evening spoke about providing water for flushing the Murray River. The Menindee Lakes system was developed primarily to provide downstream servicing by flushing the lower Darling and particularly the Murray of salinity problems.

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In the 1960s when that system was built there was nothing like the demand now being made on water along the Darling system or along the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan. Since that time many industries based on horticulture and on irrigation have grown up along those rivers. Headwater storages were built to service those areas. The development along the river system of tracts of irrigation places demands on the scarce water supply. At the moment the most disgraceful situation exists in the Menindee Lakes system because for the first time since the lakes were built the Menindee Lakes are virtually dry.

According to the Department of Water Resources this is a natural occurrence - the lake has to run dry. The lake above Menindee, the Pamamaroo, has water but the Department of Water Resources believes that it is not right to release that water to clean up the mess that has resulted in dead fish since the drying up of Menindee. There were plans to sell water from Lake Cawndilla to the Lake Tandou users on the basis that it would evaporate anyway. The interesting thing is that it was not until the honourable member for Mount Druitt, who is the shadow minister for water resources, and I went out to Menindee in October that we discovered the plan was under way, and then the game was up.

I am particularly concerned about the secrecy under which the Department of Water Resources operates. I would like to know exactly who gives the orders. As far as I can determine, the present Minister is running a million miles away from the problem at Menindee because he believes that the officers of the Department of Water Resources should be the ones to explain. I do not believe that is good enough. The Government must tell the people what is going on. It was not until recently, when the people of Broken Hill, who depend on the lakes system and certainly the river system for their water, agitated and stirred in an attempt to get some action that we received some explanation from New South Wales Fisheries and the Department of Water Resources.

I hope the Government will instigate an immediate inquiry into the circumstances that led to Menindee Lake being allowed to become dry, into the plan to sell off the water in Lake Cawndilla to Lake Tandou, and into the general management strategies that are in place whenever this natural phenomenon occurs. We have to really look at some way of preventing it happening again. At the moment there are a lot of dead fish lying around, and blue-green algae is present. It is a filthy situation; it stinks and it is unhealthy as well. The people are pleading with the Department of Water Resources to

let some water out of the Koomarmuru. The department will not let that go because they believe, and probably quite rightly, that to do that will put pressure on their requirements to provide water for Broken Hill and downstream. They are in a bind: there is no water coming down the system. What do we do about it?

Obviously, the best idea would be to have more water down the system. For many years I have believed that there should be some means of getting more water into the western rivers. It is certainly not the immediate answer but I believe the Government should be looking closely at the scheme to turn back the surplus waters of the Clarence River and the other streams that run into the sea. I understand the ecological worry about all that, but if we are to sustain the development we have on those western rivers, somehow we have to get more water or use the water we have more efficiently. I suppose that is the answer.

I hope there will be some investigation into the number of water licences that are held and the people who use them, and I would like to see a great deal more policing of the licences by the Government or the fisheries inspectors. There has been a reduction in the number of fisheries inspectors in the past couple of years and I would like to see a beefing up of the inspectorial service to ensure that people who have licences are drawing the correct amount of water and at the right time. It is extremely difficult, I suppose, if someone has a huge cotton crop and millions of dollars invested and the water level is such that the licence does not allow for the drawing of sufficient water from the Darling or the Barwon. That person will undoubtedly take the water to save the crop. The penalties for the breach do not reflect the seriousness of the event because everyone thinks that water that passes them is surplus water. It is not, because every river needs the water to get right to the end. It was in December 1982 that the Murray ceased flowing into the sea at Lake Alexandrina and the Darling River stopped. I vividly remember flying over the Darling River and seeing the little pools of stagnant water actually filling up when the fresh water came down. It was quite a weird sight to see the pools filling up and gradually becoming a river again.

I hope that a great deal of attention can be given urgently not only to the provision of the quantity of water but also to the quality of the water. There is an extremely difficult situation with blue-green algae. The Government, in consultation with the Federal authorities, believes there are ways of attacking the problem and I understand that 10 centres are being monitored for effluent levels in the systems that run into the Barwon-Darling. A very close watch has to be kept on how that water is used, from the top of Mungindi to the junction of the rivers at Wentworth. I believe there should be a policy in place and a strategy to handle these issues. The Government must have another look at the arrangements in place for the Murray-Darling river system. Perhaps it really is too much to expect the good old Barwon-Darling to provide the quantity of water licensed to be taken. Perhaps we are expecting too much from too little water. Of course, most of the water comes down from Queensland to the border rivers and through the Namoi and the rivers coming west in New South Wales; the bulk certainly comes through from Queensland. If it does not rain in Queensland, our river system has a problem.

Another matter of concern to my electorate, and of course it is a concern to everyone, is jobs. I can think of no better way to ensure that we have what is known these days as reasonable development than for

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the Government to take a lead in finding ways and means of providing more work in country towns and employment in smaller centres. People may say, "Well, do you want the rorts back on?" Everyone talks about rorts but they do not understand. They seem to think there were too many people working in a railway station. They do not understand that in a small township, Nyngan for instance, taking - as the Government is doing at the moment - three employees from the railway station knocks the place around. Over the past couple of years a number of railway workers have been retrenched and given a token redundancy or whatever. The community suffers because the town does not have that income. Nyngan is a classic case. I made representations on behalf of the Bogan shire council last year to the Minister for Transport to receive a deputation to talk about the impending closure of the Nyngan railway station. The shire wanted to put up a case but, incredibly, the assistant Minister replied that the Minister was too

busy.

That was an insult. I do not know of any Minister, and I have known many ministers in my time, who have acted in that way. Ministers must be willing to see people, to talk to people, and to explain to them the reason behind any decision that has upset the community. The community in Nyngan has a great deal of respect for this Government as a whole because the Government acted so well in repairing Nyngan after the 1990 flood. But it is an embarrassment to have a Minister say, "No, look, I am too busy to see you", particularly when it was the same Minister who spent most of last year out of the country getting the Olympic Games for Sydney.

I should like to refer to public works - which is what I was really on about - and the Government providing jobs in regional areas and in the bush. Public works provides a great opportunity to employ people, because when the Government builds hospitals, schools, police stations, or whatever in, say, the western areas, that money actually employs people in those areas. We need a reassessment of where we are spending our money on public works, because I have seen public works signs disappear out of Broken Hill and other centres, only to reappear by the hundreds at Homebush Bay. That very large sign at Homebush Bay proclaiming it to be a public works project is no doubt a source of great pride to the Government, but a lot of the towns in my area would like to see similar signs going up again, as an indication of increased employment.

In Broken Hill we have again had the difficult situation of men being told that redundancy was going to be offered, but nobody knowing about it until the men came and said, "Look, this is what is happening. What are you going to do about it?" The council took up the matter and we now have a building there that the Government is trying to sell off because there is nobody in it. There were 14 employees - now there are 12 - who went from public works. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Public works in Broken Hill, like in lots of other places, provided work and we would like to see more there. Even a small position like the regional tourism manager was vital to a city like Broken Hill. Because we are so far away from our capital, it is important to have government services actually provided in our city. We lost the tourism manager - and admittedly he went with a lot of other managers because of a reorganisation within the Tourism Commission. Within the past four or five years we have had several different plans and propositions, including that disastrous NSWOW campaign. Now we have the successful seven wonders of New South Wales campaign, and that is fine. There is a lot of talk about developing regional New South Wales, but nothing is being done about creating work there. And of course tourism is one of the things that most country towns look for to help boost their economy.

Certainly there are wondrous things to see in my area; it is a fabulous part of New South Wales. In fact, it constitutes 41 per cent of New South Wales, so it goes a long way towards being unique. The Government has to take an active role in promoting employment in regional New South Wales if it is going to succeed. I say to my own party that this has to be an important part of our program to get people working again, but there is little fat left. If the Government wanted to do another purge, I do not know where it would start, but certainly we would want to see buildings built and services provided. There are not many people in my area, but those that are there pay their taxes the same as anyone else; they have children who have the same sorts of ambitions as children in the city. They want the same sorts of facilities to advance their children's talents and, of course, to live a life that provides the standards of living available to people in the cities. It is so much harder for schoolchildren to go to the marvels of Sydney when they live so far away. Really it is important that we acknowledge that Australians who live in my area are the same as anyone else, and deserve the same sort of treatment.

I also want to touch on law and order. If this Government has failed at anything, it has failed to provide a framework in communities whereby we can all walk down the street, and live in our houses free of the fear that we are going to be set upon, that we are going to be harassed, that our lives or our family's lives are in danger. I am not saying that we live in an environment anything like that of New York, but what worries me very much is that one commitment to law and order that the Government has not

delivered is the abolition of drinking in the streets. We all supported legislation that was introduced four years ago. It was to be trialed for a year and then reviewed. I am not certain whether the review has taken place; I certainly have not seen the result of any review. The shires in my area are continually pressing me to find out what is going on, because they have the problem right on the ground of how to handle people drinking in their streets.

If that legislation were enforced correctly it would be of great benefit to our community. But now at night it is absolutely unbelievable, certainly on hot

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nights, to wander around different towns and see the number of people who are drunk on the street. I do not get down to Redfern too often, or to other places where they say there is this problem in Sydney, but if it is as bad as it is made out to be it is just not good enough. We must have a return to respect for the law. We must revert to the understanding that people who offend will pay.

I speak about this every year - and I make a point every time of saying that I want to send the signal to the magistracy; that I want to send a signal to those who preside over the hearings when offenders come before the courts. I ask them please take into account the community expectations; please understand, even though they do not live in the town in which they are presiding, that people do have to live there and that the real victims are not the people before the court but the people who they have offended against.

We must have some sort of direction. It will not come from a politician and it obviously will not come from this Parliament; so it must come from the judiciary. They must have a look at the standards, what people expect and the protection that is needed, and understand that the real victim is the person who has been offended against and not somebody who has been 10 times before the court, with a good excuse and good representation each time. What we have to do somehow or other is to have these people understand the reality of living in the area in which they preside as magistrates.

In Wilcannia recently a big meeting decided to do a number of things because those attending had had enough. The community is actually fed up to the back teeth with lawlessness. The community submitted some ideas and the Government acted quickly. One of the recommendations related to the juvenile justice officer who was going to be placed in Wilcannia for six months. Somehow or other that did not eventuate - it might very well have been the will of the Government. The person who was appointed lives in Bathurst and goes to Wilcannia on a needs basis. That has been going on for years, and that is not what they wanted; they wanted somebody full time. I hope the Minister will see fit to ensure that that person is there on a full-time basis for six months, four months, or whatever, working out priorities and plans with the people of Wilcannia to ensure that they can address their juvenile justice problems. That is totally feasible. The residents of Wilcannia have not previously tried to work out among themselves what they would like to do. The process is continuing, and if a particular proposal can be agreed upon and used as an example to other townships, those communities could get together and solve their problems within the present framework of the law.

I turn now to expenditure on roads. Any member who represents a country electorate understands the need for proper roads. There are sealed roads in the inside country, as it is called, the Central West. The problem is that those sealed roads are now carrying a great deal of larger and heavier traffic. Therefore, the roads will break up and the councils will need sufficient support to ensure that the roads are not torn apart by these huge trucks. Last year the honourable member for Barwon and I intended to attend a ceremony held at Burren Junction. However, we were unable to attend because Parliament was sitting. The east-west road from Bourke to Narrabri has been promoted by the Namoi Valley Council and the honourable member for Barwon for years. A tremendous effort has been made. I hope the sealing of the road will continue because there are now about 90 kilometres of dirt in the shires of Walgett and Brewarrina. The road from Bourke to Brewarrina has been sealed. We want the great link completed.

The Cobar Council has made marvellous efforts to try to wangle money for the Kidman Way. It has

managed to obtain money from the Federal and State governments and is now working on a program to use Aboriginal people to help seal that road. The council has displayed fantastic energy. A distance of 50 kilometres has now been sealed from Cobar towards the town of Bourke. I understand Bourke Council will seal 10 to 15 kilometres at the Bourke end, so some really good work is being done on that road. The road from the south of Cobar to Hillston needs a great deal of work. I hope that over time the Government will see fit to ensure that that vital link to relief on the Newell Highway is completed. Everyone knows the dangers of that highway. It will certainly be of great benefit to Cobar and Bourke, which are in my electorate, and Hillston, which is on the edge of my electorate.

The other matter is the Burke and Wills road through Broken Hill, which is more of a developmental road to Tibooburra. The Roads and Traffic Authority has done some good work in using new rubberised seals to repair the bad patches. The dream of that north-south road through Broken Hill now looks like a possibility. I know the Broken Hill Council has been extremely active in trying to obtain Federal funding for it. That is difficult because the area administered by the Broken Hill Council does not traverse much of the Silver City Highway, the present name of the road. It is a problem for the Roads and Traffic Authority because it is in the unincorporated area. I would like the Government to address that. Most importantly, I want the House to understand the problems being experienced in the Central West at present in relation to water quality and quantity in the Barwon-Darling river system. A plan should be implemented to enable that river system to live again. The river should be handed over to the generations that follow us in a better condition than it is in now.

Mr PHOTIOS (Ermington - Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice) [4.44]: I join with other honourable members in paying tribute to His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, on the exemplary fashion in which he has discharged his responsibilities as

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Governor. He has demonstrated compassion, sensitivity, real credibility and has been a fine example of the best we can expect from the Government and, of course, from governors of New South Wales. I was impressed by the Governor's outline of the Government's program for New South Wales in 1994. I am proud to identify myself with that agenda and with the Government's commitment to the people of New South Wales. The New South Wales Government has set a precedent. In contrast with any previous or current State government in Australia, the Fahey Government can boast a deep appreciation of the significance of those who constitute the population of this unique State.

Accordingly, the Government has introduced revolutionary measures to strengthen the distinctive position of New South Wales as the most culturally diverse State in the most culturally diverse nation in the world, with the exception of Israel. The city of Sydney is home to 220 different ethnic communities. In fact, Sydney has now overtaken Melbourne as the migrant capital of Australia, a larger percentage of its population having been born overseas. Of Sydney's population, 35.7 per cent over the age of 15 years were born overseas. More than one million people in New South Wales speak a language other than English at home.

For the first time in Australia a stand-alone multicultural and ethnic affairs portfolio has been established. Never before has a government in this country taken this vital initiative. For my part as a community-based member of Parliament, I am committed to making myself available and accessible to the people I represent, whether we come into contact in my electorate of Ermington or through my portfolio activities. As I have made clear on many occasions, I am determined to act as both the voice and the servant of the ethnic community, giving voice to their concerns in Cabinet and Government. But beyond that accessibility, the establishment of a stand-alone portfolio ensures that all government decisions are examined for their impact on people of non-English speaking background.

It is unfortunate that the State Opposition has promised to abolish this stand-alone portfolio, making it once again a part-time token job. The commitment of the Leader of the Opposition to marginalise the important role the large and dynamic ethnic community seeks to play in Australia is a most regrettable

step indeed. Since my appointment as Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs in May last year, many new initiatives have been implemented. I am pleased to outline now some of those initiatives. The State Government's continuing commitment to cultural diversity took a further step forward in August with the presentation of the charter of principles for a culturally diverse society by the Premier, the Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission, Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian, and me to the chief executives of New South Wales government departments and agencies.

As honourable members would be aware, the Premier launched the charter in March 1993, endorsing it as a statement of the State Government's commitment to developing policies and practices that reflect the interests and needs of people from all backgrounds, regardless of cultural heritage. The charter is not about entrenching privilege for people of non-English speaking background. It is not about preferential treatment. It is about ensuring that all people, regardless of culture, ethnicity or religion, have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to and participate in the community at large. The charter goes far beyond multiculturalism as we know it today. As a community we have advanced to what is more broadly appreciated as the concept of cultural diversity, a realisation of the worth and contribution of all people, regardless of background, whether English speaking or non-English speaking. The implementation of the charter's principles will be an ongoing process, with a range of initiatives being undertaken in coming months, and the production and publication of guidelines and a manual. These guidelines will detail managers' roles throughout the public service and outline their responsibilities in realising the principles outlined in the charter.

The manual will explain how to develop, monitor and implement the principles in individual government agencies - in all government agencies. We will establish a departmental task force to monitor progress and provide assistance across portfolios. A series of departmental seminars will be held on the implementation of the charter. Departmental statement of intent documents will be produced. As the first step in implementing the charter all public sector agencies will be required to produce and to prepare statements of intent which will commit the agency to developing strategies to implement the principles, the philosophy behind the charter.

A number of key agencies which provide services of particular importance to people of non-English speaking background will be targeted, particularly the departments of School Education, Health, Community Services and Housing. These agencies will be required to work with the Ethnic Affairs Commission to develop a charter of principles implementation plan which will then be linked to their corporate plans and which must detail how their statements of intent will be implemented. Additionally, and of landmark significance, as the Governor announced in his address to Parliament earlier this week, this year the New South Wales Government will develop - the first time any State government has done this since Federation - a multicultural and ethnic affairs strategy statement.

The strategy statement will be based on the following principles: it will highlight areas of particular importance for the Government in the provision of services to people of non-English speaking background, and it will contain standards and criteria for each strategy. The strategies documented in the statement will be selected both from those submitted by government agencies which have submitted their charter of principles

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implementation plans and from those submitted by the Ethnic Affairs Commission. The strategies must be capable of achievement or of substantial or demonstrable progress towards achievement during 1994-95.

It will be an action plan, not just a philosophical statement. It will be monitored, not just made available in the public forum for discussion. This dynamic three-part program, the first to be adopted by any State government in Australia, will be completed this year. Agencies must complete their statements of intent by the end of April. Charter of principles implementation plans will be required by the end of July. The New South Wales Government's inaugural multicultural and ethnic affairs strategy statement will be released in the last quarter of this year.

I now turn to the 1993-94 Budget. I am delighted to report that the multicultural and ethnic affairs portfolio received a massive 57 per cent increase in funding for the period 1993-94. This was the highest increase in funding of any Government portfolio and as such is recognition of the high and meaningful priority given by the Fahey Government to multicultural and ethnic affairs. Funding increased from \$6.695 million to \$10.522 million this financial year. A major part of the increase will be delivered in the form of community grants and outreach programs, which have been boosted fourfold from \$1.03 million to \$4.33 million.

This evening I am pleased to announce formally the establishment of two new grants programs to be added to the Ethnic Affairs Commission portfolio of grants programs. The new programs will supplement and expand on existing ones and encourage greater diversity of activity. The new programs are the cultural event sponsorship program, to support major one-off cultural events among ethnic communities, and the special community development program, to support outstanding initiatives that contribute directly to the promotion, development and implementation of the New South Wales charter of principles for a culturally diverse society.

The new categories join, and in the next financial year will incorporate, the well-established community advancement program, which assists community organisations to conduct projects to help migrants contribute more to Australian life, and the community capital assistance program, which encourages the establishment of facilities with an educational, vocational, recreational or aged focus that promote the principles of cultural diversity. The aspirations and concerns of migrants and their families are much the same as those of people born in Australia but the fact remains, as all honourable members are aware, that people of non-English speaking background do have special problems and needs.

Programs such as these can go a long way towards solving those problems and meeting those needs, particularly in providing governments with listening posts and sounding boards for other initiatives across portfolios. Importantly, the grants provide people with employment opportunities as well as educational, cultural, social and recreational resources that are often difficult to find, particularly in regional and isolated areas. The two new programs I am announcing tonight total \$2.755 million - \$2.255 million for the special community development program and \$500,000 for the cultural events sponsorship program. Over the next fortnight thousands of ethnic community organisations throughout New South Wales will each receive a grants package detailing the guidelines for each program and application forms.

I turn to the museum of immigration study. I am pleased to be able to inform the House tonight of the progress made on this valuable project. Honourable members will recall that the Fahey Government has committed \$300,000 for a feasibility study to look at possible strategies for preserving the heritage of our culturally diverse society, documenting and interpreting the history of immigration and considering whether we should establish a museum of immigration, the first museum of immigration in Australia. It could be established in the immigration capital of Australia, Sydney, or elsewhere in New South Wales. I am pleased to announce tonight that the Kinhill Group has been engaged to complete stage one of this feasibility study for the Fahey Government by the end of April. Working with the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Kinhill Group will be undertaking an extensive process of consultation with our ethnic communities, our State's cultural institutions and the many interested and excited individuals and organisations all around the State who are keen to be involved in this project.

Honourable members representing electorates outside Sydney will be interested to know that I have directed the Kinhill Group to hold a number of workshops outside Sydney, including Wollongong - I am aware the Labor members for that area have been particularly keen to be consulted and are keen to see the establishment of a museum or part thereof at least linked with the community in Wollongong - Newcastle, Parramatta and other regional centres. This will ensure that the consultation process will get balanced feedback and develop concepts that meet the needs of our ethnic communities beyond Sydney in regional and country locations. This is an exciting project which I am sure will attract support from

both sides of the House. It has been widely and enthusiastically applauded by the State's entire ethnic community. It is my hope that it will lead to the implementation of a living commemoration of the role that immigration has played in building our great multicultural nation.

I turn now to ethnic representation. Another significant initiative I will announce next week is the appointment of just over 100 people of non-English speaking background to leading government advisory bodies. People of more than 30 nationalities have been appointed to more than 60 different councils, boards and committees since my appointment as Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs. The appointments have been made solely on merit. All the appointments were made with reference to the

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individual's skills and experience appropriate to the position. Given that New South Wales is the most culturally diverse State in the most culturally diverse nation on earth, the Government believes it is vital that this diversity, on merit, is reflected in the composition of government boards and committees.

I turn to the local government forum. Local government is another area in which we are encouraging greater integration of ethnic affairs programs. Late last year representatives from more than 40 councils from all over New South Wales attended a special inaugural forum I hosted in Parliament House thanks to the good will of the Speaker of this House and the President of the Legislative Council. The forum discussed local government participation in the development of our culturally diverse society. The forum was a great success and I was able to announce funding for a co-ordinator to assist councils in their ethnic affairs policy development. The co-ordinator, who will commence work by the end of this month, will be primarily responsible for informing councils about the charter of principles for a culturally diverse society and assisting in its implementation.

I deal now with migrant employment. Last year I established a State Government interdepartmental task force to recover some of Australia's \$250 million annual productivity losses caused by the lack of recognition and underutilisation of migrants' skills and qualifications. When it is considered that 22 per cent of people in this country were born overseas, the implications of migrant unemployment for the Australian economy are enormous. The interdepartmental task force which I established, which includes responsible Federal Government agencies together with New South Wales Government representatives, has been regularly consulting with community groups and professional associations representing overseas qualified professionals.

One of the first tasks of the task force was to examine the profile of non-English speaking background public sector employees and the level of their underemployment. I look forward to receiving the report of recommendations, which is due to be completed by mid-April. I am also pleased to note that this issue is on the agenda for discussion at the immigration and ethnic affairs conference, which will be held later this month. This is an area of government activity in which the Government is making a meaningful attempt to assist in the resolution of a major problem. The Government is implementing a range of important programs to address this need. The training and work placement program targets unemployed migrants who are not undertaking full-time studies. The Skillmax program targets underemployed and unemployed migrants of non-English speaking background who have overseas qualifications and experience but who are otherwise not recognised in an Australian environment. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

The Skillmax program has been established so that migrants whose skills are unrecognised in the Australian work force, thus precluding them from gaining either experience or recognition of their qualifications, may enter the work force and make a meaningful contribution to Australia's economic development based on their enormous experience and training overseas. For three-month, six-month or 12-month periods people can join the New South Wales public sector and work in an area which in the normal course would be unavailable to them because their skills are not recognised. They can gain experience there and go out into the private sector, with their qualifications recognised, to utilise that experience.

Specialist migrant placement officers are available who link into existing networks, for example, of training providers, referral agencies and employers, to facilitate the entry of migrants into the labour market. Bridging courses for overseas trained professionals are also provided. A \$960,000 enhancement to the Migrant Employment Qualifications Board in the 1993-94 State Budget brought its total budget to \$3 million. This money is to assist the MEQB in developing initiatives in the areas of skills recognition, training and employment of migrants of non-English speaking backgrounds.

Next I turn to ethnic health and community services, and in particular to the Government's initiatives on ethnic health. In this year's State Budget the Fahey Government has allocated more than \$18 million to ethnic health services. Already New South Wales has the world's only 24-hour hospital interpreter service. In this State people of non-English speaking backgrounds are well served in a hospital environment. This year the record \$18 million ethnic health budget includes special programs with new community health services, greater access to hospitals and more outreach services to our ethnic community. In particular, services for women of non-English speaking background are being extended.

Enhancement funding of \$500,000 to the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors - the STARTTS program, which was established by the Greiner Government - has been provided. This funding will assist in expanding counselling services for people of non-English speaking background who have survived torture and trauma in their former homeland. Thousands of refugees are now arriving in Australia from the former Republic of Yugoslavia. More than 50 per cent of those refugees are seeking to settle in one city in one State - Sydney. For many of them, bi-cultural counselling services at present are either inadequate or unavailable. On 23 May my colleague, the Hon. Ron Phillips, the Minister for Health, will be launching the non-English speaking background women's health policy.

Finally, I turn briefly to two Federal issues with State implications. I will deal first with the plight of detainees in Villawood. I have consistently lobbied for recognition of the continued plight of Indo-Chinese boat people detained around Australia for up to four years. I was the first Cabinet Minister, State or Federal, to call for the release of the boat people. It is an issue I am passionate about and it is one I will continue to pursue. Detention of people seeking

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asylum, particularly children, for up to four years in poor conditions contravenes international covenants on human rights that Australia has signed and is one of the darkest marks on what is otherwise an excellent human rights record in this country.

I do not intend to detail the litany of legal toings and froings that have gone on in the past four years regarding the detention of these people. Suffice to say the process has been somewhat exhaustive with appeals, appeals against appeals, bureaucratic ineptitude and Federal Labor Government intransigence keeping the door securely locked. Children have been born in the centres but they have received no education, no specific health services, no clothing. For years they have been locked up in Villawood and Port Hedland. Both of those facilities, as the honourable member for Murrumbidgee indicates, should be closed now. Yesterday the latest episode occurred in this long-running saga following the presentation of the report of the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration on detention practices. Many positive recommendations are contained within this report, particularly to provide decent education and health care facilities to detainees, two issues that I personally have spoken out about on television, radio, through the media and at public meetings on many occasions.

In a nutshell, the report recommends discretionary powers for the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to consider releasing people who have been detained for more than six months. The report vindicates the stand taken by the New South Wales Government. The detainees should be released now. Bridging visas would only be issued to those who had remained in detention because of inaction or error by the Department of Immigration and who could be supported by community groups. The report is a step in the right direction, with many positive and meaningful recommendations, but I doubt very much whether people who have been detained for up to four years will find any comfort in the possibility that the

Federal Labor Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs will exercise these discretionary powers to their advantage. That is a sad and sorry tribute to a Minister who has neglected the human plight of these people. I doubt very much whether those same people could expect the Department of Immigration to admit any mistakes of inaction.

Mail order brides is another horrific practice deserving of criticism. Of increasing concern to me during the past 10 or so months is the number of introduction agencies involved in the sponsorship of a series of women from overseas. Unfortunately, evidence indicates that a disproportionately high percentage of women who come to Australia on a sponsorship arrangement can become victims of domestic violence. I believe that Australian men who marry a succession of women from overseas - the practice is known as serial sponsorship - should be carefully screened to protect women from domestic violence and other abuses. In July last year I proposed the following: screening of serial sponsors, regulation of introduction agencies, earlier pre-arrival counselling, more support services, and a high level Federal inquiry. The Federal Government's response to that has been zero: no impact, no policy, no action, with a continuation of this appalling disgrace, with thousands of women across Australia suffering from domestic violence as a consequence of this appalling serial sponsorship.

I have touched, albeit briefly, on just some of the Government's recent initiatives in the area of multicultural and ethnic affairs. I hope that I have also been able to provide a good insight into the way we believe this portfolio should be directed and maintained. I am confident that our future objectives will be well and truly met. With a separate, stand-alone portfolio, ethnic communities not only have access to the Premier, but they also have access to the Cabinet and the entire Government.

The portfolio was established last year because Premier Fahey understands that the migrant community deserves a full-time ministry and dedicated attention - not the cutthroat approach Labor wants to relegate, in second-rate terms, our ethnic communities to. I was honoured to be appointed to this position. I have worked hard to be a voice and a servant in government for members of our ethnic communities. I have made sure that every major decision of any government authority meets the needs of our ethnic communities and ensures the best possible future for all Australians.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PITTWATER COUNCIL SECESSION

Mr HUMPHERSON (Davidson) [5.11]: I raise an issue which is of concern to a large number of my constituents: the impact of the secession of Pittwater Council from Warringah. This situation is unique in New South Wales; there have not been many occasions when a new council has been created. There has been community fallout as a result of this. Since the time a poll was conducted of the residents of Pittwater in the A Riding area of Warringah several years ago, the issue has been inevitably drawing towards the point it is now where there is a dispute about the division of liabilities and cash reserves. That issue was addressed by the Minister of the day, Gerry Peacocke.

The then Minister indicated quite clearly on a number of occasions that the residents of Warringah, who did not have a vote on that particular issue, would not bear any cost as a result of the secession of Pittwater from that shire. He also indicated that the residents of Pittwater had to accept that there would be a cost in having independence. He also recognised that there were opportunities for the Warringah Council to make reforms and restructures, particularly with the advent of the new Local Government Act,

to improve performance and its focus on service.

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Unfortunately, in much of the time since then there has been acrimony between the councils over the division of assets and liabilities. Much of the negotiations have been very difficult, particularly for Warringah because the attitude of Pittwater for much of that time has been intransigent. Unfortunately, no guidelines were put in place. Appropriate procedures exist in other States. If a similar situation arose in the future, it would be worth having appropriate procedures in place to alleviate the difficulties that have been experienced.

Pittwater Council initiated legal action against Warringah with respect to the assets and the staff - initially because of ambit claims and ultimately after the expenditure by Warringah of some \$800,000 and expenditure by Pittwater of probably an equivalent amount - and that result has been that much of Warringah's claims have been upheld. It is unfortunate that the matter was not resolved amicably between the two councils. I refer to the bottom line costs. The two issues that are primarily of concern to Warringah are the legal costs of \$4.3 million to date and the internal loans that arose primarily for the redevelopment of a caravan park, which is now situated in the Pittwater area. There were some benefits to Warringah in the division: it obtained a \$2 million saving in subsidising what is now Pittwater. However, there are diseconomies of scale of some \$1.4 million. The net benefit, therefore, is around \$600,000 per year.

The honourable member for Wakehurst, the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for the Ageing and I approached the Minister for Energy and Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives. The Minister has offered to assist the council to review some of its costs. The council is trying to substantiate that it is \$5 million out of pocket. I am hopeful that that exercise will demonstrate that there is some substance to Warringah's claim, particularly with regard to the legal costs. I am hopeful that the Minister will look upon that issue sympathetically.

It is also important that there be a focus on whether Warringah is reflecting the costs correctly. To achieve that end, it is necessary for the staff of the department to have a close look at the exercise Warringah has gone through. It is unfortunate that some political elements within Warringah Council have chosen to be extremely political by criticising the State Government on this issue. If Warringah hopes to achieve a satisfactory result in the interests of the residents of the shire, it should desist from that. I believe that the Minister will assist the council so far as he is able. I am sure that he is sympathetic to the argument it put forward with respect to the reimbursement of legal costs - costs it would not have incurred had it not been for the vexatious attitude of Pittwater Council. The council has to go through the process of allowing the officers to examine its finances, and the Minister should be given sufficient time to address the issue.

Mr PHOTIOS (Ermington - Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice) [5.16]: Honourable members would be very much aware that the honourable member for Davidson, the honourable member for Wakehurst and the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for the Ageing have been pursuing this matter vigorously on behalf of local residents. The Minister for Energy and Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives has given a commitment to review the question of legal costs for Warringah, but to review it in the context of the amounts it claims and the issues the honourable member for Davidson has raised in the House. That must be done in a co-operative fashion. If Warringah Council persists with politicising the issue, it will only damage the case.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING SERVICE

Mr SCULLY (Smithfield) [5.18]: I wish to raise a serious matter concerning the Government Printing

Service. The matter has come to my attention in my capacity as Deputy Chairman of the New South Wales Waste Watch Committee. After the 1988 election, Premier Greiner emasculated and truncated the GPS, but it was subsequently partly resurrected. The GPS is now a small, commercialised, government trading enterprise, run on a profit and business basis. It is lean and mean. In the last three years it has paid approximately \$5.5 million in dividends to the State Government.

What has been brought to my attention reveals the hypocrisy of the Government's obsession with running everything on a commercialised basis, but leaving one-half of the public sector as a fat bureaucracy, with large hands outstretched for taxpayers' largesse. The GPS has a branch office in the Redfern TAFE building. It pays \$70,000 per annum to TAFE by way of rent. Until recently this branch office did all the print work for Redfern TAFE. On the basis of guaranteed work from TAFE, the GPS obtained two large 5090 printers valued at \$300,000 each.

If the Government seriously wants its government trading enterprises to run efficiently it has to justify the acquisition of \$600,000 worth of equipment, which would have to be used night and day - and that is not the case. Redfern TAFE purchased its own \$300,000 5090 printer. It is apparently in the throes of purchasing an additional \$600,000 printer. Recently I went to Redfern TAFE to look at the situation. The TAFE print room was running flat out, but the Government Printing Service room - which is in the same building, on the same floor, 30 feet away - had two machines, worth \$600,000, and three staff doing absolutely nothing.

I asked the staff at TAFE why this was so. They astonishingly claimed that the GPS was too expensive; that it cost 4¢ a page for printing, but it

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cost TAFE 2¢ a page. After making inquiries, I found that the 2¢ represents 1¢ per page for the paper and 1¢ for the cost of the machine. No allocation was made for rent, salaries, maintenance, storage fees or administration. I believe that if TAFE was made to account on a full cost basis it would cost more than 4¢ a page.

A fat organisation like TAFE is allowed to compete and undercut an alternative government agency. If a chief executive officer of a private company did that he would probably be sacked. Previously at Redfern there were six staff; it is now down to three and could possibly go down to one. What has occurred is indefensible. This sort of thing has also occurred at Parramatta where in the Ferguson Centre the TAFE administrative office has purchased a 5090 machine for \$300,000, a Docutec printer for \$600,000 and a colour photocopier for \$60,000. That is \$1.1 million worth of equipment solely used for producing examination papers, run at one-third capacity.

Down the road at Parramatta the Government Printing Service has an office which could do all the work. I understand Minister Photios represents Ryde TAFE, which is in his area or nearby. Ryde TAFE asked the Government Printing Service to set up an office, which it did at the Ryde TAFE campus. I have not checked the site but I am told that this information is reliable. That office at Ryde does 80 per cent of the college's print requirements, but the excess which it cannot meet is not done at other GPS offices. The TAFE at Ryde has been directed that if that work is not done at Ryde, it has to be done elsewhere by the private sector.

The situation is ludicrous. The Government Printing Service is expected to be run lean and mean for a profit; and TAFE, which is large and fat and not commercialised, not run on a cost recovery basis, is empire building and featherbedding. People at the senior executive level in TAFE obviously enjoy setting up big print rooms, big offices with large furniture, but they are using taxpayers' money to undermine an otherwise profitable trading enterprise. I would like to know to what extent this occurs in TAFE. I would like Minister Photios to ensure that the Minister responsible for this undertakes an audit of equipment and the printing carried out in TAFE. What is the sense of having this semi-government trading enterprise that is mean and lean cut to pieces by a fat organisation such as TAFE. TAFE has so much money it does not know what to do with it in terms of its executive wing and its officers.

I invite the Minister to go to Redfern and have a look at what is happening. Within 30 feet of these two 5090 machines lying idle, worth more than half a million dollars, people in the TAFE room at Redfern are running around day and night trying to justify having this equipment, which is going to waste. This is an important issue. I am glad it was brought to my attention. From time to time I will be reporting on these incidents.

Mr YANIS SAKALIS TAXI LICENCE

Mr PRICE (Waratah) [5.23]: My comments today are directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. I refer to problems associated with the issue of taxi licences. Mr John Sakalis of 32 Bardia Road, Shortland, went on to a seniority list that was advertised in 1987. Mr Sakalis was subsequently readvertised by the Department of Transport as a person on its seniority list in location 10. Everything went along fairly smoothly, the licences were to be issued in strict rotation with the list. In 1990 the new Act, known as the Passenger Transport Act, came into effect together with regulations.

Mr Sakalis was not aware of the details of that Act but he did write subsequently to the department because he had heard nothing about the taxi licence he was anticipating as a result of being on the seniority list. Mr Sakalis received a reply from the department in January 1992 telling him that the seniority list was quite active and that he retained his position. That was in 1992, two years after the Passenger Transport Act had been introduced. The letter dated 9 January 1992 quite clearly states:

The Taxi-cab Driver's Seniority List for the Newcastle Transport District is still active. Mr Yanis Sakalis currently appears as number two on the list. Future issues of additional taxi-cab licences for the Newcastle Transport District will be made from the seniority register.

Mr Sakalis had gone up six places on that list. On 3 September 1993 Mr Sakalis received a letter saying:

According to department records you were listed in the Newcastle Transport District, Taxi Cab Driver, Seniority Register.

The introduction of the Passenger Transport Act 1990 reformed the licensing procedures for all public passenger vehicles services in NSW, enabling transport operators to manage their business in a co-regulatory environment with reduced government intervention.

Suddenly some five years after being listed, Mr Sakalis learned that he is not to be issued with a licence in strict seniority. I wrote to the Minister in September last year and received a reply from his department signed by John Scott, executive director, vehicle transport policy and regulation division, confirming that Mr Sakalis was no longer a listed person for favoured treatment in line with the seniority list that was active from 1987 to 1990. Ordinarily one would say it was bad luck. On several occasions Mr Sakalis had passed up the opportunity of purchasing an additional taxi licence because he was on the list for the issue of a free licence. No correspondence was issued; in fact in 1992 there was a denial that the seniority list had been abandoned. He was legally advised by letter from the assistant Minister for Transport of the day, Mr Page, that he was safe on that seniority list.

Mr Sakalis could have purchased additional vehicles within that time. There has been no compensation because no money passed hands but he has lost commercial opportunities. Given this Government's record in relying entirely on market forces and the competitive advantage of commercial

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opportunity, I would think that Mr Sakalis should at least be recognised by being given the option of the first licence to be issued under the guidelines that currently exist in regard to the demographic requirement. A licence should be issued not through the co-operative but to Mr Sakalis, who, in all honesty and without any significant difficulty, remained on that list and only made inquiries through me. Mr Sakalis made no other attempt to gain special advantage but now finds himself totally disadvantaged

because of bad advice from the department through the assistant Minister at that time.

I am extremely concerned that Mr Sakalis has been disadvantaged and I appeal to the Minister and the department to give him the opportunity to accept the first licence that becomes due under the current guidelines. Mr Sakalis has been badly treated; it is a major problem that has been caused by the department. I cannot believe that two years after an Act had been changed the department would be still issuing advice saying that everything was okay, his listing under the previous Act was intact and he would not be disadvantaged. That is wrong. Mr Sakalis has been totally disadvantaged. If bad practice such as this advice are continued, it is time that people such as Mr Sakalis are compensated, at least by priority with the new licences.

BALLINA DISTRICT HOSPITAL OBSTETRIC SERVICES

Mr D. L. PAGE (Ballina) [5.28]: I raise an important issue affecting my electorate, namely the provision of obstetric services, particularly at Ballina District Hospital. It is important to my electorate that this issue be aired. It is also of interest to other country areas of New South Wales. The situation in Ballina is that the district health board has decided that babies will not be delivered in Ballina hospital after June this year. However, post-natal services will be provided. Matters have come to a head in recent times because a local general practitioner, Dr Sue Page - who is not related to me, although I would be happy to be related to her because she is a very good and very caring doctor - has become pregnant. Dr Page is one of two remaining doctors in Ballina out of 18 who deliver babies.

The district health service advertised that it wanted a GP with an interest in obstetrics to come to Ballina. Ballina is a beautiful place with a population of 15,000 and is a rapidly growing area. Although this vacancy was advertised nationwide, unfortunately, not a single GP who has an interest in obstetrics was interested in coming to practise obstetrics in Ballina. In addition, the local district health board wrote to every general practitioner in Ballina asking them specifically whether they would consider the practice of obstetrics in Ballina, and they all declined. There must be a good reason for that. It is a complex issue but I believe there are two main reasons and one in particular needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, I believe it is outside this Government's capacity to do it because it is a Federal Government responsibility. I refer to the totally inadequate Medicare rebate that is applicable to the delivery of obstetric services across the nation.

I will give honourable members an example. For antenatal treatment, delivery and post-natal service a GP would be paid \$217.50 for the antenatal portion which may involve nine or 10 visits; and for the delivery and post-natal service a GP would receive \$170.10. That is a total of \$387.30 for the confinement, which may involve up to 20 visits. Working out the sums, that is approximately \$19.36 on average for a visit by a general practitioner to a lady who is about to have a baby, who has the baby, and who requires attention afterwards. That is the full fee with the 85 per cent rebate. The amount of money the doctor receives is \$334.00. In my electorate many patients are bulk billed, so that is what the general practitioner would receive.

There is little doubt that something needs to be done to create greater incentives for local doctors to practise obstetrics. The fact is that obstetrics involve considerable disruption to one's family life and, also, there is an element of risk involved. I call on the Federal Government to examine this issue as a matter of urgency because I believe it will have long-running implications for the rest of New South Wales. In a letter in today's *Northern Star* Dr Sue Page said in part:

Obstetrics may be showing the strain first, with 50 per cent of GP obstetricians in NSW expected to have ceased work by August this year, but rural general practice is facing a crisis of enormous proportions.

Unlike city areas, if a rural GP no longer provides a service the people in that area will simply no

longer have that service.

Already there are women who have to move to larger centres for the last 2-4 weeks of their pregnancies - delivering without the support of their family because local services were unavailable.

They are not available because, the Medicare rebate being the way it is, there is no incentive for local GPs to practice obstetrics. The other area of concern is the rapidly rising insurance premiums that apply in obstetrics. The premium for obstetric insurance cover varies from \$3,500 to \$4,000 above basic GP cover, or the equivalent of 20-25 Medicare rebated confinements. A doctor would need to deliver 25 babies each year just to pay the premium. Eighty per cent of general practitioners in New South Wales deliver fewer than 40 babies each year.

They are very sobering statistics and they tell an important story, and a very sad one unless we grapple with this problem. Some people have said that the health system should pay the extra premiums but I believe that is not the way to go. First, it would be very costly for the Government; second, where would we stop, in terms of liability and other types of premiums in the medical area; third, it would not solve the problem. I quote further from Dr Page's letter on this issue:

Simply to have hospitals cover the cost of the additional insurance premiums, for example, will not make the problem disappear other than in the very short term.

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I believe that we need to cut insurance premiums, but that may be more difficult than we imagine.

Mr PHILLIPS (Miranda - Minister for Health) [5.33]: I thank the honourable member for Ballina for raising this very important issue. In the limited time available to me I want to emphasise this very serious matter confronting country people in particular. It results from two issues: one is the steep increases in medical indemnity insurance particularly for obstetrics; the second is that it is compounded by the low return under the medical benefits schedule from the Federal Government. Those two things are compounding, which means that on the North Coast at Ballina the two remaining general practitioners who undertake obstetric work propose to cease doing that work.

This issue is confronting the Government all over New South Wales. The Government has advertised everywhere in an attempt to find replacements and is looking at ways to address those particular issues in New South Wales. There are only two ways in which this problem can be solved and they both relate back to the Federal Government. To its credit, the Federal Government recognises the problem and a study is under way at the moment in an attempt to address the problem of the high cost of indemnity insurance. I say to the Federal Government that it must get that report out urgently and respond to solve this problem before it becomes too wide in the country. On that basis, and following representations from the honourable member for Ballina, I have today written a letter to Senator Graham Richardson appealing to him and making some recommendations as to options that could be followed. I will be more than happy to co-operate with the Federal Government to find a solution to this very important issue. Once again, I commend and thank the honourable member for Ballina for raising this issue on behalf of his constituents.

AGE OF CONSENT

Mr GLACHAN (Albury) [5.35]: I want to talk about a very serious subject and it has to do with the age of consent. I would like to say immediately that in no way do I want to see the age of consent altered in this State. I have heard there is a move in Victoria to lower the age of consent to 10 years. I certainly do not agree with that and want nothing at all to do with it. I do not want honourable members to jump to that conclusion. Recently I was on a tour of my electorate when a woman came to see me

about a matter relating to her son. She told me a story that I found distressing and bewildering. I was quite perplexed about it all. She told me that her son formed an association at school with a young girl whose age was similar to his own. The girl was a bit younger than he, and they were both under the age of consent at the time.

They became firm friends and the relationship lasted for about 18 months. During that time they became involved in what the mother described as "very heavy petting and touching". At no time, she said, did full sexual intercourse take place between the two young people. The girl agreed with that at a later date and the boy always maintained that was so. Everyone involved agreed that that had never happened, but some very heavy petting and touching developed between the two young people by mutual consent. The girl always agreed that she was a willing partner in the friendship and the intimate things that occurred within the friendship. After 18 months the boy decided that he wanted to break off the relationship and he told the young girl that he no longer wished to be associated with her. She was bitter, upset and disappointed about this and she hounded the boy for some time. She rang his home constantly, went to the house to see him when she could, tried to see him on the bus and tried to see him at school but he said, "I do not want to go on with the association and I do not want to be associated with you any more".

After some time the girl went to the police and laid a complaint that the boy had sexually assaulted her. The police invited the boy to the police station with his parents. He was required to go there on a number of occasions because the police could not decide whether charges should be laid. It was a very traumatic experience for the boy and his parents, and for the whole family. This was in a country area where everyone knows what is going on. The family found it very distressing. Finally, it was decided that charges would be laid against the boy. The Director of Public Prosecutions decided to proceed. The boy went to court in Wagga Wagga; the magistrate heard the matter and the boy was placed on a bond.

He was told that he could not go back to the school, he had to change schools, and he was not to associate with the girl again. The mother's concern was that although there was a couple of years between them they were of like age, and that it was a mutually acceptable association while it lasted. It was dreadful that this should happen to this young man, because it has had a terrible effect on his life. He said he did not want to go on and do the higher school certificate, and he did not want to stay at school, because everyone knew about the matter, everyone was talking about it on the bus, and he felt his reputation had been destroyed. It was very distressing for everybody.

The mother is asking the New South Wales Government - and I appeal to the Attorney General on this matter - to look at changing the law so that if the two people are of similar age, no charges like this can be brought. The mother said to me that if the boy had been 22 or 23 and the girl 14 she would have been disappointed. But as they were of similar age and it was by mutual consent, she wonders whether something could be done so that in future young people will not face charges like this when one of the young people is bitter and upset because the association was broken off. I appeal to the Attorney General and ask him to consider this, because it is a situation that really needs to be looked at. It will not help this young fellow but it might save someone else in the future from these embarrassing circumstances.

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SUBCONTRACT DRIVERS

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [5.40]: The theme for the Olympics was, I believe, "Keep the dream alive". That is an important element in this country and reflects the way in which we have built up Australia, particularly small business. I raise some disturbing matters and ask that they be referred to the Minister for Small Business. Representatives from a company called Hymix told me last Friday that there had been a 20 per cent increase in their business. They also said they had 33 subcontractor truck drivers.

Some of these people had purchased trucks for between \$100,00 and \$150,000. One couple had worked for this company for over 23 years - 23 years of dedicated service. Negotiations ensued with regard to an enterprise agreement and during those discussions the executive of the company decided that they would not enter into an enterprise agreement with the lorry owner-drivers. For a period of 12 months, but mainly in the last six months, they starved these men into submission.

At one stage one of the senior executives of this company said to the representatives negotiating the enterprise agreement, "I would burn \$3 million before I give one dollar to these people." Yet one of these drivers worked for him for 23 years. When asked why, he said that the difference between subcontractor owner-drivers and the employee drivers is that when he tells the employee drivers to jump they say, "How high?" When he tells the lorry owner-drivers to jump they say, "Why?"

On 23 December 1993 they entered into a negotiation for \$12,000 and, after 23 years' service, Mr Ball was rewarded \$12,000 and a contract which stated he would not be put under any duress, he would not sue Hymix in the future, and he would be provided with some money. It had to be one in, all in, or one out, all out; so all the drivers entered into similar agreements. Mrs Joanne Morgan spoke to me yesterday and told me she will lose her house. Mrs Ball is lucky that she is able to restructure her finances. In the 20 years that that company had been operating there has been one strike in its yard.

Pioneer Concrete, to its eternal credit, entered into a negotiation because it had a similar problem, and its drivers are very happy. It put \$4 million on the table for its drivers. Mrs Lynn Thompson told me that her husband, who is an engineer, carried out work on a Hymix executive's boat and she babysat his children. They bought a truck and now they are losing their home; their reward has been that they have been thrown out. Mrs Thompson said last Friday to a group of people in the industry, "We could have bought a hamburger place, we could have had a lease, and we would have known where we were going." Thirty-three men are out in the cold in the Year of the Family. Mr Colin O'Neill of Hymix said he would burn \$3 million before helping these men - that is their reward for having worked 25 years for this company.

The second and more serious matter relates to Comet. Mr Billsborough has worked as an employee of Comet. A representative from Comet said to him one day, "Listen, you get \$60,000 and I will tell you what we will do; we will sell you this run up in the Blue Mountains and pay you \$2,500 a week." He borrowed the \$60,000, he mortgaged his house - his wife did not want to do it, but they did - because he wanted to be in his own business. They paid their money and signed the contract, but Comet never signed the contract.

Eventually, after about three and a half years Comet called Mr Billsborough and said, "You are making too much money, we are going to reduce you to \$600 and you will work as a casual employee." The Billsboroughs went to their bank and the bank manager said to them, "Well, that's the way things are. I am sorry about that but you will have to keep your payments up." They spoke to someone else who told them that Comet then divided the run into two runs and sold them to another courier company at Penrith, for \$50,000 each. They took Mr Billsborough's run, gave him nothing for it and yet resold it to some other courier company. There is a song entitled, "You never thought you would ever make it". So they were going to write on the side of their truck, "We have made it". Well, they have not made it because in two weeks these people will lose their homes. These are not truck drivers; these are small business people who happen to drive trucks. They are the backbone of this country, as is a butcher or a real estate agent.

Let us keep the dream alive with small business and let the small business people at least have a fighting chance against the multinational companies. "I would prefer to burn \$3 million," said Mr Colin O'Neill, "than give those lorry owners one penny." That is what wealth is about in this country, but we should be there for small business people.

SENIORS CARD

Mr SMALL (Murray) [5.45]: I wish to speak about Seniors Cards. They were introduced in this State about two years ago but unless you live in a very large metropolitan area, in the centre of New South Wales or along the coastal region where there are large population centres, they are of little advantage. That is so in my electorate of Murray, along the border of New South Wales and Victoria. Many people have told me that they have been able to secure a Seniors Card after they turn 60 years of age. The advantage of these cards is that they provide discounts in major stores as well as for accommodation and travel arrangements.

The problem I have is that most of the country towns along our side of the border between Victoria and New South Wales do not offer many discounts, but on the Victorian side they do. Seniors Cards are available in Victoria, Queensland, and, I understand, South Australia. I believe that Australia should have a national Seniors Card, because many people now in retirement are travelling not only in this State but also around Australia, whether by cars or in buses, and the card is a great attraction for them.

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Most people within my electorate, because they live along the border, have cause to go to Victoria for health and other services. No doubt that is also the case with people in the northern regions of New South Wales going to Queensland. Reciprocal Seniors Cards rights, particularly between New South Wales and Victoria, would be a tremendous advantage. The Minister for the Ageing is in the House and I appeal to him to take on board what I am saying about securing reciprocal rights for Seniors Card users between New South Wales and Victoria. Seniors week starts on Sunday 20 March, and what a great birthday it would be for seniors if they could have reciprocal rights and, in the longer term, a national card. Given that in Australia today there are Conservative governments in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory there is a wonderful opportunity for our Minister and his fellow Ministers in the other States to work together to secure a national Seniors Card.

Perhaps we need to try a little harder in both city and country areas to realise the benefits offered by the Seniors Card. A discount of between 7 per cent and 15 per cent, which is offered by most of the larger retailers for purchases made on the Seniors Card, goes a long way because many people over 60 years of age must manage their dollars very carefully. Those discounts mean a lot. If local community businesses are not offering these discounts, people are prepared to travel to obtain them. That places those local businesses at a great disadvantage. We talk about decentralisation, but most users of the Seniors Card in country areas travel to a city or a large country town to achieve the end result. I ask the Minister to take my comments on board. I congratulate him for the good work he is doing as Minister for the Ageing. He is responsible for the care of the elderly, and the creation of a national Seniors Card with reciprocal rights would be a wonderful birthday present for them.

Mr LONGLEY (Pittwater - Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for the Ageing) [5.50]: It is with great pleasure that I respond to the concerns of the honourable member for Murray. New South Wales now boasts 620,000 Seniors Card holders, and success is being achieved in extending seniors' discounts to other States. Based on both the number of members and the number of participating retailers, the New South Wales Seniors Card scheme is the largest in Australia. The New South Wales card now represents more than 9,000 retail outlets in 50 categories of products and services across the State. More than 500 companies have paid to participate in the State directory and another 1,400 participate in local directories.

I am pleased to announce that most of these businesses will accept Seniors Cards from other States. Where they have branches in other States, all of the businesses have said they will honour the New South Wales Seniors Card. Several major national groups recognise the Seniors Card as a matter of policy, although the exact discounts vary from State to State, as one would expect. All new companies applying to join the Seniors Card scheme in any State are now being asked if they will honour

interstate cards. The vast majority say that they will, and this means that New South Wales seniors will find their cards more and more useful when travelling interstate. At a recent meeting Seniors Card managers agreed that they would work towards placing an identifying logo beside each provider in the relevant directory to show in which States a discount would be provided. That is another service to the senior citizens of our State and, indeed, of Australia. It is great tribute to the honourable member.

KEIRA AND ILLAWARRA ELECTORATES WATER QUALITY

Mr MARKHAM (Keira) [5.52]: I raise a serious issue that is affecting many constituents of the electorates of Keira and Illawarra. I refer to the supply by the Government to households in those areas of dirty water. Residents are paying for that water, and it is an absolute travesty to ask people to pay for a service which is, at best, second rate. People throughout the electorate of Keira contact me regularly, asking for dirty water forms that the Water Board provides so that they can list their complaints about a service that is below standard. People are complaining about water that is so dirty and so putrid it is ruining their clothes. They cannot wash their clothes but, when they manage to do so, they sometimes have to rewash the clothes three or four times to try to get them clean.

When they complain to the Water Board, they are told, "Well, we are doing everything in our power to deliver you clean water. We have a regular flushing campaign which flushes water mains throughout the electorate of Keira, particularly in your street". That is not good enough. It may be necessary to do that on a weekly basis. Not only is the Water Board not supplying water of a quality standard to consumers who are paying exorbitant amounts of money to get clean usable water, but thousands upon thousands of litres of water are being flushed down drains and into creeks within the electorate of Keira. It has even got to the stage of the Water Board saying that it will only flush pipes and mains when people ring up and complain, because the water level in the dam over the back of the Illawarra escarpment is becoming dangerously low.

What does the Water Board intend to do? More importantly, what does the Government intend to do to provide clean pure water so that people can go about their everyday business? At present, every time they turn on their washing machines or draw a bath full of water, they have to make sure it is not dirty, putrid, stained water containing particles. Last year the Government announced that water in the Illawarra region would be paid for under the user-pays principle. What does the Government intend to do about the people to whom it cannot provide water? The Government is asking those people to pay for a

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service it cannot deliver. Mrs Lyons, who lives in Underwood Street, Corrimal, telephoned me on Monday. I went out and inspected the problem she was experiencing. The water was so black that I could not see the bottom of a stainless steel washing tub in her laundry. When she asked the Water Board to address that problem, the mains were flushed out. The water might then have been all right for two or three days.

The last time a Water Board inspector attended Mrs Lyons' home, she actually turned on the tap in the front yard to show him how dirty the water was. He said, "Don't do that, you are paying for that water". She said, "That is the very point I am making, I am paying for a service that you people are not delivering". He said, "Leave it, do not turn it on, we will go and flush the main and you will not have to pay for the water". That is happening throughout the electorate of Keira and I am receiving daily complaints. Young mothers have problems bathing their babies. I received one complaint from a mother who has to fill up the tub to bath her child and let the water sit for anything up to an hour. The rubbish in the water settles on the bottom and she can then bath the baby. Napkins come out of the washing machine more stained than when they were put in. The Government has a responsibility to my constituents to provide them with clean, fresh, drinkable, usable water, for which my constituents pay top dollar. As time goes on, they are paying more and more. When one is paying for a service to maintain a standard of cleanliness, the Government must ensure that that service is adequately provided.

PACKAGED BEE IMPORT AND EXPORT

Mr MERTON (Baulkham Hills) [5.57]: I speak about a matter concerning my constituents, Mr Clive Brown and his son Peter, who work in partnership in the bee industry. As honourable members may know, that is an important Australian industry. The information I have in my possession indicates that in Australia 4,500 registered beekeepers manage about 3,500 hives each and produce about \$15 million worth of honey annually. The export bee industry is growing and is worth about \$8 million a year. My constituent has serious problems concerning the export of packaged bees to South Korea, the export of queen bees and packaged bees to Canada and the importation of breeding stock from the United States of America. My constituent tells me that he has been involved in the bee industry for some years and during the past two years from February to April he has supplied queen bees to South Korea. He commenced to do that in 1991.

The trade is now estimated to be worth \$4 million annually to the New South Wales economy. The New South Wales Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries highlighted the trade in packaged bees to South Korea approximately three weeks ago on Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio after signing a memorandum of trade agreement with the South Korean Government. Since 1993 a parasitic bee disease in Australian bees has caused the South Korean national animal quarantine service to impose overly restrictive health importation requirements on Australian honey bees.

The requirements for checking chalkbrood disease and the refusal to accept the importation of Australian honey-bees because of the presence of a mite is jeopardising this trade, which is important to beekeepers and the New South Wales economy. At this time the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service will not authorise any shipments of live honey-bees to Korea. It appears that the Korean authorities are divided in their decision to accept packaged bees from Australia this year. The beekeeping industry in New South Wales has geared up to export packaged bees to South Korea and is in a position to keep exporting as soon as permission is obtained. My constituent fears that this growing market could be lost to the industry if Australia fails to supply this year.

There is a problem with the exporting of queen bees and packaged bees to Canada. Since 1988 my constituent has been involved in exporting queen bees and packaged bees to Canada. Each year transshipment permission is requested from the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service to transship via Honolulu or Los Angeles. When seeking permission to transship to Canada via Los Angeles my constituent was amazed to learn that transshipping via the United States is now prohibited. My constituent wishes to import breeding stock from the United States of America. I am informed that in February 1993 the Queensland Department of Primary Industries notified all Australian States that an exotic bee disease known as chalkbrood was detected in hives in southeast Queensland and now in New South Wales. The disease is caused by a fungus that affects the development stages of honey-bees and it has no known treatment.

New South Wales Agriculture estimates that the disease could cost the New South Wales industry and the State \$22 million this year. My constituent seeks to import breeding stock but the restrictions are excessive. I have brought the matter to the attention of the Minister, who is looking at this matter. He regards it as very serious. He has informed me that he has made certain inquiries and checks of certain bee producers for chalkbrood. My constituent is seriously concerned about the effect on his business and the whole of the bee industry in New South Wales and Australia. These are serious matters. We need as many exports as we can possibly get.

Mr PHOTIOS (Ermington - Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice) [6.2]: Honourable members are well aware of the longstanding interest of the honourable member for Baulkham Hills in the bee industry and the seriousness with which he has pursued this issue with both the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and other Ministers in relation to the Federal implications of the problem.

I am pleased to confirm that the Minister for Agriculture will review the situation with a view to giving any possible assistance at the State level. I join my colleagues in emphasising the importance of the beekeeping industry, particularly with its export implications. The honourable member for Baulkham Hills, like the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, who has pursued a beekeeping course and who keeps beehives on the North Coast, has a particular interest in these issues. They will be congratulated by all members for pursuing this issue with diligence and determination.

HENRY SEARLE SCULLING MONUMENT

Mr J. H. MURRAY (Drummoyne) [6.4]: There was a time at the end of the last century when professional sculling attracted a very large following in New South Wales. Tens of thousands of spectators were attracted to view the races on the upper Parramatta River. The races started at the Ryde bridge and finished three miles downstream near the present position of the Sydney Rowing Club, adjacent to a rock formation called the Brothers. During the height of support of professional rowing Australia developed a number of world champion scullers. In 1884 the world champion, Hanlan, a Canadian, visited Sydney to row against the Australian champion, Bill Beach. There was a side bet of £1,000, which in today's terms would be more than \$500,000. Beach won the event and the side bet and held the title for the next three years. In 1888 a young rower from the Clarence River, Henry Searle, won the title back for Australia and defended it at Henley-on-Thames, where he became a national hero, convincingly beating other highly fancied scullers. Unfortunately, on returning home he fell victim of typhoid fever and died in 1889 at the age of 23.

The citizens of Sydney undertook a fundraising venture and two years later erected a monument to Searle's memory on the Brothers rock, which was the finishing point of the championship course. I have a photograph of the large monument to show the House. The Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs is at the table. He can see from the photograph that the monument is about to topple into the river. That photograph was taken last Sunday. The Minister has had a close association with the river and he would know the monument well. The monument is more than 100 years old. I understand that its base was hit last Saturday by a vessel forced to veer to avoid a fast travelling RiverCat. I have drawn the House's attention to this monument today because it has now been removed from its base and I understand that it is currently in the possession of the Waterways Authority. The monument is part of the history of the upper harbour waterways. I spoke to the Minister about the matter before raising it in the House and asked him to investigate the removal of the Searle monument. I hope that this is not another example of a government bureaucracy taking over a monument, storing it in some out of the way shed and then conveniently forgetting to replace it.

Recently there was press coverage of the anchor for the *Sirius*. A monument that used to be at the bottom of Macquarie Street has reappeared 15 years after being taken away for refurbishment. I have received a number of representations from local groups and from the President of the Sydney Rowing Club, Ern Chapman, Charles Watson from the Drummoyne Rowing Club, and a large number of skiff people from the Abbotsford 12-foot skiff club. I would be pleased if the Minister could expedite the re-establishment of the Henry Searle monument, as it has for the past 100 years provided a navigational point for those many craft using the upper Sydney Harbour and is a tourist point of interest for craft cruising Sydney Harbour.

Mr PHOTIOS (Ermington - Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice) [6.8]: Government members want to confirm on a bipartisan basis their determination to get to the bottom of this issue and to restore the monument to its original place in good repair. The Minister has given an assurance that every attempt will be made, first, to find out who is responsible for causing the accident. In that regard, John Barraclough, Chairman of the Waterways Authority, tomorrow will be calling for information from the public. I and no doubt the honourable member for Drummoyne will join with him in supporting that call with a view to finding out any available

information. At this stage no one has claimed ownership of the monument in specific terms. We all appreciate the significance of the Searle monument, dedicated to Henry Ernest Searle for his achievements as a world champion sculler in 1889.

A day-night navigation marker is now in place on the monument base as a warning to all passing craft. The authority will be pursuing the issue of placing a permanent marker there for future safety. Divers have been dispatched to recover a piece of the monument dislodged during the recovery, to which the honourable member for Drummoyne referred, and to investigate the surrounding reef for evidence. The authority is also seeking expert advice on repair of the monument. I can assure the honourable member for Drummoyne that the Minister and the Waterways Authority are making every effort, on a bipartisan basis, joining with the honourable member, to pursue this issue so that the mystery boat that hit that historic monument can be found, the monument restored, and appropriate navigation lighting put in place on a more permanent basis to avoid repetition of the incident.

Private members' statements noted.

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

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Second Day's Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr FACE (Charlestown) [7.30]: I believe that the Governor, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, and his wife work very hard at the office they hold. I hope their work is appreciated by the Government and that there is an affirmative judgment made that the

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Governor and Mrs Sinclair should continue to serve this State. I believe that the Address-in-Reply debate gives members an opportunity to address the Chamber on a wide range of matters, matters that in the main affect our electorates and the well-being of those we represent. Police and emergency services are referred to in the Governor's Speech, which states:

The Police Service remains under intense public scrutiny. The Government has embarked on a comprehensive reform program designed to make the Police Service more efficient, open and accountable.

During 1993, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services instituted a wide range of legislative and other reforms in the areas of accountability, integrity and management. However, more needs to be done.

This year the Government's reforms will focus on addressing the major issues of drug security and the handling of complaints against police officers. Major legislative changes in both areas are planned for introduction this year.

In addition, a comprehensive review of the police discipline system is being undertaken. Significant amendments to the role of the New South Wales Crime Commission are also being considered following the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee upon Police Administration.

I refer to the Police Service in the Newcastle-Hunter area. I draw to the attention of the House an incident which at first appeared to be nothing more than a difference of opinion as to whether a police officer had acted responsibly. Not only was it a question of whether the officer acted responsibly, but whether he did so in compliance with the law and without emotion. On 13 November 1993 an incident

occurred at the Newcastle wharf at the South Steyne floating restaurant. I do not propose to go into the why's and wherefore's of the incident, although I will refer later to a matter into which I believe there should be some investigation. I understand that the Ombudsman is currently making inquiries.

The family involved in this incident are constituents of mine. The wife, Mrs Elizabeth Cleary, has placed in my hands certain material and requested certain action. It is not my role to be judgmental in this matter. However, I would be less than responsible as an elected member of Parliament if I were not concerned about the incident and matters associated with it. Mrs Cleary raised with me how her family had been dealt with, not only by the Police Service but by the media. She wanted to know whether the family had any rights in a supposedly democratic country where people are treated equally under the law. I am concerned that there is a public perception that people in public life and in senior positions have no rights and that their families should suffer.

It most disturbing that the Cleary family was effectively barred from entering their home by a television crew which was outside the home for many hours. Mrs Cleary pointed out that her husband had been issued with a Police Service directive to say nothing about the incident which occurred in November the year before. However, everyone seems to be running to the media with immunity, except her husband. I am not condemning the media; it has a responsibility to report news and matters of public interest, but what happened did not happen by accident. Someone is feeding the media.

I propose to highlight one media outlet and the way the Cleary family has been harassed by a television journalist. The behaviour that has been reported to me leaves a lot to be desired. The Cleary's daughter, Jane, is the subject of a major part of the events of November last year. She now works at police headquarters. She was finally located by a journalist from "A Current Affair". However, the person who answered her telephone at police headquarters was a woman who had recently returned from maternity leave. The women had changed desks.

The woman received a tirade of abuse from the journalist. The journalist stated that she was lying and various expletives were used. The journalist was very heavy-handed. The woman who answered the phone knew nothing about the situation until she asked Miss Cleary what it was about. Is this acceptable behaviour? The same media organisation, "A Current Affair", was virtually camped on the family's doorstep and excluded the family from their home for almost five hours one evening recently.

I have been furnished with a letter of complaint from Mrs Cleary. She has also given me a series of questions relating to this affair. The media is not so much interested in the incident of 13 November last, but her husband's pursuance of brothels in the Newcastle area - however, Mrs Cleary believes that both are inextricably linked. I have lived in the Newcastle area all my life. I know how things work and I have also been a member of the Police Service. In that time I saw things I considered to be a joke - such as SP betting, illegal gaming clubs, and sly grog - so I can relate to Mrs Cleary's concern. Brothels existed then and they exist now. Any person, a police officer or otherwise, who tried to stop them would be very brave indeed.

Newcastle is no different from any other city or town in the world. There are those who belong to the monied families, who are currently referred to as the establishment and believe that they have a God-given right to run and control everything in industry, commerce and politics. There is another section of the community - the one consisting of those who believe they have the right to run everything that is illegal and outside the law. The Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services in the Chair would know of my grave concerns about a lot of things that have happened with respect to illegal gaming. Everybody accepts that and it is tolerated. Any person who interferes with those illegal operations is either dealt with or discredited. Those people continue to go on doing as they like and live on their ill-gotten gains.

It is true that illegal clubs and SP betting no longer flourish as they did in the past because checks and balances within our community have minimised those activities. Brothels have been around since

BC. Past and present governments have had ample

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opportunity over the years to take away the sinister and corrupt adjuncts to this industry by legalising it. However, to use the vernacular, no one has had the guts to do it. Until some government, regardless of political persuasion, has the guts to legalise brothels, our society will continue to have sinister problems of illegal brothels. I speak with experience as a policeman and as a person who has been in public life in this Parliament for more than 20 years.

Many people in Newcastle are saying that Mrs Cleary's husband is a crusader and that he ought to let sleeping dogs lie and accept what goes on. He is opposed to the continuance of brothels, but he has become the victim because of his sworn duty. Perhaps I misunderstood when I entered the police academy; when I was sworn into the New South Wales police force, as it was known in those days - my comprehension was that police were to uphold the law and detect breaches of law, not neglect it or allow selective people to do what they like, when they like, and how they like.

The whole issue concerning brothels has been the subject of a lot of publicity. The *Newcastle Herald* has given the issue what I believe could be described as a fair amount of coverage. It should in no way, shape or form be condemned for that. It is its responsibility and right to bring matters of interest to the attention of its readers. In fact, I believe it has reported fairly various people's comments about what has occurred in the courts. If my memory serves me correctly, the *Newcastle Herald*, in one of its editorials, took a similar view - that this would always be an issue until governments accepted responsibility for it. However, people will form their own opinions. For that reason one could be forgiven for thinking that Superintendent Cleary was the villain of the piece.

I repeat that the *Newcastle Herald* has never said that but, because of its coverage, this issue has become extremely controversial and emotive. Let us put this matter in its right perspective. Who wrote to Mrs Cleary's husband stating that, under the Disorderly Houses Act, the case against brothels should be proceeded with? This matter was not instigated by Superintendent Cleary; rather it was instigated by the then Deputy Commissioner of Police and present Commissioner of Police, Mr Lauer. That is not a criticism of Mr Lauer. I do not condemn Mr Lauer. He, like Superintendent Cleary, was doing his duty. Superintendent Cleary did what the law said he should. According to Mrs Cleary, Superintendent Cleary contacted the Commissioner of Police on numerous occasions and kept him apprised of the matter.

Superintendent Cleary received briefings from the Commissioner of Police. He met with the commissioner to discuss this brothel issue. So it could hardly be said that he was operating alone. At law, Superintendent Cleary had no option other than to act. He notified the Police Service and the commissioner every time these matters went to court. According to Mrs Cleary, he has never been told, officially or unofficially, to back off. One disturbing aspect in this matter, about which the whole community should be concerned, is the meeting of local brothel keepers that took place in Newcastle towards the end of 1993. According to Mrs Cleary, the purpose of the meeting was to get rid of her husband. Brothel owners were concerned because he had closed brothels under the Disorderly Houses Act.

I have been informed that, as a result of that meeting, Superintendent Cleary forwarded a briefing note to the regional commander, Assistant Commissioner Donaldson, North Region. The State Protection Group of the Police Service contacted Superintendent Cleary to assist him in providing security for his family. The State Protection Group would not have become involved in this matter if what I am saying was not serious. Superintendent Cleary informed the State Protection Group that he considered any attacks by brothel owners would not be of a physical nature; rather they would be attacks on his credibility. Mrs Cleary says that, as the events of 13 November last year started to unfold, she became convinced - this is the serious aspect of this matter - that there was a major conspiracy to attack her husband's credibility and reduce him to ridicule to ensure that brothel keepers continued to flourish in Newcastle.

Another matter was reported to me by a policeman of reasonably high rank. His mother lives in the

Fern Street area of Islington in Newcastle, where brothels have been established for a long period. The owner of one brothel in that area, which was the scene of a murder years ago, informed Superintendent Cleary that brothel keepers were out to get him and discredit him. The women heard the same also. Because of the seriousness of the documentation given to me by Mrs Cleary I have no option other than to furnish this material to the Independent Commission Against Corruption for investigation of these serious allegations. As each day passes this matter becomes more serious. Yesterday afternoon an honourable member who represents the Hunter region received an unsigned letter which concluded with the words, "Yours very sincerely, the Ladies of Zaara Escorts". Later I received the same letter.

Mr Jeffery: We all received that letter.

Mr FACE: I acknowledge the interjection of the honourable member for Oxley. Yesterday afternoon several other members of Parliament received this letter. The letter refers to the fact that the premises of this escort agency have been declared a disorderly house. The letter refers also to Superintendent Cleary and it mentions the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services, but not in derogatory terms. On page 2 the letter states:

Police officers have called at the premises since the summons was served and openly stated that they did not agree with the action being taken by Superintendent Cleary. It is strongly suspected that some of the evidence which is incorrect in the affidavits was put there deliberately by the police to assist the ladies in defending their case.

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That quote in itself is sufficient to warrant an inquiry. The letter states that agents have been to this establishment and it nominates six other locations where similar businesses are conducted. On the third page of the letter the authors appear to be attempting to stop things from occurring before 14 March - a date which they have nominated - when this matter will apparently again go before the courts. I make no judgment in regard to this matter, but events of recent months and allegations raised by Mrs Cleary could be an attempt to discredit her husband so that he will not appear in court on 14 March, or it could be an attempt to have Superintendent Cleary charged so that the case falls over.

This whole business becomes more sinister as the days go on. As I have said, this letter has been received by a number of members of Parliament. I was told, after inquiring this morning, that this letter could represent contempt of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. There is a considerable amount of conflict concerning the brothel issue, both in revelations that have been made to me and in the letter which has been sent to members of Parliament. Some people might say that this is an overreaction. They might ask why the Ombudsman and the Police Service cannot investigate this case themselves. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

I believe this matter needs to go to the ICAC for several reasons. In the main, we are talking about officers of superintendent rank and above. This case has to be dealt with in a credible way. All the papers surrounding this brothel issue should be sent immediately to the ICAC so the matter can be properly investigated. We must determine whether or not what is being alleged is true. The Clearys must be interviewed about the brothel allegations and the circumstances surrounding events that have transpired since 13 November last year. I have lost faith in investigations by police about police. It is pretty hard for me to say that considering my background. Let me highlight the reservations I have. For the last five years I was subjected to horrendous attacks on my credibility. I was subjected to investigations by various government bodies. My family and those close to me suffered. Everyone concerned tried to cover up what is now known as the Thomas Colquhoun affair.

Material received through freedom of information discloses that former Assistant Commissioner Col Cole said that this matter effectively concerns a personality clash between me and Colquhoun. He did nothing, even though I reported the matter to him. No matter how much I complained there was a

cover-up to protect Colquhoun and to discredit me and those associated with me. I have been cleared on every count. I do not propose to go into all the details concerning that matter because I know who the conspirators were. I brought this matter to the notice of this House after years of harassment and after placing questions on the notice paper. The current Minister was sympathetic about the way in which I was being treated. I compliment him and the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services, who is in the Chamber, on being scrupulously fair, regardless of the fact that I am an Opposition member.

Both Ministers have shown strength in this matter which arose at local party level. There has never been any suggestion that it emanated from Sydney. The Office of the Ombudsman, after conducting an inquiry, informed me that if I, the Minister for Police and the Chief Secretary had not done what we did, I and those around me would not have received any justice. My lack of confidence in those who investigate complaints against police is understandable. I have explained to this House why I have a lack of confidence in those who investigate complaints against police.

One more very good reason that this matter needs to be independently assessed is whether, as alleged by the Clearys, the incident of 13 November was a set-up. I am not in a position to say, nor would I deem it my right to make a judgment as to whether it was a set-up, stemming from the brothel issue and the fact that the brothel owners had made a decision to get Superintendent Cleary. Whether the events of that night of 13 November were merely a coincidence and were seized upon subsequently to discredit Superintendent Cleary, I am not in a position to say. That is probably the more reasonable view. What the links are between the city venue brothels, and who owns them, I have no knowledge of, but from what I have been told they are quite hair-raising. I believe that the papers ought to be sent for immediately by the ICAC. Mrs Cleary works at police headquarters. We are not dealing with a woman who has come in off the street; she works at police headquarters, adjacent to her husband. She describes them as explosive and describes who is named in them, and the links made between the owners and criminals.

I believe that any investigation will put to rest once and for all the continuing police rumours about the credibility of our commissioner. The allegation one hears constantly in police company is that Chief Superintendent Moeller enjoys patronage from the commissioner because he assisted him as a member of the internal affairs branch during the now famous Hakim case. I am saying this to have the matter cleared up. The police continue to say that Moeller is in his present position as a result of this. This House well knows that I have had a personal friendship with the commissioner for many years. It is with that in mind that I believe it is unwarranted for the commissioner to be attacked in this way, that the reason behind any action is the friendship. It is said that the commissioner protects Chief Superintendent Moeller. A simple search of his job application and the process of his appointment will put that matter to rest once and for all.

I bear no ill will to Chief Superintendent Moeller. I have known him since his days as a detective constable when we both worked in the Newcastle area. Of course, the aspersion will be that this case is a consequence of my friendship with the

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Cleary family. I have an obligation to bring matters to notice on behalf of my constituents. It is true that I have known Mrs Cleary since childhood. I have known her husband for a long time, prior to joining the police force when I worked with him. I am not offering any judgment in this matter or arguing the Clearys' case; that is for others to do. The Clearys are getting no special treatment from me. I am putting that on public record before someone tries to make something sinister out of it. I have spoken earlier about rights. It seems that if you know someone, or are married to them, you are supposed to let everyone walk all over you, and some people treat others unfairly because of that relationship.

Naturally I am concerned about what I am doing here today. The easy way for me would be to walk away and do nothing. I emphasise that I expect reprisals, but after 21 years that is nothing new to me. That is part and parcel of this job, especially when dealing with people associated with activities - such as brothels - that are outside the law, yet continue to make out a case for their continued illegal activity to be

tolerated. This is the first time I have said these things in this Parliament, but I am sick to death of it. I want to make it clear that I will take action in every form that I can if my wife - who is a police person - is subjected to any reprisals because of what I have said. I am heartily sick of her having cop what she does on a daily basis, and that is why I am revealing it in Parliament tonight as part of my duty as a member.

I will give the House an example, and I will clarify it because it is something I will not tolerate any longer. There are two sergeants who work at Newcastle police station who think they have the right to persecute my wife in a variety of ways because I am a member of Parliament and that she should be treated differently in everything she does or tries to achieve. I have stood aside for too many years and seen her spirit and dedication to the Police Service - and the Minister has complimented her on that on many occasions - over 22 years service destroyed by these people.

How would honourable members like to walk into a sporting venue, as I have in the past 12 months, and have one of these despicable sergeants say, "Tell your cook to get to work on time". It is about time she was treated as a separate and distinct person in her job. She is getting no favours, and never has. The only burden she has to bear is being married to a Labor politician in a conservative organisation. When it suits them, they tell me to tell my wife to get to work on time, but they cannot have it both ways: they cannot treat her as a leper because of me, but tell me to chide her to get to work on time. Discrimination of women in the Newcastle police headquarters is far from solved and is probably the worst case of discrimination I know of in New South Wales.

This issue is about the rights of members of Parliament. In the years I have been in Parliament I have seen those rights stripped away. I am sick to death of my family being treated as they have been over a period of years. I can handle it; I am a big boy. In addition to handing information over to the ICAC, questions will appear on the notice paper in the next few days, which are based on questions asked once again by my constituent, Mrs Cleary. She says she and her family will get no justice and the complaint concerning those questions will be given to the Ombudsman who, I understand, has an inquiry under way. Since the complaints have been handed to me, Mrs Cleary has become aware of further reprisals involving a former police person who is now working elsewhere.

Since I asked Mrs Cleary to give the information to the investigatory bodies, things have hotted up. Late last evening I was told that a now resigned police officer - a former detective senior constable, Michael Pont - was taken off detective duties, because of having been in trouble, and was put on to general duties at Newcastle. He is now trying to discredit Superintendent Cleary. This is an amazing revelation - amazing because I have now learned that one of the police who came to the scene of the incident on the *South Steyne* on 13 November 1993 was former Senior Constable Pont. According to Mrs Cleary, Pont rendered virtually no assistance at the scene and was reluctant to do anything in regard to this matter until the time of his resignation from the New South Wales Police Service.

It is amazing that this discredited former senior constable of police is now working for a Newcastle based insurance organisation, NIB - known as Newcastle Industrial Benefits. I find it amazing that a highly reputable insurance organisation, such as NIB, whose chief executive, Mr Colin Rogers, is a man of impeccable integrity whom I know well through family affiliations, would have this man running around the State. As late as yesterday at Hornsby, Pont said to a police person, who will come forward with some relish, that "I am investigating my former boss, Superintendent Cleary, for fraud". According to Mrs Cleary, it is well known that antagonism exists on Pont's part towards her husband. On whose authority is this man operating? Whose bidding is he doing? Is he still connected with the police in Newcastle? It begs a whole host of answers.

Another matter which needs thorough and urgent investigation is the allegation that various actions which have been taken since 13 November 1993 in regard to the withdrawing of charges against the person Fries constitute a conspiracy to pervert the cause of justice. I am not making a judgment but in the information I am handing to the ICAC there are claims that subsection (4) of section 103 of the

Licensing Act has been ignored in that the only way the matter could be dispensed with is before a magistrate, that is before the court. Yet the matter has been dispensed with by negotiation within the Police Service with a variety of civilians, one of them a solicitor who is a part-owner of the licensed premises at which this incident occurred. What makes it more serious is that apparently it was handled without reference to what is now a missing file. The file is supposedly missing. How often have we heard about the case of the missing file?

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The advisings that were given by Mrs Cleary's husband and numerous legal persons about the course embarked upon to have the matter dispensed with by conciliation appear to have been ignored. Other legal opinions indicate that a case may exist where people have conspired to pervert the course of justice. Whether the Clearys acted responsibly on the night of 13 November 1993 is not for me to determine. The Clearys have indicated to me that when they asked what they were expected to do when their daughter found herself in this situation, they were told that they should never have become involved. Superintendent Cleary posed that question to an assistant commissioner of police and put a hypothetical question to him: "If I stumbled across my daughter being raped by two people behind a bush, what would be the situation?" The reply was, "You would do the same; you would not involve yourself".

What stage have our Police Service and society reached? The sooner this matter is cleared up, the better it will be. I take it that because the police see something happen they have no rights. If what happened to Cleary's daughter had happened to my daughter, I would have taken the same action as he did. What happened about that obligation to have these people sworn? If it is suggested that when police see incidents involving their families they should walk away and neglect their sworn duty, it is time a set of guidelines were introduced setting out their rights and obligations. I repeat, as I have said throughout this contribution, that I am not passing judgment in this matter, nor have I come to any conclusions. I believe that it is imperative for the matter to be cleared up, not only for the benefit of the electorate I represent but for the good running and order of the Police Service in the Newcastle area, a service which, despite what I have revealed today, has served the city of Newcastle and its environs well.

These isolated incidents involving only one person or a small number of persons create a perception in the community that all members of the Police Service are doing the wrong thing. This matter follows hot on the heels of the Independent Commission Against Corruption report on the Police Service, which makes it all the more imperative that it be dealt with independently. My relationship with the present Minister for Police has been good. Though he and I do not share the same political philosophy, I am aware that he does an extremely good job in what is not the easiest of portfolios to administer. He is not in a position - and nor am I - to determine exactly what happened in the matters I have raised.

An unfortunate aspect is that in the immediate future there will be those who will be for and those who will be against what I have divulged, but I am satisfied in my mind that unless the issue is clarified the concern and animosity surrounding the incident will hamper the good work of the Police Service in Newcastle. The Commissioner of Police, Tony Lauer, has to be able to do his job effectively, but if that is to happen matters such as the one I have raised must be resolved and not allowed to run like a festering sore. The only way to prevent a recurrence is to carry out a complete investigation. [*Time expired.*]

Mr O'DOHERTY (Ku-ring-gai) [8.0]: I share the concerns of the honourable member for Charlestown regarding the matters he has raised. All honourable members are aware of the pressure on those in political life and on their spouses. I join with other honourable members in commending the Governor for his Speech earlier this week on the opening of this session of the Parliament. I send him personal greetings, as someone who has had the opportunity to work with him on the committee for the Governor's prayer breakfast. I echo the sentiments expressed by many other honourable members about the marvellous job that Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair and Mrs Sinclair do in fulfilling their public duties.

I welcome the Government's program outlined by the Governor. This year the Government's program is all about the continuing process of building a better community. My theme for this contribution to the debate is: building and belonging to a better community. As we head towards the end of the 1990s and put our cars on the last stretch of that highway that leads to the year 2000 we need to think about building and belonging to a better community. It is well worth spelling out some important principles for leadership in the 1990s if we are to build and belong to a better community. The first is that the skills, gifts, talents and abilities of the community are vested in individuals. Therefore individuals who improve themselves improve their society.

A second important principle is that one of the roles of the community is to provide for its members some of the essential things that they cannot provide for themselves; for example, a widespread and well developed education system - education for life - a health system that is available to all, and the sorts of things that the community provides to its members. On one's own one could not provide anything like the health or education benefits that people can obtain as a community. The third principle, which goes hand-in-hand with the first two, is that our sense of community is based on the principle of service. When individuals serve the community their achievements benefit the whole. The role of government is to serve people, as individuals and as members of a united community. The Government must be the leader in building a better community. It can do so by creating a climate in which individuals can succeed for themselves and for their families.

I should make specific reference to some of the important things that are part of the process of building and belonging to a better community, for example, the worth of the individual. As I have said, it is in the individual that the skills, knowledge and talent of the community reside. I believe also in the power of individual enterprise. People strive for achievement in their lives as a way of fulfilling a basic human need to contribute to their own well-being. As they do so they contribute to themselves

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and to their families. The task of government is to set the climate in which individuals can not only have goals and dreams but also reach them.

An important part of the process is the community. People have a basic need to live together as a community; I believe that we are meant to live together as a community, as a united cohesive society that works together for the common good, but having regard for one another's needs. To my mind that is how people are supposed to live. Anything that diminishes that takes away from the good government of our society. I am proud to be a member who supports the Government, which is building a better community based on those types of principles that are important to me as a member of Parliament and a member of my community. Those principles are embodied in the achievements of the Fahey Government.

When one examines the programs outlined in His Excellency's Speech, one finds that the principles to which I refer are embodied also in the program of the Fahey Government. I shall focus on several items in that program, rather than commending the broad strategy, before moving to speak about my community. I should say a special word about the family. Undoubtedly in this International Year of the Family the focus will be and has been on families. Many words have been spoken and there has been much rhetoric about families, what they can do and what can be achieved for them. What the Fahey Government has set out to do in the International Year of the Family is vital to the process of building a better community.

I commend the Government for its enterprise in establishing a special unit that will co-ordinate the International Year of the Family activities and the many specific and individual programs - too many to enumerate here - that will directly benefit the lives of people who are trying to improve their family relationships. There is no shame in saying that sometimes our families are not ideal; often family relationships break down and need healing and repairing. If we have any shame about saying that, and if we hide that fact as a society, we will not be able to restore and repair our families. The breaking down of relationships within families has an enormous impact on society, probably the most enormous impact

of any developments occurring in Australia today. Sadly, the breaking down of family relationships involves emotional, sometimes physical and often economic costs. It causes emotional scars that can take generations to heal. The solution lies in allowing people to focus on the quality of their family relationships. This is the year in which that should be done.

The solution lies in allowing people to say that without judgment we do not always get these important relationships right. There is no shame in seeking advice and help that is being offered by the Government in the International Year of the Family. The solution lies also in discussing more openly as a society the things that we value. Foremost among those things must be the family. We must clearly identify the family relationships and values that we regard as important. We must clearly understand what has to be done by us as individuals and as a community to protect families. At one time I worked for a company - and I am sure many people have worked for companies of this type - which specifically excluded spouses from the annual Christmas function. That is a small thing. The Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services reminds me that it is no small matter to be a spouse. That is how my wife felt. Along with others who worked for that company I offered to pay for my spouse to go to the Christmas function. The response I was given by one of the executives was that the concern was not about cost. He said that to have spouses there would inhibit the socialising of the staff.

I deliberately turn my back on values of that type. I do not want to be a party to those values. They are the values that will bring down our society. That executive said that having spouses at such a function would inhibit the socialising of the staff. What about inhibiting the strength of families? That business depended upon family people turning up to work every day and doing their bit to be loyal to the company. I ultimately left that company. That value system is upside down. It is symptomatic of some ways in which society operates.

The division between work and family is often a division that we force on ourselves. When the pressure is on it is often our families that suffer most. Honourable members know a lot about that and I do not have to labour the point, but it strikes me that this is what is important about the family and our community. Beyond work and the status we try to create for ourselves as individuals in this consumer society, beyond all the external trappings of our lives, beyond all of that it is our families that define us, that sustain us, and that create us as beings within a society. It is our families that teach us what community is about; it is our families that give us meaning and comfort, and importantly it is our families that can restore us through appropriate relationships. If we restore values, we will go a long way to restoring society. I am proud to be part of a Government that is committed to that value in the International Year of the Family.

I want to briefly focus on economic strategy because part of my theme of building and belonging to a better community is being a responsible economical manager of the resources of a State such as New South Wales. It is not about getting good numbers and not about pure economic theory alone. I think that sterile approach has largely been discredited in Australia. That is good. It is about the heart as well, and in New South Wales we clearly have both. We have a Premier with heart and he is managing an economy that is clearly the best performing and most accountable in Australia. There is no doubt about that.

It is about being responsible in the way we treat the money that is entrusted to us by the people of this State. Accountability is important and what is it aimed at? It is aimed at delivering services to

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families and to people; it is about building and belonging to a better community. That is why the good economic performance of New South Wales over the years, and the continuing program to reduce the deficit, is important. I want to leave the big picture, the macro-picture if you like, and turn to some key local concerns in my role as the member representing the people of the electorate of Ku-ring-gai because there, too, I am committed to building and belonging to a better society. I have been the member there for just on 18 months and we have achieved a lot in that time. I have seen great growth in that community. It is a marvellous community to represent. The people of the community are terrific. It

really is a joy to represent them and work with them to achieve what they want in their society.

It is the community that cares for each other, that knows the value of families, and that knows the value of standards. It is the community that knows that when you turn your back on those things you start turning your back on a good society. There are some issues that I intend to concentrate on in the coming years but particularly during the next 12 to 18 months. There are a number of local concerns that I have identified and will continue to raise with the Government. The first is law and order. A key part of the commitment to building a better community is a commitment to law and order. I talk about it broadly. It is not just a question of providing a better police and justice system, although clearly the Government is doing that. It is wider than that and goes to the heart of the values of our society.

For example, what types of activities and entertainments are there for some of the young people in our society? I am pleased that within the past few months I have been able to persuade the State Rail Authority to provide a lease for a group called Fusion, a youth organisation which, with me as patron, is about to open a youth cafe in Hornsby. It will be based on Hornsby railway station in a formerly disused building which was known as the station master's cottage; although I am led to believe that it was never in fact the station master's cottage. It is now known as Jack's Island, which was the old name for Hornsby. Jack's Island Cafe will have its official opening very soon. I am pleased to say that the cafe will be a place where the young people of my electorate will be able to come for drug free and alcohol free fellowship and entertainment. It will be a place where they can come into contact with people who have good values; and a place where they can go to try to stay away from some of the less salubrious activities in which some young people have been involved in in recent years.

Sadly, even in Hornsby and places such as Berowra a problem has emerged of under-age drinking. It is something that needs to be addressed and the youth cafe project will certainly help. There is a great awareness among the professionals in the field, the police and other agencies, of the need to take care of this youth problem, particularly late at night and on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I have spoken to the Minister for Police and also to senior police in my electorate about further police patrols, particularly in Berowra, which has had a problem with vandalism late at night after the last train. As a result, a number of initiatives have been put in place, some of which involve further police patrols; others involve the return of beat police at certain times to patrol in Berowra; there is a whole range of issues. I am not entirely sure that those initiatives will be enough and I will continue to press the point with the Minister for Police to try to get further police strength in Berowra. I would like to see beat police return full-time to the Berowra patrol area, and that is something I will continue to work on.

I want to speak about health in my electorate and just briefly touch on Hornsby hospital. Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai district community hospital has been part of the district for 60 years. It is the place, as I so often say, where many of our friends, relatives and members of our family have been born. My brother was born there. It is a great part of the community and is regarded very highly by the people of Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai. The hospital provides world-class treatment for its patients but its infrastructure and buildings are ageing. The Department of Health has as one of its priorities the redevelopment of Hornsby hospital. It is a bit down the list, too far down for my liking, and I will continue to raise with the Government and the Minister for Health the need to commit funds as soon as possible to the first phase of the development work for rebuilding the hospital, and thereafter to follow that with the second phase. I commit myself to continuing to work on that with the Minister for Health.

I want to speak now about the environment. The people of my electorate guard their environment very jealously. Indeed, they are very concerned about the environment, as so many people are these days; but it is probably fair to say that in my electorate there is a very high degree of awareness about the need to protect our environment. Part of that is due to the debate that has taken place in the past 10 years in this country; but the other part is due to the fact that so many people live in the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai areas because of their very special environment. There is Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park; the Mookamurra Nature Reserve; Berowra Waters and the Berowra Creek area and some of the waterways in the national park. Parts of the Hawkesbury River also run through the electorate. There

are some fantastic natural bushlands and natural environments. Sadly, it is showing signs of having been closely associated with urban development for decades, none the least of which are the signs that emerged recently in Berowra Creek, a creek which is seriously under stress. It is not by any means beyond repair, and the repair process has already begun. As I said in a statement to the House yesterday, I was very pleased that the Government, through the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Trust will implement one of my key concerns for the area, which is a catchment management committee for Berowra Creek. That will begin the process of community understanding of the problems of the creek and a community solution for cleaning up the creek. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

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The problems of Berowra Creek belong to the entire community and the creek belongs to the entire community. It is not just a problem for the Water Board or the council's stormwater system, or the industry that impacts on it, or those of us who live in the catchment area who discharge sewage and urban runoff into that catchment. It is all of those things combined and more. A community solution is needed to clean it up. The community cares, and I know my community will be involved in the clean up of that creek. I am hopeful of a meeting within the next couple of weeks with senior representatives of the Water Board. I will continue to press the Government for nitrate removal to become a feature of the effluent treatment in the two sewage treatment plants in the area - at Hornsby Heights and West Hornsby. The removal of the nitrates from the effluent will involve a cost and the community needs to understand the questions of costs, although as a Government we need to commit ourselves to doing that. I will continue to press that with the Ministers involved and also with the Water Board. I have spoken about that elsewhere and I will not labour the point.

I turn now to education. I am committed, as we continue to build and belong to a better community, to growth in our schools. The schools in my electorate are doing a marvellous job in educating young Australians. Also, many schools are involved in community and adult education programs. Honourable members opposite who are smiling may well be jealous of what is happening within schools in my area. A new hall is about to be commissioned at Wahroonga Public School involving a great community effort and Government investment of \$500,000. The bush school, as it is called, still requires further redevelopment. I shall continue to press the Government to develop its buildings because, as with Hornsby hospital, it has many old wooden buildings.

Wideview Public School is commencing a building program. Hornsby Heights has new library facilities. Redevelopment of the library and administration area at the Berowra Public School is being carried out for its centenary. As the school patron I shall take part in those celebrations later this year. I do not want to single out too many schools for fear of offending some people through omission. I am close to all members in the education community in my area. I wish to commend the work that is being done. In particular, I wish to speak about the development of Ku-ring-gai High School as the first creative arts high school. That designation was given by the Minister as a result of a program we were involved in last year. Performing arts high schools are in existence, but this creative arts high school will focus on the visual and performing arts, drama, theatre, media, radio, television, and print, as well as the more traditional pursuits of music.

The Ku-ring-gai High School will become a centre of excellence for the entire region and the Sydney metropolitan area. It may even draw people from other parts of the State. Residents from the Central Coast would be interested in the programs being offered at that school. Tom Richmond, his staff and Beverley Peter, the director of schools, are developing programs in co-ordination with the committee of which I am a member. They are committed to developing Ku-ring-gai High School as a special creative arts school, an exciting development that will continue over the next few years.

I wish to refer now to sporting facilities. My electorate is extensive and further sporting facilities are required in suburbs such as Berowra. I have been supportive of a program for the building of a pool

complex at the Berowra Community Centre. I shall continue to talk to the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing about that. I am aware of private sector interest in the project. I am of the view that this is an ideal way of funding community facilities because the private sector will gain benefit from such facilities. A proposal for a skateboard ramp is being developed as a result of representations made to me by a 15-year-old youth. Recently I put him in touch with other people who came to see me last week about the same proposition. The community is trying to build a better community and my role as a local member is to help facilitate that wherever possible.

There are many issues of concern in the Brooklyn area, and I have been working on those. I am still endeavouring to secure resolution of a dispute between the State Rail Authority and Hornsby Council over the use of the public wharf at Brooklyn. At one point slippage of the seawall has occurred and a legal dispute has arisen as to who has responsibility for rectifying that. I do not care who does it provided it is rectified so that the public wharf can be used by the Dangar Island ferry and many other users. When the tide is high people often are forced to make alternative arrangements. That is not good enough; it has been continuing for too long. I hope to have the matter settled this year.

Dredging needs to be undertaken off the Gut at Brooklyn because of spillage from State Rail works many years ago. State Rail wants that area dredged and has allocated the resources to do so; it has submitted an environmental impact statement and development applications to the Hornsby Council. There was toing and froing between the council and the State Rail Authority. As a result the process must begin again because the time for the development approval has expired. That should be undertaken as soon as possible and I shall continue to raise that matter with the Minister.

I am addressing many issues relating to Brooklyn, but one outstanding matter is the need to dredge the navigation channel. As a result of a meeting I set up with the Public Works Department and Hornsby Council progress has been made. The Public Works Department may be able to fund that project on a more realistic basis than the 50-50 funding they were offering Hornsby Council. I accept that Hornsby Council would not be able to meet 50 per cent of the cost. A number of my constituents have continued to raise that matter with me and I shall endeavour to work out a solution to the problem.

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On the issue of local planning, I welcome the decision of the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Robert Webster, to agree to my request to exempt Hornsby Council from the blanket policy for dual occupancy. Hornsby Council did an excellent job in coming to grips with the need to increase the consolidation of our urban area. Many residents did not approve of the way the dual occupancy provisions of the various State planning laws were being applied in their area. They raised those issues with me and other local members representing the Hornsby Council area, including the former member for The Hills, Tony Packard.

It was following representations that the Minister granted permission for the council to be exempt from the blanket policy, provided it demonstrated its commitment to areas of medium and high density housing. The local environmental plan prepared by Hornsby Council has been sent to the Minister who, in due course, it is hoped will approve it. As a consequence, local planning will have been determined by local people. I am committed to that concept, and the Government has delivered it for the people of the Hornsby shire. The same offer is open to people in the Ku-ring-gai shire. However, the Ku-ring-gai Council has not yet seen fit to discuss the matter in a meaningful way with the Minister at the negotiating table in order to reach a solution similar to the one reached with Hornsby Council. I urge the Ku-ring-gai Council to do so because many of my constituents are concerned about planning in the Ku-ring-gai shire, especially relating to dual occupancy.

People in that community are not aware of exactly what rules will apply. On certain occasions the council seems to apply different criteria. If the council has certain criteria about dual occupancy and a policy to approve them all, it ought to inform residents. In some cases proposals are going backwards

and forwards to council and, ultimately, to the Land and Environment Court. This is not in the interest of good government. I urge the council to review its dual occupancy policy and, in particular, to enter into negotiations with the Minister similar to those undertaken by Hornsby Council.

In terms of traffic management, I seek a quick solution to some of the problems with the Pacific Highway and welcome the initiative of the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads to have a study prepared for the upgrading of the Pacific Highway between Hornsby and Chatswood. I have had a briefing on the draft proposal. That will provide a much better deal for my constituents who use the Pacific Highway in the morning and evening peak periods. The proposal will improve the capacity and flow rate and, in turn, will alleviate another problem of major concern to my northern constituents, which relates to the intersection between the freeway and the highway at Hornsby. Sometimes vehicles on that intersection are banked up for more than a kilometre. In my many discussions with the Roads and Traffic Authority it has been suggested that the traffic lights favour the freeway at key peak times. I believe that suggestion is necessary and I urge the Roads and Traffic Authority to keep it in mind when finalising plans for that part of the Pacific Highway.

Traffic management issues in Wahroonga continue to be a problem. Last year, at my request, the Roads and Traffic Authority began talks with Ku-ring-gai Council about some of those issues. One principle I wish to mention is that in general residential streets should not have to bear the burden of through traffic travelling, in many cases, to the city or, indeed, to the Central Coast if they are travelling in the other direction. A traffic management scheme is needed which will give residents some certainty that their streets will remain residential in character. Earlier today the Minister for Transport spelled out the magnificent achievements of the Government in relation to trains. My constituents have benefited from improved on-time running, an increased number of seats, and improvements in rolling-stock and safety. During the term of office of this Government there have been many improvements to the train system.

One matter I continue to press with the Minister is the need for additional services - not necessarily additional seats, because the number of seats has been increased - in the morning peak hour for people living north of Hornsby. My speaking time is about to expire, and I wish to once again reiterate that as the member for Ku-ring-gai and as a member of the Fahey Government I commit myself to building and belonging to a better community. I am not referring only to my electorate, where the community and I are working together to build and belong to a model community, but also to being a member of the Fahey Government, which is building a better community for the whole of New South Wales as we move towards the year 2000. The role of the community is to respond to those efforts and to ensure that the New South Wales community continues to be a model for the remainder of Australia.

Mr MARTIN (Port Stephens) [8.30]: My contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate will be in two sections, the first relating to Port Stephens and the second relating to some of my shadow portfolio responsibilities. His Excellency the Governor, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, has done an excellent job for New South Wales. He comes from Tea Gardens, which is in my electorate. I express my sincere regrets about the treatment that has been meted out to him in relation to his reappointment and the way that issue has been debated in the media. In this country there is a time and a place for everything. The treatment given to this issue could be described only as very poor.

Mr Jeffery: By whom?

Mr MARTIN: The honourable member for Oxley asks, "By whom?" In the first place the issue was obviously raised with the media by members on the Government benches. The way the issue has developed and been speculated upon, but not decisively answered, has caused only distress to the Governor's family and the people of my electorate, where he is respected as an excellent citizen and where he will always be a favoured person. Certain issues raised in the Governor's Speech concern me.

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At the outset I should like to refer to some problems associated with local government. There are three local government areas in my electorate: Great Lakes, Port Stephens and Newcastle.

For a long time many of us have worked hard to improve the image of Port Stephens Council. I must record that there is disquiet in my electorate. Of all the correspondence I have received during the six years I have been a member of this place, the greatest amount has been in relation to a matter that has been recently referred to as the rezoning of Fern Bay, which is in the electorate of Newcastle. It is not for me to pass judgment on the council rezoning of that land, but there is a major level of disquiet in my electorate about it. I have in front of me a letter addressed to the Director of the Local Government Department, Mr Payne. The letter reads:

Dear Mr Payne,

As a Councillor of Port Stephens Council I write to you today -

The writer is very concerned about the rezoning of land at Fern Bay from 1(a) to 2(d). The letter continues:

At Council's meeting of December 14 the Mayor . . . declared an interest and refrained from chairing or voting at this meeting.

At a Special Meeting of Council on December 21 . . . after a rescission motion was signed by 3 councillors, the Mayor chaired the meeting and voted for the rescission motion. (The vote was 6-5 against this motion).

After this meeting the Mayor approached each of the 6 councillors who voted against the rescission motion individually, and in front of witnesses, mentioning that he had word from the developer that we were to be summonsed and where did we wish this act to happen - at our place of residence or at the Council Chambers - as he did not want to upset families prior to Christmas.

The only reason for my writing to you today is that I felt truly intimidated and uncomfortable by this statement, although I have not changed the way I voted.

Since December 21 the question of the rezoning was brought forward from the mandatory (regular) 3 months to an Emergency Council Meeting of January 25th, 1994 where 3 motions were put to a meeting of a Committee of a Whole. (These motions being successful.)

A rescission motion was lodged and debated on February 1st with the vote being 6-all and the Mayor exercising his casting vote.

I urge your Department to investigate this matter and send all the relevant information to ICAC.

That is the text of the letter that was handed to me. It would be prudent for people in this Parliament to highlight the need to ensure that the due and proper processes of the law are observed. The Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives and the whole Parliament should be cognisant of what has happened before any judgments are made. It is important to exercise integrity, and integrity must be seen to have been exercised. I have not been able to find out why the mayor changed his mind. He refused to talk to the *Newcastle Herald* and has had no contact with the media. All in all, there is great disquiet in my electorate. I urge the Government to be aware of the problem so that it does not make any rash judgments.

I turn now to the recent bushfires. As the Governor said in his Speech, the bushfires were a matter of grave concern. Twenty units from the Country Fire Authority of Victoria attended a major emergency in Port Stephens. That highlighted a matter that is important to the people of my electorate. The Victorians are very much better supplied in communications, training and equipment. If the Parliament does not address that issue, the same problems will recur in eight to 10 years' time. The fact that the

Victorians had 20 units, a 20-channel communication station, mobile workshops and a disciplined and able team of people highlighted what good training can achieve and how training can be improved. The people of my electorate were impressed by the uniformity, first-class equipment and the use made of that equipment.

Recently I have had quite a deal to do with firefighters in my electorate and the consensus is that the issue of communications particularly needs to be addressed. I look forward to any hearing at any time and to being able to put forward my electorate as a typical New South Wales coastal electorate that is able to contribute to firefighting needs in the State. The electorate of Port Stephens is a long way behind other electorates such as Sutherland, Baulkham Hills and the Blue Mountains that have first-class equipment. I make that offer to the Government. The people of Port Stephens will be only too happy to contribute to any inquiry at any time. I hope any such inquiry will be ongoing.

For the past six years Nelson Bay Road has caused major problems in my electorate. Over a six-year period there have been 15 deaths and more than 500 serious accidents on that road. In 1988 Premier Greiner promised that the road would be rebuilt. During the by-election campaign in 1988 he promised that the road would be totally reconstructed. Major safety improvements are still needed to that road. The problems have not been addressed. If it has any semblance of decency the Government, which is obviously out of control, must address these problems.

In 1987 the Labor Government started the Hunter fringe area sewerage program. On the eve of the 1988 election the people were told that sewerage could be provided without a levy. Every light pole in my electorate had a blue and white sign on it that read, "Vote 1 Liberal-National - Sewer Without a Levy". In the Port Stephens electorate people are paying yearly \$70 a property, a payment that will continue for 24 years. With 133,000 contributors in the Hunter region, that amounts to about \$10 million a year, which is equivalent to the dividends that the Government takes from the Hunter Water Board. In addition, every person who built a new home post-17 February 1989 is liable for a \$2,963 contribution to the Water Board, plus an application fee, plumbing fees and inspection fees.

Many pensioners reside in my electorate. Those who have borrowed the maximum to obtain housing are in the intolerable situation of having to pay an

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extra \$3,000. They are either forced to sell their houses or they suffer the trauma of being unable to connect to the sewer. I urge the Government not to go through the exercise of telling people to obtain a commercial loan. Pensioners cannot do that, and people who have borrowed the maximum - young couples with families and often families with only one breadwinner - are forced to pay. I urge the Government to seriously consider its promises of 1988, and to seriously consider what it is doing for families. Honourable members have heard the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai talk about families. Families are being unbelievably squeezed by this Government. It is intolerable that they are \$1,600 worse off than they were five years ago. It is even more unbelievable when the sewerage charge is added.

The Government must plan for the Raymond Terrace bypass. The first bottle-neck on the journey from Sydney occurs at Raymond Terrace, as the expressway virtually finishes at Hexham. Anyone who travels north and south knows that it is the major bottle-neck, with massive traffic holdups, particularly at Christmas and Easter. The honourable member for Myall Lakes knows it is a major problem, as his electorate is to the north. He and I have continually approached the Government to expedite expenditure on that bypass.

The challenge for the Government is that if that money is made available at the appropriate rate, the road can be completed by Christmas 1996. That is not unreasonable. However, if the money does not flow, construction will extend well beyond that time, which would be intolerable not only for the people of the Port Stephens electorate but for people who travel the Pacific Highway in New South Wales. I urge the Government to consider seriously the issue in the formulation of the forthcoming Budget. The

Commonwealth has provided money, and the State has a commitment to do so.

The shortage of police in Port Stephens has been a major concern for a long period. There are no major problems in Nelson Bay. There are peak workloads at Christmas and holiday times, but it is reasonable in winter. At Christmas more than 6,000 people congregate in the Nelson Bay-Shoal Bay area. Major problems occur on New Year's Eve. We are trying to sort out ways to make the area alcohol free and to sort out some of the unruly behaviour that occurs. If it is not handled properly we will have another Byron Bay, Kings Cross the way it was years ago, or The Entrance. Something must be done about the challenge and the warning. I commend the police. Last year 50 police were brought into Shoal Bay but it still was not enough. Considering the mess and the alcohol problems, the challenge exists, but extra resources are required beyond the level of those which can be provided by the local police inspector from local stations. It will probably require 200 or 300 police to enforce the laws that need to be enforced.

I highlight the needs of air force families in my electorate. Many people who are associated with the Royal Australian Air Force base at Williamtown have major problems with pre-schools, community facilities and many other State supplied services, which reflect on their lifestyle. It is important that we recognise that these families, through recent taxation and social security rulings, are being disadvantaged. We must do all we can to ensure that is sorted out, in addition to ensuring that family facilities are provided for people who remain in the area for an average of two years. Some of my shadow portfolio responsibilities are fisheries, forests, lands, agriculture and soil conservation. The Governor on page 9 of his Speech - a speech that I consider one of the poorest that a Governor has ever been given to read - indicated that the Government will introduce legislation to improve fisheries management in New South Wales. He said:

As well as modernising the State's fisheries legislation, my Government will liaise with the fishing industry with a view to introducing a system of property rights into fisheries management. Such statutory rights would enable fishermen to conduct their fishing operations increasingly as a business, and would ensure more comprehensive management of the industry, whilst protecting fisheries resources for the future.

The Speech was given to His Excellency to read, but that part of it is nothing short of hogwash. Considering property rights and the problems occurring along the coast of New South Wales, the system has been proved a failure. Systems in other countries that went through the dry economic Thatcherite-Reaganite activities that were proved to have failed absolutely are now being thought of in New South Wales 10 years afterwards. People who are thinking up these ideas are geared to a Treasury concept of getting two-thirds of the fisheries budget - \$12 million to \$13 million - out of a user-pays system. Part of the plan is to freehold the fish resources of the State, which is unforgivable. Fish in the sea are publicly owned resources. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Fishing rights are a problem that is about to confront this State, and the warning should have been heeded by the Government. There is a saying around the Sydney Fish Market that the Minister for Fisheries, the honourable member for Clarence, has his ears painted on his head because he does not listen and he cannot hear. That is repeated to me up and down the coast. At seven meetings on the New South Wales coast, the fishing rights proposal as put by the bureaucracy of New South Wales Fisheries was unanimously rejected, so much so that at four of the meetings the Director of Fisheries said he believed there should be an amateur fishing licence and that the bag limits set by the Government were far too large.

One in four people is a recreational angler and tackle shops alone have an annual turnover of \$125 million in this State and \$400 million nationally. There has been no consultation on this matter. The Minister has the audacity and the stupidity to tell people that he will ram the legislation through the Parliament. I will do all I can to see that there is justice and that there is consultation before the legislation is introduced. The oyster industry is near and dear to me. In six years it has been ruined

because decisions have been made on a political basis

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instead of on sound scientific data and advice. The once great industry of this State, worth \$35 million, is on its knees. Families are bankrupt. Oyster farmers on the South Coast are being hounded out of the industry. There is division. The regulations are unmanageable and impossible to enforce.

I warn the Government to be careful of what it is doing or it will send further families to the wall. The coast of New South Wales must be regularly surveyed and where it is agreed that the Pacific oyster is out of control restrictions should be removed and Pacific oysters should be allowed within the estuaries affected. But in estuaries where the Pacific oyster does not occur not one oyster should be allowed to be transferred in. In estuaries where the Pacific oyster is considered controllable there should be 100 per cent commitment from the oyster industry and the officers of New South Wales Fisheries to ensure that the Pacific oyster is controlled. The situation should be monitored sensibly and soundly, and with a lot of common sense.

I now turn to forest matters. The Government's policies for ensuring the supply of wood have been absolutely pitiful. Short-term politics has been the driving force in much of the Government's decision-making. It has sought political advantage instead of long-term ability to manage the forests. The Opposition has a commitment to hardwood plantations. Labor will adopt conflict resolution procedures. The Government has tried to promote conflict for short-term political advantage. In 1992 there was a demonstration outside Parliament House. National Party members were chanting like schoolboys at the gates of Parliament House. One of them was even sitting on the back of a timber jinker with a mobile phone in his hand trying to direct the protest. The Government does not have a commitment to resolving conflict and it has not properly managed forestry.

Five environmental impact statements in a row have been failures, the last costing more than \$1 million. Five in a row have been rejected. Five major court cases were lost by State Forests and still the Government is not learning how to settle problems and get it right. That reflects poorly on Government administration. Labor will have contractual wood supply agreements. The waste problems of New South Wales will be addressed. We will look seriously at an education system for forest management in New South Wales. I had tertiary training in agriculture nearly 30 years ago. When I visit tertiary training institutions today I see that none of the natural science courses other than that at the Australian National University offer anything on forestry technology and activities. The ANU School of Forestry in Canberra is run like a secret society, but it is the only place where knowledge about forestry can be passed on. And we wonder why we have conflict!

A Labor government will provide a high level of education in forestry matters. It will be an ongoing program that will take years. It will continue well after I have finished to serve in this Parliament. If we do not adopt this approach there will be no future for our forestry industries. Honourable members opposite do not even think about sustainability. If we do not quickly achieve sustainable yields we will be derelict in our duties in representing the people of New South Wales. We will have penalty systems and ways of sorting out the cowboys in the forests. Even State Forests at times has done the wrong thing. Are our forest industries doing the right thing by selling Australian hardwoods at \$300, \$400 and \$500 a cubic metre when, with a minor degree of value adding, the return could be \$2,000 to \$3,000 a cubic metre?

I now turn to agriculture. People in the National Party seem to think they have a mortgage on rural issues, but I serve notice that from now on Labor - as it has in the past three years - will be active in highlighting the weaknesses of the Government's rural policies. I turn first to the Letona cannery. Despite votes in this Parliament the Government sat on its hands and neglected its responsibilities to ensure that there was a speedy resolution to the winding up and restructuring of the Letona cannery. It is a scandal. Yet to prop up the honourable member for Murrumbidgee the Government put up \$5.5 million towards a United States owned, ConAgra owned, industry activity at Griffith. Government members should think about where they are coming from. A foreign owned company got \$5.5 million but

the Government could not even get the receiver to expedite the Letona issue so that the cannery could be restructured to take the season's crop. Honourable members opposite ought to hang their heads in shame at what they have done for rural New South Wales.

The honourable member for Murrumbidgee talks about the rice-growers co-operative. The coalition is nothing short of disgusting, and that is what this matter is all about. Suddenly there is interest in sugar when the industry is highlighted. Mark my words: the Opposition will undertake many things to ensure the sugar industry in the Murwillumbah and Tweed areas is given a fair go and the white shoe brigade from the National Party does not get hold of all the land. The Government has a group of people who want to do nothing about the buffalo fly. The problem with ticks is also disgusting. Notice is hereby given that the Government can expect many attacks and its members will be cringing by the time the Opposition is finished. The polls will determine which is the better party.

Mr TURNER (Myall Lakes) [9.0]: I do not know that I have the nerves to follow that tirade. I was shaking in my boots after being whipped by a feather from the Opposition. I congratulate the Governor on his Speech and I thank him for giving such a far-ranging and visionary address to the Parliament. I should comment on some of the mischievous speculation in the press about his replacement. I note the Speech was given on 1 March and not 1 April; the reason the journalist wrote the story must be that he mixed up the months. His Excellency, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, has carried out an admirable job.

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Mr Martin: Why do you not reappoint him?

Mr TURNER: I am not the Premier of New South Wales. I am sick and tired of the media in this State indulging in such speculation. Today in this Parliament in a debate about cleaning we heard that the media attempted to portray a school with litter problems. However, the purported school was a park. The press must answer to some of its scurrilous reports. Someone either sold them a dump at the reception on Tuesday or they decided the opening of Parliament was an opportune time to attempt to run a ridiculous story.

I have a strong commitment to the Governor system. I am a monarchist and I believe we should retain the Governor. The Governor's Speech covered a range of activities in New South Wales. It reflected how well the State is progressing under the Fahey-Armstrong Government. No doubt at the present time New South Wales is confident in the direction of the Government and in its leadership. I have received positive feedback from my constituents about projects being undertaken in the electorate. Under former Premier Greiner we experienced a period of change; it was a necessary change after 12 years of Labor. Sometimes the change was agonising because we had to implement drastic cutbacks.

At the present time in Victoria we are witnessing a sense of déjà vu as Mr Kennett has to undo, change and redirect that State after a colossal period of Labor Government. I am sure change will also hurt South Australia and Western Australia. One of my National Party colleagues in Victoria told me before the election that it would take 10 years to undo what the Labor Party had done. I am pleased that after six years in office this Government has made the changes and is allowing the people to reap the benefits of those changes in a better community.

The main issue in my electorate relates to roads. Although there was a tragedy today in my colleague's electorate of Oxley, no doubt the road system is far better than it was six years ago. I pay tribute to my friend and colleague the honourable member for Barwon for that achievement during his stewardship of the roads portfolio. Under the previous administration rural New South Wales and the North Coast were deprived of road funding. Everyone says that our roads are now better, not worse.

More money is always welcome, but the improvements so far have been significant. In my electorate the dual carriageway of approximately 20 kilometres has been completed and will open this

month. Construction of the Taree dual carriageway bypass is now commencing. The \$360 million Pacific motorway project to be trialled in my electorate will open a further 50 kilometres of dual carriageway and add approximately 75 kilometres of dual carriageway through my electorate that contains the three black-spot areas of rural New South Wales. I thank the Government and the honourable member for Barwon for putting the efforts into the road system. Of course, the 3 x 3 program ensured a great deal of money flowed into rural areas, all of which was directed to the road system.

The extension of the Sydney expressway has an indirect benefit to my electorate because the travelling time to Sydney is greatly reduced. In the past month we have been working on providing a new airline service to my electorate. Thanks to this Government and the farsightedness of former Premier Greiner, Premier Fahey and former Deputy Premier Wal Murray, my electorate has fared well with transport and roads. It is not by accident that under the stewardship of the honourable member for Barwon the road toll has been reduced by almost two-thirds. He does not seek praise but he has helped to save many lives in New South Wales.

This year is the International Year of the Family and I am pleased to be involved because it provides an opportunity to reflect on traditional values. The family has changed, but certainly not to the expectations of the gay mardi gras. It is wrong for the homosexual population to portray in the coming mardi gras the traditional values that we ascribe to families in the manner they wish. I do not begrudge them their mardi gras, but to attach themselves to the International Year of the Family is drawing a long bow. We have traditional values and people are seeking to redefine the family. A few days ago at the launch of the International Year of the Family the Premier announced a number of proposed activities. I will certainly be encouraging everyone in my electorate to become wholeheartedly involved and to participate in those activities. I will ensure that not only do we consider activities to celebrate the year of the family, but to make the family a better unit for many years and to reappraise the family situation as we head towards the year 2000.

One small initiative the Government has achieved is the introduction of enterprise agreements. Enterprise agreements allow for flexibility so that families benefit. For example, if a woman who wishes to work has young children who attend pre-school or a day care centre, an enterprise agreement with her employer can facilitate her working hours so that her children might be involved in activities that will enable the mother to work during that period of time and be available to collect her children at the end of the activity and supervise them. There is nothing sadder than latchkey children or those who, through no fault of their own, have to forgo time with their mother or father due to the economic pressures of running a family unit. Enterprise agreements are a significant step forward in enhancing family life. That view might seem obtuse, but if enterprise agreements are given a go, they will prove a worthy aspect of the industrial reforms that have occurred in this State in recent years.

I have always had great concern for the aged, especially those in the Myall Lakes electorate, which has a large population of retirees. Many of them come from Sydney and many are from country areas. Institutionalisation of the aged has always concerned me. It is wrong to peremptorily put old people into retirement homes - unless of course they want to go themselves - or to otherwise institutionalise them. The policy of the Government to keep people in their

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homes as long as they can remain there, through a variety of programs and incentives, is to be applauded. Every day in my electorate I become aware of older people forming loose peer groups to support other older people within their community to stay in their homes and enjoy quality of life in their day-to-day activities. I am pleased to be part of a Government that considers these issues.

The Government has re-emphasised Senior Citizens Week and was most proactive in making that week a calendar highlight in New South Wales, to ensure that seniors in our community enjoy themselves and look to new goals and directions in the coming year. Although retirement villages and nursing homes are needed, I am pleased that great support still exists to encourage people to remain in their homes. I am also pleased, though, that the Government has supported many initiatives on retirement

homes in the Myall Lakes electorate. not least being the retirement home being built on Crown land lease at Old Bar. That home will provide great assistance to the people of the Old Bar, Great Lakes and Taree areas, and coincidentally will also provide employment in the Old Bar area.

A wilderness proposal in an area called Barrington Tops has created much emotion in the electorate. The proposal is to take 67,000 hectares of national park and forestry area, and to sterilise that land from any forestry or recreational activity or use other than walking. That proposal effectively would remove a recreational area that has been economically viable for more than 100 years. In 1989 a plan of management was put together by the people of the Gloucester region, including various environment experts, environmentalists, council representatives, union representatives, community representatives and others. That most sensible plan provided legitimately for 27,000 hectares of wilderness, with other areas being kept for forestry or national parks. That plan achieved great success within the community. Regrettably, the Wilderness Society chose to overlook that document and made a claim for the whole 67,000 hectares, including areas where I have walked with women pushing babies in strollers through the bush - an area that could hardly be called wilderness.

That matter is yet to be decided by Cabinet, but I ask and hope that the Cabinet and the green movement considers the win-win compromise put forward by the thinkers in our community, by those opposed to the Wilderness Society proposal. That compromise is a wilderness area of about 27,000 hectares, with some national park being left for those not nimble or agile enough to walk into and enjoy areas that have been available for more than 100 years. The forestry area can be retained as an economic base for keeping residents of towns such as Dungog and Gloucester in employment. There is no doubt that we need wilderness. I subscribe to that view, but the grab by the green movement for chunks of land that are not really wilderness can only add bitterness to the debate. I hope the green movement gives consideration to compromising its grab for land in the Barrington Tops area.

Tourism goes hand in hand with national parks, wilderness and forestry areas, which provide much scope for recreational activities. If I could express a somewhat parochial view, I happen to represent one of the prettiest electorates in New South Wales. Myall Lakes, as its very name suggests, is idyllic. Mr Acting-Speaker raises his hands in dismay, but I am afraid that the attractions of the electorate of Lismore could not compare with those of Myall Lake, Smiths Lake, Wallis Lake, the beautiful Boomerang, Bluey's and Burgess beaches, the hinterlands up to Barrington Tops, Gloucester and all those wonderful areas.

We are desperate to ensure that our area is foremost on the tourism calendar. To that end I congratulate the Government on introducing the outstanding "Seven Wonders of New South Wales" program, which we are featuring. Already, in its infancy, the program has brought an increase of up to 25 per cent in tourism in New South Wales. My electorate is benefiting from that increased tourism. We were happy enough to receive from the Hon. Virginia Chadwick, the Minister for Tourism, a \$100,000 grant. On Monday I will be giving the Great Lakes Tourist Authority a \$10,000 grant.

Mr Nagle: What size whiteboard does she use?

Mr TURNER: What an unintelligent, stupid interjection from a shadow minister! Every area in New South Wales got exactly \$100,000, unlike what happened with Ros Kelly, who wrote the details on a whiteboard and then rubbed them out. She gave all her mates the money. The honourable member, if he pretends to be a shadow minister, should consider his interjection next time he makes one. I will be sending a \$10,000 cheque to the Great Lakes Tourism Authority for its tourism plan. That excellent initiative will enable us to plan for many years into the future to ensure a continuation of tourism.

However, a low impact tourism destination holiday place is needed in the electorate to add a touch to its tourism potential and employment opportunities. We are well planned on the ground for an expansion of tourism. A very active TAFE college runs tourism hospitality courses which have great potential. TAFE is continuing to run those courses, and trained people will be available. That provision is another initiative by this forward looking Government to satisfy the educational needs of the citizens, especially

the young people, of New South Wales. In addition, the emphasis of courses can be changed so that people can get into their chosen areas.

I am excited by the trialling in the electorate of the excellent TAFE pathway project, in which students in years 10, 11 and 12 do vocational courses at high school if they do not want to go on to university. Not everyone wants to go to university. The Fahey-Armstrong Government has been deeply conscious of education needs in developing areas; the Myall Lakes electorate is certainly a developing area. The new Cape Hawke high school recently opened. The Forster high school moved to the previous Cape Hawke school site, where \$2 million has been

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expended on upgrading. The new Hallidays Point school has also been formed. There was such anxiety about getting that school into operation that it was relocated in Forster while a new school was built at Hallidays Point.

The Government recognises the need to continue and advance the educational changes put in place in the early days and it is pleasing to see that even teachers who were against some of the Government's proposals during the early part of the Greiner Government are now saying, "Yes, it works"; "Yes, it is good"; "Yes, we were wrong". I will not request an extension of time, but in my few remaining minutes I should like to say that law and order in my electorate is a concern. However, my electorate has an excellent police force, dedicated to the eradication of problems that often beset country and coastal areas.

I am pleased that the Minister for Police announced recently that the new Forster police station will soon become a reality. When I was first elected, Forster had only seven police officers. It now has 15 police officers, but they are still working in temporary premises - a garage. The Labor Government housed the police officers in that temporary accommodation and they have been waiting for a new police station ever since. It looks as though Forster is about to get its new police station, and that is an advantage. Law and order in my electorate has been enhanced greatly by the implementation of alcohol-free zones - an initiative of the Government - and many activities in my electorate have benefited therefrom. I could mention other areas, but there is no doubt that the State of New South Wales is in good hands under the Fahey-Armstrong Government.

Mr J. J. AQUILINA (Riverstone) [9.20]: I am delighted to have the opportunity to respond to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor. His Speech was presented in excellent fashion, although the text left an enormous amount to be desired. The New South Wales Parliament used to hold an official opening after every parliamentary election. It was an opportunity for the elected Government to present its program to the people. In those days programs had vision, and spelt out the aims of the Government and what the Government hoped to achieve. However, we now have an official opening every year. Pomp and ceremony every year! The Governor, the judges and the vice-chancellors are marched out, all in their festive array. The Governor is presented by the Government with a speech to read.

We have the pomp and ceremony, but we do not have the vision. Those who read through the Speech would be really hard pressed to find anything of substance and anything meaningful that looks forward to what should be achieved in the next 12 months. The Speech announces a few committees and a few inquiries. The Government is all for committees and inquiries! They are the answer to everything. Whenever something goes wrong the Government says, "We will establish an inquiry". If something needs to be done, "We will set up another committee". It is understandable, therefore, that some reference should be made to committees and inquiries in the Governor's Speech. Where is the vision? Where is the program? What is being achieved for the welfare of the people of New South Wales as a result of the Speech?

I should like to analyse education training, as I would be expected to do. It was very hard to hear in the other place among all the pomp and ceremony, with so many people jammed into that small

Chamber. I strained to hear something that was in some way innovative. Unfortunately I was to be disappointed, as were hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren and students at TAFE colleges in the State, as were hundreds and thousands of parents of schoolchildren in the State. What was announced in the program? The TAFE-HSC pathways - nothing new. We had it last year. It was an absolute flop because the Minister cannot manage programs she announces. The HSC pathway program was to have been piloted in 1994 for 1,200 young people. Unfortunately, the Government announced the project but forgot to tell the teachers and the students about it.

When enrolment in the HSC pathways program closed, 400 students only had enrolled out of the entire State, not the 1,200 for which I had criticised the Minister because I felt, at that stage, that too few places had been provided. At the last minute they scurried around and got a couple hundred more students to enrol. This year only 600 students are enrolled in the HSC pathways program, a program that everyone supports, including me, and which is acknowledged as a very worthwhile program, but once again has failed and has been failed by the Government because the last people to hear about it are the teachers in our schools and our TAFE colleges and the students who are supposed to be benefiting from it.

The Governor announced also joint secondary schools TAFE programs. Big deal! New South Wales has had those programs for 10 years. What is so new and so innovative about those programs? If one continues, one finds mention of a special education policy 1993 and a special education policy plan 1993-1997, but nothing is spelled out. What does this all mean? It is just so much mumbo-jumbo. There is no vision. There is no foresight. The Hon. Virginia Chadwick is shooting from the hip when it comes to education policy, and it happens time and time again. If it were not for some initiative on the part of her bureaucrats, we would have no initiative at all. She is failing to provide leadership. She is failing to provide any kind of initiative direction. She is failing to assume any degree of responsibility for this very important and vital portfolio.

The Governor's Speech made much of the Government's claimed commitment to the family. Again, that has a lot of platitudes. I put it to the Minister and the Government that there are few areas of government policy that could have a greater effect on the long-term welfare of families than the education of our children. Few family values can be

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argued to be more important than the inculcation of a spirit of honesty in our children. It is a pity, therefore, that the record of the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs so far this year has been characterised by lies and dishonesty - precisely the wrong values to promote in families. In the absence of any leadership on education issues, all the Minister can do is spout lies. In six days during February and March, the first month of the school year, she lied at least 14 times - that is a lie every 10 hours on those six days. This is not an idle boast. Each of those lies can be documented specifically, chapter and verse.

Let us take, for example, her claim on 31 January in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Each year since 1988 there has been an increase in spending in government schools". That claim is totally misleading. It fails to account for the increase in pupils enrolled and inflation. Since the Hon. Virginia Chadwick assumed the education portfolio, total recurrent education spending has fallen from more than 29 per cent of the total budget in New South Wales to just more than 26.7 per cent. The Minister for Health knows that only too well because his portfolio, which was second to education, has overtaken education in terms of budgetary expenditure in the State. Those figures can be obtained from page 199 of Budget Paper No. 2 for 1991-92, as compared with Budget Paper No. 2 for 1993-94. At the same time, pupil enrolments have increased to what the Hon. Virginia Chadwick has called "record numbers" - her words, *Sunday Telegraph*, 30 January. In the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* of 31 January, the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs claimed:

Mr Carr's figures are outdated and failed to include the Government's recent push to strengthen teaching numbers.

The Minister said this in response to an analysis by the Opposition showing that education funding in New South Wales was worse than that in any other State and any other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country. The Opposition's analysis showing lower per pupil spending and higher pupil-teacher ratios than other States and underdeveloped countries is based on three reports, each of which was released in December of last year and January of this year.

These reports are the most up-to-date, publicly available, comparative statistics on education funding. The reports include: "Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators", Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD, Paris, released in December 1993; "Statistical Annex, National Report on Schooling in Australia 1992", Australian Education Council, released in January of this year; and "Schools Australia, 1993, Preliminary", Australian Bureau of Statistics, released on 12 January 1994. Where is Mrs Chadwick's documented evidence for all her bogus claims, her lies and her dishonesty when it comes to educational statistics as far as New South Wales is concerned? No data released by Mrs Chadwick suggests that the statistical picture has changed. In fact, every indication is that things have got worse since the statistics were collected. On 1 February 1994, the Minister claimed on 2BL news:

When one looks at the cutbacks including sacking of teachers in other States, our commitment to education is very obvious and very high.

These words flow very freely from the lips of the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs but they belie the facts and the truth. What are the facts? Even after the sacking of thousands of Victorian teachers, New South Wales pupil-teacher ratios are still the highest in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in January show that last July, after the teacher sackings in Victoria, the New South Wales pupil-teacher ratio was still 14 per cent worse than that of Victoria. Even the further cuts in Victoria since then still leave New South Wales as the worst State. The extra 190 teachers this year will not decrease the pupil-teacher ratio; they will merely meet increased enrolments under the 1988 staffing formula, as the Minister has admitted. Again I refer to the 2BL news of 1 February 1994. On the same day Mrs Chadwick stated on the 2GB news:

New South Wales has one of the best education systems in the country because class sizes have not changed for four years.

In fact, we continue to have the worst funded system in Australia precisely because class sizes have not decreased in four years. If anything, they have increased. I have statistical evidence to back that statement as well. Four years ago 2,500 teacher positions were cut. I need not remind honourable members or the public of New South Wales that Labor is committed to the restoration of those 2,500 teacher positions, and we will do so in our first term of Parliament come May 1995.

Every comparison of funding per pupil since then has shown New South Wales to be the worst funded State. The fact that class sizes have not been reduced proves that this is still the case. Again, on 2BL news on 1 February 1994 - the Minister should stay off the airwaves because every time she goes on and tells more of her lies she gets the Government and the Premier into more trouble - the Minister said, "The staffing formula for schools has not changed since 1988". Where has the Minister been all this time? Is she so lazy that she does not even know what is going on in her department? Does she let her bureaucrats run it and let it run away from her?

The simple statement punctures all the Minister's other claims. It appears to be the only true statement the Minister has made in this debate. New South Wales education funding has never recovered from the cut of 2,500 teachers announced in 1988 and implemented in 1989. It was this cut which made New South Wales the worst funded State in Australia. It is a fact that teacher increases have kept to the staffing formula that keeps New South Wales the worst funded. This statement also rebuts Mrs Chadwick's misleading suggestion that new teachers this year represent an increase in

resources per student. Quite simply, they do not.

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A spokeswoman for Mrs Chadwick stated in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 21 February 1994, "Class sizes have not risen since 1988". The facts are: under Labor class sizes fell consistently from 1976 to 1988; since then, class sizes have increased to an average of 27.4 pupils, with 15 per cent of classes with 31 pupils or more. I need not remind any member of this House that 30 is supposed to be the ceiling for the teaching of classes - not 31, 35 or 36, as is very much the case with composite classes. Mr Acting-Speaker, you very well know that that is the case with some schools in your electorate. A spokeswoman for Mrs Chadwick stated in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the same date:

Schools have been operating under the same staffing policy of one teacher to 25 pupils in primary school and one to 35 pupils in high schools.

What are the facts? Around 80 per cent of primary school students, approximately 350,000 children, were in 1992 - and are presently - in classes of 26 or more. That fact is published by the New South Wales Department of School Education "Statistical Bulletin" put out by the Minister's bureaucrats, dated 1992. The staffing agreement states that class sizes in primary schools "need not exceed 30". However, in 1992 around 15 per cent of classes exceeded this limit. There has not been a staffing policy of one teacher to 35 pupils in high school for the last 19 years. I would like the Minister to point to anything within her bureaucracy, within any of the papers prepared for her, that shows that it has been policy for the last 19 or 20 years to have 35 pupils per class. That is a blatant lie. The *Daily Telegraph Mirror* of 21 February 1994 quotes Mrs Chadwick as saying:

There has been no rise in the number of composite classes across the state.

That is probably the most barefaced lie of all. In 1987 the number of composite primary classes was 3,417. That is a departmental figure, taken from the Department of Education "Statistical Bulletin", page 9, of 1987. In 1992 the number of composite primary classes reached 4,700. Again, that is a figure from the "Statistical Bulletin", page 18, of 1992. The department should stop printing these statistical bulletins, because every time it does it reveals the barefaced lies of the Minister and the way in which the Government is creating falsehood after falsehood when it comes to public education. [Extension of time agreed to.]

There has been an increase of 1,283, or around 40 per cent, in composite primary classes since Labor's last year in office. These three lies were all told on the one day. The Minister does not only lie to journalists and the public, she also lies to her friends, including an old friend from the good old days - none other than Kathryn Greiner. Mrs Greiner interviewed Mrs Chadwick on 2UE on 20 February. Mrs Greiner said:

Let's take the issue then of the composite classes. Have composite classes increased by 40 per cent?

Mrs Chadwick replied:

No they have not increased by 40 percent . . . it certainly isn't 40 percent.

I have already explained to the House that the official statistics of the Minister's own department show that the increase since Labor's last year in office was 37.5 per cent, or around 40 per cent in round terms. The staggering thing about that lie is that the Minister was prepared to lie to an old friend. What is she prepared to do to the general public of New South Wales? In the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 February 1994 she said, in reference to principals being gagged in regard to the Opposition's class size survey:

It was the first time Mr Carr had not approached the minister's department for information, despite past requests for data on class sizes, violence, computer numbers and other education issues.

The Opposition has had no co-operation from the Minister's office when seeking basic information. The Minister's office has failed to give the Opposition a personal briefing on the English and history syllabus, despite numerous requests in 1993. What does the Minister have to hide? Why did she refuse to allow departmental officers to give the Leader of the Opposition and me a briefing on the English and history syllabus? That should have been common knowledge. I, as a member of Parliament, and as shadow minister for education had the right to that sort of briefing and that sort of information. The Minister has refused to give the Opposition a copy of the first quality assurance report, despite announcing that it had been released and despite repeated requests from the Opposition.

I do not know whether honourable members would believe that she has refused me permission to visit schools in New South Wales - an elected member of Parliament and shadow minister for education, not a candidate or Joe Blow in the street. I have to kowtow to officers in the Minister's office to obtain entry to schools in New South Wales. More often than not I receive verbal and written advice to the effect that I have not received permission. This Government likes to run its schools like a dictatorship. Principals are disgusted with the way in which they have to watch their p's and q's. Honourable members should look at the department's code of conduct, which states that if principals speak out in any way against the official government or ministerial line they will be hauled before their regional directors and asked to account for themselves. They will have a black mark against them when they go for their merit promotions. This is the type of tyranny we have in our schools today. Teachers are looking over one another's shoulders. No one is prepared to speak out on educational issues because of fear of being reported to someone higher up or being asked to atone for what has been said.

The code of conduct refers not only to matters of policy but also to educational issues. The year before last we had a disgraceful situation where a principal on the North Coast was hauled over the coals. In fact, he was locked out of his office, the keys were thrown away and the locks to his office were changed because he dared, at a public assembly in his school, to make some statements that in some way were critical of the education policies of this Minister and

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this Government. What a disgraceful affair that was! Eventually, of course, he took the matter further, was reinstated and his office keys were returned to him. The Opposition has never received any significant information from the Minister's office. I do not even receive the same information which is sent to schools and many Government members. I, as shadow minister for education, have to try to obtain my information by various means, whether it be something as simple and as straightforward as a school memorandum or a syllabus that has been publicly released.

I wish now to deal with the lie about the bushfire heroes. On 16 February I drew attention to the fact that the Department of School Education was refusing to reinstate lost leave to volunteer firefighters in the Blue Mountains who happened to be teachers, despite the fact that the Government had announced that other public servants would get back their lost holidays. Journalists who rang the Department of School Education were told by the department that teachers would not get back their leave because they were on school holidays when the fires occurred. The Minister did a backflip and reversed the department's policy. But, worse, she claimed that there had never been such a policy. A spokesperson for the Minister's office lied to journalists and said that the department had never told teachers that they would not get back their leave. The Minister has a lot to answer for if this is the way in which she runs her department. She is tripping up departmental officials left, right and centre. She is changing policy on the run and, in so doing, is making her departmental officers look foolish and, in some cases, even stupid.

Both the department and the bushfire volunteers confirmed that the Minister's statement and the statement by the spokesperson for the Minister were lies. Effectively, the Minister was labelling those bushfire heroes as liars. That is reprehensible when those people gave up in excess of two weeks of

their holidays to help fight fires on behalf of people in other areas. I will deal now with the recent saga of lies and misinformation in relation to the Barnes affair. Poor old Chris Barnes was accused five years ago of having stolen higher school certificate papers. Two years ago he was acquitted by the court, which said that he had no case to answer. Because of an inquiry by the Ombudsman he was subjected to torture for a further two years. He is now being subjected to further torture because this Minister has announced an inquiry but she has failed to make that inquiry independent. On 1 March the Minister, on Alan Jones' 2UE radio program, had this to say about the Barnes affair:

. . . the matter that went to court was in fact a matter to do with an allegation that the papers were stolen . . . there were two different charges: one of cheating and one of theft.

That statement is false. The Minister does not know her facts or she is deliberately telling untruths. Barnes appeared before Mr K. Quinn, a Local Court magistrate, on the charge only of misprision of a felony. The other two charges were not proceeded with. Mr Barnes never went to court on an allegation of theft; the Minister lied again. On 1 March, on the same Alan Jones 2UE radio program, the Minister said:

There is no mechanism for me to instruct the Board of Studies.

Again that statement is false. The Minister could have taken the following steps: she could have carried out her functions under section 19 to determine whether the general method of assessment of candidates for recognised certificates involved an appeal process which was fair and impartial; she could have requested the Premier to initiate a special inquiry under section 82 of the Public Sector Management Act. A short, sharp four-week to six-week inquiry would have brought justice more quickly than the report of the Ombudsman. The final lie occurred earlier today during question time in another place. The Minister, as recently as this afternoon, could not help telling a lie to help get herself out of trouble.

The Minister espoused the same lie that she had espoused on two other occasions in her duplicitous costings of Labor's education policies. She stated today that Labor's policies would cost over \$300 million each year. In fact, using New South Wales Treasury's method of calculation, Labor's education policies - which are equivalent to 2,500 additional teachers - would cost around \$117 million each year when fully implemented in Labor's fourth year of government. Time after time, almost on a daily basis, the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs is resorting to lies, false claims and downright untruths to get herself out of the mess she created through her own inefficiency, ineptitude and laziness. It is about time the Minister started to get her facts right. If she continues in this way she will not only undermine her own authority as Minister, and her own credibility in this important portfolio, but she will undermine the credibility of the entire Department of School Education and those important instrumentalities that are so vital to students of this State.

I mention a matter relating to my electorate of Riverstone and to education, that shows the duplicitous nature of this Government. This evening I had the pleasure to entertain the former captain of HMAS *Nirimba*, Captain Geoff Cole and his lovely lady Lyn. *Nirimba*, which was a naval base in my electorate, has been closed down. It is a unique institution of great tradition and history, a learning institution through which over the past 40-odd years more than 12,000 apprentices have passed. It was, and continues to be, the hope of everyone in the western area of Sydney that that naval base would be turned into an education precinct with a university campus attached to the University of Western Sydney, a major TAFE college and two senior school colleges, one run by the Catholic Education Office and the other by the Department of School Education.

For months this Government has had the opportunity to respond. All we have received to date is one press release from the Premier saying that the education precinct has been approved. As the local member, and as an advocate for the western area of Sydney, I would like to see more ink on the paper and more commitment on the part of this Government. I would like to see a bit of timetabling, a bit of

guts to make sure we give some assurance to the people of western Sydney. Unless we have that assurance very soon, we will miss the boat for 1995. Thousands of young people who depend on this Government to provide them with educational leadership and educational opportunity will miss the boat. The Premier should tell us now what the future of HMAS *Nirimba* will be. [*Time expired.*]

Mr RIXON (Lismore) [9.50]: The shadow minister for education has managed to vent a whole lot of spleen, obviously because he was not happy working for the Department of Education, was not happy working with children. That showed up in the 28 minutes of rubbish we have just heard. The honourable member then spent two minutes talking about his own electorate. Even then he showed how little he really cares for his people and once again went on with a whole lot of rubbish and criticism. It would be well to remind honourable members what this debate is actually about. The autumn session of the New South Wales Parliament commenced on Tuesday this week with the official opening by His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Ross Sinclair, Governor of New South Wales. Following the long-established tradition of the Westminster system of government, the Chief Justice, university chancellors, lord mayors, service chiefs from the army, navy and air force and judges moved into the Legislative Council Chamber to witness the occasion.

After the arrival of the Governor, the Usher of the Black Rod, clad in his traditional black suit with white lace, crossed to the Legislative Assembly to knock on the door three times before entering this Chamber to invite members of Parliament to move in procession to the Legislative Council Chamber. The Governor then made his Speech which outlined the legislative and financial proposals to be debated during the Fourth Session of the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales. The topics covered indicated the wide range of responsibilities faced by a Government that has real concerns about the welfare and future of the people of this State. When honourable members look at those topics, ranging from family and community services through to ageing, education and training, initiatives for women, urban renewals, transport, health, indigenous people and many other matters, we begin to understand how well His Excellency set the pace for this coming session.

The Governor referred to the tragic fires that occurred in many parts of this State. In my own part of the world, because of the work of our own people and our own fire brigades, we were perhaps more fortunate than people in other parts of the State. In my electorate conditions were as severe as anywhere in New South Wales. We had temperatures of over 40 degrees, strong hot westerly winds, absolutely zero water in the grass and zero humidity, making conditions horrific for fire fighting. But with the help of fire brigades from as far south as Bellingen through to the Queensland border, under the control of our fire control officer Peter Ryan, we were able to minimise damage. On Saturday in Kyogle I enjoyed a barbecue and a parade of 40 firefighting units which were congratulated by the people of my area for the work they had done.

In Australia we can expect extremes of climate. We go from dramatic fires and drought through to heavy rain and floods. I am proud of the emergency services in my area - the full range from firefighting, flood, rescue, and volunteers - for the work they carried out. Even while I speak, my area has turned a full circle once again. It is pouring rain in that part of the world and the lower lying areas are suffering minor flooding. The last report I received was that the rain was not heavy enough to cause major problems. However, all these things indicate our need to be ready for all sorts of problems in the extremes of climate experienced in Australia.

The Governor also mentioned that this is the International Year of the Family. I record that I would like to see prominence given to examples of loving family relationships that set a role model for the way young people should live and provide strength for our community. Too often today young people do not see the sort of role model of which we would all be proud. As I look around the Chamber, the majority of people here are role models for exactly that sort of good living -

[*Interruption*]

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! Perhaps the honourable member for The Entrance was being disrespectful to the Chair. I did not quite hear his comment but I hope it was not disrespectful.

Mr RIXON: In the International Year of the Family I would like to see strong consideration given to these matters. I would not like to see the International Year of the Family spoiled with debate about what a family might or might not be. I would like to see prominence given to the positive side of family relationships. The North Coast is a very desirable residential area and therefore many aged people reside there. I am pleased the Governor mentioned in his Speech how important housing, health and recreational services are to the people of the area.

Mr Nagle: I have two sisters living in the area.

Mr RIXON: I am pleased that the honourable member for Auburn has interjected. The services the people of the Lismore electorate get from their local member are such that even members of the family of the honourable member for Auburn have moved to the district. Education for young people is most important for families, whether that education is provided in pre-schools or special schools. The Lismore electorate has a special school at Casino called Jumbunna. That is an early intervention centre which takes quite young children who have some form of disability. Those children are given stimulation to enable them to develop their full potential more

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quickly. That special school has much higher costs than have normal pre-schools. Recently the Government has been able to help the school continue its good work by making a one-off grant of \$15,000 to keep it going this year.

The children who attend that special school can then go to special schools such as Wilson Park or attend special classes at other schools. A greater co-operation and relationship has been developed between the special school and the special classes at other schools in the district. That is a model I have supported for some time. The teachers from the special school are able to have in-service training and provide resources for the teachers and children in other classes. Teachers who have specialist training could become isolated in other schools, but by mixing with their colleagues from special schools and the Wilson Park school they have the opportunity to continue to develop their specialised professional training.

The Lismore area has excellent primary and secondary schools. Schools in the area have taken up the pathways program. A small school in the Clarence electorate - a part of the region in which I am extremely interested - this year has accepted the enrolment of 17 mature-age students in years 11 and 12. The school has a total of about 20 year 11 and year 12 students. For it to take on 17 mature-age students makes one realise how well the school has promoted the pathways program. I congratulate the teachers and citizens of the Woodenbong School. The Lismore electorate also has an adult education community college whose staff have been working with the Aboriginal community and have established an Aboriginal institute. Both the adult education community college and the adult education Aboriginal institute are working extremely well. The TAFE college at Wollongbar is a regional college that is complementary to the expanding services provided by other colleges in the district.

The big success story in my electorate is the Southern Cross University, which was established by legislation introduced by this Government. I am pleased to say that the reputation of the university is becoming known far and wide. The tertiary scores required for entry to the university are increasing, so much so that it is becoming difficult to gain entry to the university. That signifies the high standard of education available at that fine university. As more people move into the electorate employment and economic development become more important. With that in mind the Government has set up business advice centres. I mention specifically the centre at Casino run by Ashton Gough and Shirley McNaughton. With the assistance of the Government they have established a rural advice service and an Aboriginal business advice service at Casino. That service deserves special mention. With the help of Ashton Gough and Shirley McNaughton, along with the work done by Russell Kapeen at Coraki, real

advances have been made.

When I was first elected as a member of this Parliament, in 1988, I visited the Aboriginal people at Coraki and was told that there were 200 able-bodied people in the town, but only one of them was employed, part-time. Since then Russell Kapeen and other Aboriginal people in the town have revived a nursery and got it going. That nursery is growing and supplying wholesale to other nurseries the vine to which the Richmond birdwing butterfly is attracted and on which it breeds. The work done at that nursery has led to an increase in the population of the Richmond birdwing butterfly and it is becoming common throughout the Richmond Valley. Russel Kapeen has entered into cleaning contracts with the Richmond River Council. He and his friends have established an art gallery at New Italy that is doing extremely well. They have undertaken a vegetable project whereby local people are learning all about market gardening. Recently I had the pleasure of presenting an award of \$15,000 to them as a prize they won in a statewide competition.

While speaking about the Aboriginal people of Coraki, I should congratulate "Four Corners" on the program it presented about Box Ridge and the people of Coraki. The presentation was perceptive and explained the difficulties faced by those people and the progress they have made. In a district that is growing as quickly as is the Lismore region it is important that small businesses be given opportunities to develop. The reduction in State taxes and charges and deregulation have helped to create opportunities for business expansion. I mention specifically two businesses that are doing very well. Norply was a plywood mill in Kyogle. After the disastrous closing down of the timber industry in North Queensland that company moved to Kyogle and set up a peeling factory. The gluing section of the company was located in Sydney. The company went bust. The people of Kyogle and Lismore bought out the company and have put it back on its feet.

When the original owners operated the factory in Kyogle about 30 people were employed. Norply has now moved its gluing section from Sydney to Kyogle and has expanded the company. The company employs almost 100 people and is producing a quality product; it cannot meet all its orders. If the company were able to gain access to greater resources, it would be able to value-add in a way that would be of economic benefit to New South Wales and improve the unemployment situation in Kyogle. Another firm that is expanding and doing well is Bindaree Beef at South Gundurimba, which is just out of Lismore. The company had a small abattoir that was taken over by local people. At that time the abattoir employed 30 people. Those who took over the company have worked hard and expanded it. Bindaree Beef now employs 100 people and sends products all over southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. That shows what can be done in country areas through decentralisation when a government is willing to support business. Power supply is most important for the expansion of businesses in regional areas. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

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It is interesting to note how public sector reform has flowed through to public utilities. Back in 1988 Pacific Power tried, with public consultation, to expand the power network from Lismore to Mullumbimby by means of a new high tension line. At that time the proposal met with a lot of opposition, because the consultation process was not as good as it could have been. Pacific Power found at that time that the need for the high tension line was not as urgent as it thought it might be because it had encouraged consumers to use power more wisely. When the company recommenced the consultation exercise it worked much more carefully with the people. As a result, although there has been some fairly heavy discussion and some people are yet to be completely convinced of the need for the line, most people in the area - whether they see the need for the line or not - have congratulated Pacific Power on the way it approached the matter of deciding exactly where the line should go and the way it has worked with the people.

Expanding areas such as there are in the Lismore electorate can have a major problem with law and order. People were very concerned about what had been happening in some streets of Lismore and in

the town of Nimbin, a very beautiful town but one with a major drug problem. I am sure any honourable member who visits the Lismore electorate will find a visit to Nimbin rather enlightening. However, in the past such visits could have been spoiled by some irresponsible people in the area. I am pleased to say that, with new patrol commanders in Casino, Lismore, Sanderson and Dawson, and the new district commander in Goonellabah, stronger and more innovative action is being taken by local police. Additional police officers will allow the reintroduction of foot patrols and as a consequence more co-operation from the people in the district. Thus the police services will be delivered more effectively.

One problem confronting police relates to drug use and drug related crime. There is a strong move by some people in the area to legalise or decriminalise marijuana. I object very strongly to any such suggestion. Having been a teacher for 28 years, I have seen at firsthand what marijuana can do to students. One of my most brilliant students took his life as a result of his involvement with marijuana. On many occasions parents come to my office with sad stories about marijuana use. I have seen for myself how young people who had tendencies towards schizophrenia or other medical problems have gone off the deep end and had their lives destroyed by that substance. I could never condone the legalisation of marijuana.

Decriminalisation of possession of a small amount of the drug or the issue of on-the-spot fines may be ways of lessening the backlog in the courts, but I am yet to be convinced of the wisdom of those proposals. We must ensure that the courts can deal swiftly with such criminal activities because, as honourable members know, justice delayed is justice denied; in some cases, punishment delayed is also justice denied because such delays can lead to the committal of further offences. Dealing speedily and justly with such offenders could perhaps solve many of the problems. I am pleased to mention that repairs and improvements have been carried out to both Casino and Lismore police stations and the new court rooms in Lismore are approaching construction, with alternative court room accommodation having been organised while the new court rooms are being built. Things are moving along well in that direction.

The North Coast has one of the best climates in the world - even better than Myall Lakes, I might say. The North Coast has an ideal climate and rich soils. The diversity of agricultural products is as great as one would see almost anywhere in the State. In addition to the traditional activities of beef cattle raising and dairy farming, there are goats, sheep, pigs, deer, horses, emus and ostriches. Among the crops grown there are the traditional corn or maize and a full range of cereal crops - wheat, oats, barley, and soya bean. The North Coast is becoming famous for its macadamia nuts, but pecan nuts are also grown, together with an extensive range of vegetable and fruit crops, including mangoes, peaches and plums. Tea and coffee are in production. The one common and essential ingredient necessary to make crops successful is excellence. Two farms may be side by side. One farmer may produce top quality mangoes while the other farmer is not quite as careful. During a season, when the farmers are looking for a niche market for their fruit to market, one farmer may be getting \$50 per case while his neighbour is getting only \$15. The story is the same whether the crop be peaches or whatever. Excellence is most important in agricultural produce.

The extension work of NSW Agriculture is most important. Field days, trials, and district shows are all very important if our part of the world is to make its contribution towards the \$5.8 billion worth of agricultural product produced in New South Wales. At the same time we have to be eternally vigilant because the North Coast, being subtropical, can have problems with cattle tick. Cattle tick is quite capable of surviving right through into Victoria. Those honourable members who have been reading the agricultural papers will have noticed that only recently Victoria has had trouble with bush tick, which indicates just how far cattle tick could spread if uncontrolled. Cattle tick spread could be absolutely disastrous to the beef industry of New South Wales. When cattle tick was first introduced into Queensland in the last century, up to 50 per cent of herds died from tick fever. The same could happen if cattle tick were to spread into Victoria. That part of my electorate keeps the cattle tick problem under control and at the same time protects the remainder of New South Wales. It is a point we should all keep in mind.

The North Coast is very attractive to the honourable member for Auburn because of its ideal environment and climate. Many writers say it is the best in the world. The mountains, the hills, the alluvial plains, the creeks, the rivers, the forests and the grasslands all need to be maintained and cared for.

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Planning, and balancing rural residential needs as against agricultural pursuits all need to be carefully considered. I am pleased that the current debate on wilderness has led to many people beginning to realise just how important the environment is to the local people. What concerned me in relation to the wilderness debate was the bad advice -

Mr Nagle: From the Minister for the Environment. He gave you bad advice.

Mr RIXON: No, not from the Minister for the Environment but advice he appears to have received from some of his advisers. I was pleased to be able to approach the Minister and correct that advice. I know the honourable member for Bathurst will be surprised, but I support the views of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness on that matter. The Colong Foundation for Wilderness nominated part of the Border Ranges National Park, which truly was wilderness and did not contain any tourist areas. The Border Ranges National Park has national heritage status and the romantic name of Lost World Wilderness was put forward. But then some advisers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service advised that all of the national park, involving 60 kilometres of tourist roads and miles of tourist walking tracks, should be included in the wilderness.

Mr Nagle: Is the honourable member saying that the Minister did not take his own initiative on this matter?

Mr RIXON: I am saying that a good Minister delegates and then checks to find out what is going on. A good Minister speaks to the local member and receives sound advice. That is what happened on this occasion and that is why it is known all over New South Wales that National Party members on the North Coast are sensible, well-educated environmentalists. They do not go around with a string of letters after their names, yet they have enough brains to understand that some people have not received adequate education. I am pleased to know what is happening. Of course, we need to look closely at the development of our roads, airports and railway structure. The Macpherson Ranges have provided a major barrier between the North Coast and southeast Queensland. I shall continue to mention the importance of the east Mount Lindsay crossing of the Macpherson Ranges to that part of the world. I remind honourable members that the Governor said in his summing up:

... I now leave you to your important responsibilities to further the welfare of all citizens in New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government and I take that challenge seriously. In the coming year the Government and I, as a local member, will be doing everything possible to ensure the future welfare of the citizens of the North Coast and, indeed, all New South Wales citizens.

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [10.20]: Honourable members will note that on the lapel of my coat I have a blue and white badge that has the familiar words London, Paris, New York and, more important, Auburn - the Auburn electorate being the centre of the year 2000 Olympic Games. Members of the Liberal Party would like a boundary redistribution so that the Olympic Games are held in a Liberal electorate - but they will be held in the Labor seat of Auburn. My sister Carmel and her husband, Richard, and my sister Mary and her husband, John Browning, enjoy living in the electorate of the honourable member for Lismore. They know the honourable member and speak favourably of him. The honourable member for Lismore has expressed views about the North Coast. However, the reality is that the North Coast is slowly but surely becoming Labor, and it will be a Labor electorate by the year 2000 because every seat north of Sydney will be in Labor Party hands.

I commend the Governor for his Speech, though not the rhetoric. I was pleased when the Governor visited Lidcombe Hospital in my electorate. If the Government remains in office after the year 1995, it will lead to the demise of Lidcombe Hospital. The hospital celebrated its centenary and the Governor said to the master of ceremonies, "Everyone can take off his coat". The Governor took off his coat and put it on his chair. That is His Excellency's nature. So why does the Government want to sack him? Tell me the truth. I was astounded by the nonsense I heard from the Premier today. The Governor is a man of the people and should have another term as Governor according to tradition.

Mr Kerr: You want a republic.

Mr NAGLE: If Australia became a republic tomorrow, the Governor would be the President or Governor of New South Wales but without the English connection. As I said earlier today during the debate on the fall of Singapore, my uncle was the great-great-grandson of an Irishman who came to Australia as a consequence of fighting for his liberty. Every year that I have been a member of this Parliament I have heard various speeches. Since this Government came to office every year I have heard the Governor's Speech. I do not wish to appear cynical but the Government does not have the ability to gain the numbers in order to pass legislation. The Government knows that the Parliament has to meet, thus presenting the facade of a parliamentary democracy. Parliament will spend three weeks debating the Governor's Speech but very little legislation will be dealt with; it is being held back because the reality is that the Government does not have the majority to pass legislation.

Recently I said at the Regents Park branch meeting of the Australian Labor Party that Parliament will sit for only 35 days in this year. Someone asked whether he could have my job - and preselections are imminent! I questioned whether he would really want it. We should be sitting more and dealing with important legislation. However, legislation is not being dealt with because the only legislation that is passed is that agreed upon or introduced by the Opposition - which is really the government - with the support of the Independents, Ms Clover Moore, Mr John Hatton and Dr Peter Macdonald, the honourable
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member for Manly. I say that because I picked the habit up from the Minister for the Environment, the honourable member for Gosford. Instead of addressing the Leader of the Opposition as the honourable member for Maroubra or as Leader of the Opposition, he addresses him by his first and last name. Honourable members should be addressed by their correct titles because that is the tradition. The Minister for the Environment, should not use his supercilious television antics.

[Interruption]

He loves Wilson Park, and I shall return to that in a moment. The honourable member for Lismore stated also that 1994 is the International Year of the Family; it is a year that should be created for the family. The idea is not rhetoric; it is to unite the family, to bring back the family. The incidence of violence in society stems from broken marriages and the failure to enforce discipline in the home or in the schools. Also, people are not taught to respect personal property and other human beings. We no longer have love and affection for each other. Back in the days when I was younger and my father was alive, we used a wonderful word - mate. In those days people were mates and could talk to each other. On many occasions driving up to Oberon and other country areas in my youth, hitch-hikers could be picked up without any problems. However, today people are terrified to do so. Violence is blamed on television and many other things, but I believe it stems from lack of communication with our family, and a lack of love and affection.

Earlier in debate on the motion relating to the fall of Singapore a lovely comment was made about a man who said, "I held your husband in my arms and all I could do was pray over him and send him to God. He was dead". That man fought in the war. Thousands of men died so that we can have our wine, our dinners, and our arrogance - but we must get down to reality, and, more importantly, this is the International Year of the Family. However, 17,000 families of lorry owner-drivers in Sydney - they are in the electorates of the honourable member for Cronulla and the Minister for the Environment, but not so

much in the working-class electorates - will not be celebrating the International Year of the Family because they are being financially destroyed.

When I became the member for Auburn, my electorate had an ethnic affairs office, a housing commission office, a health care office and a GIO office. Those offices have now all been closed by the Government of which you are a member, Mr Acting-Speaker. Those offices dealt with family issues. My office is now the housing commission office because people come to me to do something about their housing problems. The Government has closed those offices but the Opposition will re-open them as soon as possible after March 1995. I wear a badge which refers to Auburn, because the Auburn electorate is a great place to live and I represent a great group of lovely people.

Mr Acting-Speaker, you come from Lismore and you have told us it is a lovely place. Indeed, Lismore is a lovely place and a good member represents the electorate, but you must have a wider vision. I said to a Liberal member of Parliament, whose name I will not mention but who is now in the Chamber, "Why don't you come out to Auburn?" He said, "How do I get to Auburn?" He has not been past the North Shore. Where is Auburn? It is where the people live. It is where the Olympic Games will be held. Auburn has 20 per cent unemployment, it has poverty, it has many problems with regard to violence but it does not have an ethnic affairs office or a housing commission office.

The ethnic communities in my electorate are forming a committee to undertake billeting during the Olympic Games. The committee will be advertised throughout the world. It will say to the parents, uncles and aunts of athletes who will stay at the Olympic village, "We know you cannot afford the exorbitant charges of hotels on the North Shore, in the eastern suburbs, Kings Cross and Sydney, but you do not have to pay that money because you can come and live with a family of your own nationality in Auburn". Auburn has them all - the Turks, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Croatians, the Serbians. You name them, Auburn has got them, and they are all good people. The relatives of the athletes will be able to stay in the homes of these good people free of charge. I would like to be with one of those families in their home the day their child wins a gold, silver or bronze medal. I include in that the Aussies, who are also in my electorate. When one of their children wins a medal I would like to be in their home. It does not matter that the electorate is poor and has a high rate of unemployment. That is what the people of Auburn want to do because they are good people. Who on the Government side cares about this? No one cares.

Mr Kerr: We care.

Mr NAGLE: Oh, you care? You do not even know how to get to Auburn, but you will want to go there for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games. Let us get out to Auburn and experience the reality of it. Before Sydney won the bid for the Olympic Games there were three hospitals in my electorate: St Joseph's Hospital, which was run by the nuns; Auburn District Hospital, which is still there; and Lidcombe Hospital. They all played an integral part in servicing the community. St Joseph's Hospital is gone but its palliative care and rehabilitation units are still servicing the electorate. Those units are good for the people who use them - there is no problem with that - but St Joseph's Hospital was a magnificent hospital.

On one occasion I made a speech to the local council after a massive hailstorm had wiped out 40,000 windows and 4,000 roofs. I said to the aldermen, "People in our electorate are suffering, we have got to get out there and do something". They said, "Yes, we have got to do something". I then made the mistake of leaving the dais and fell over and broke my leg. The reason I mention that is because that accident put me in a cast for seven weeks. When I wanted to go to Auburn District Hospital, I was told there would be a five-hour or six-hour wait before I could be admitted. I was taken straightaway to St Joseph's Hospital and was taken in.

My mother had a terrible headache and went to St Joseph's Hospital. She had a massive stroke at that hospital, she was cared for and she died that night. It was a great hospital and it was staffed by great people. The palliative care and rehabilitation units and the village for the elderly are great, but 30,000 people moved through the casualty section of St Joseph's Hospital every year. There is an old saying, "Nixon couldn't tell the truth, Washington always told the truth, and some people today do not know the difference". That is how I would describe the Minister for Health. He gave \$2 million to Auburn District Hospital to pay for the care of the 35,000 people a year who went through St Joseph's Hospital but who now go through Auburn District Hospital. That money is there but there is still a three-hour, four-hour or five-hour wait before admission.

The January bushfires were tragic. Friends rang me from overseas to say how tragic the fires were. My wife covered the bushfires on the Central Coast for her newspaper. I had gone to Queensland to pick up my children. We came back down and we could not get past Newcastle, so we spent our time on that side of the bushfires. Yesterday the Premier told us that the Government would help people who did not pay their insurance or did not have sufficient insurance. I agree with that. People do get into financial difficulties. But when that hailstorm hit Auburn in 1990, what happened? Nothing. Auburn received not one penny from the Government. An amount of \$300,000 was given to Bankstown Council to undertake repairs and maintenance to its wrecked equipment, but not one penny went to Auburn. The people of Auburn had to fend for themselves. At that time I said to the Premier, the Hon. Nick Greiner, "I would never do to you what you have done to the people of Auburn". The people who suffered in the bushfires deserve to be compensated; so did the people of Auburn.

In 1989 when St Joseph's Hospital was closed, 25,000 people were on the waiting list. In 1993, 40,000 are on the waiting list. The Government must realise it has to do something about that. The Premier rightly said that apart from all the integral parts of an administration, a State government is basically about three things: health, education and transport. I thank the honourable member for Eastwood, Andrew Tink, for helping an elderly woman in his electorate. I telephoned him and asked whether he could help her, and indeed he did. It was good that I could talk to one of my colleagues about a serious problem. He was able to do something, although the elderly lady was very independent and decided that she did not want the help. However, the fact is that he attempted to help. That is what we are here for.

I come now to the most serious issue about which I am concerned: the environment. The Minister for the Environment is in the Chamber. In the Auburn electorate there is a beautiful park right on Parramatta River called Wilson Park. The plan was that when the ferries came to Parramatta, passengers would be dropped off at Wilson Park, the ferries would go down to Parramatta and everyone could board them. Someone miraculously discovered that the company which previously owned the land had buried toxic waste there. Unfortunately for the people of Auburn - but fortunately for the people who previously owned and sold the land in 1992 - the toxic waste erupted from the ground and onto the park and people were affected by acid. The park is now closed.

I have written many letters to the Minister for the Environment, who is not even bothering to listen because he knows he is not on a roll in relation to this issue. Wilson Park will be his death knell because of his failure. Incidentally, Wilson Park does not belong to Auburn Council; it belongs to the State Government. It is the Government's land; Auburn Council is merely the trustee. The Minister for the Environment said that it might cost \$2 million to rectify the problem but the council could do it because the Government would not. Auburn Council intends to send the problem back to the Minister and tell him that it no longer wants the trusteeship of the land unless the Government does something. The Minister for the Environment allocated \$250,000 for a little more experimental work to ascertain if there was any way of remediating the problem. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The same member for Gosford - the Minister for the Environment, who is the ultimate joke - is good on wilderness. He does not understand that the word wilderness is composed of two parts - wild and ness. He is not wild but is Ness. He would not know what the wilderness is, for he has never been out

of his own little patch with houses all around him. Recently in this Chamber he was at sea and was incompetent in the way he handled a question about his portfolio. Fortunately, the honourable member for Strathfield came to his aid with a supplementary question. If he had not, the Minister would have been dead and Opposition members would have been laughing. Each time the Minister sees Tony Sansom, the endorsed Labor candidate for Gosford, he shakes. At least Tony Sansom pays his \$1,040 in wine bills every year. I am sure the Minister will make sure that is taken care of. The environment is an important issue, particularly as it relates to Wilson Park. I am confident that after my contribution to this debate he will ensure Wilson Park is protected for future use.

I will turn my attention to more important matters such as transport, rather than dwell on the fantasy of having this man as Minister for the Environment. I do not know how the people of Gosford tolerate him. I like him as a human being, so long as I can keep my distance from him. He invited me to lunch but I was unable to make it. I will invite him and the honourable member for The Entrance to lunch and provided I can leave after the first half hour we should have an interesting time.

The transport system is a cause of concern. I was approached by a lawyer recently - and honourable members should not get upset simply because I mention the word lawyer - and he asked me when there would be class actions. When I asked him why

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he wanted to know, he said he was representing 15 people who have been assaulted, harassed or terrified because of poor security on the trains, but they do not have enough money to sue individually. He said that if it were possible to have a class action they could join together to sue the State Rail Authority.

One of my many occupations was as a station assistant, working shifts covering 24 hours a day. The job of station assistants was to secure the stations. In the 18 months that I carried out that work in 1973-74, I did not see one act of violence or vandalism. I travelled by train today on a new Tangara which had spray paint all over it. The cost of travel from Bankstown to Sydney in March 1988 was \$12 a week; in February 1994 it is \$17.80. In March 1988 it cost \$12 to travel from Parramatta to Sydney and in February 1994 the cost is \$17.80 - a 48.3 per cent increase in rail fares. If rail fares have increased so greatly, why is there such a problem with violence on trains, and in schools?

I refer to an article in the *Review Pictorial* of Wednesday, 2 March 1994 entitled "School principals, police chiefs meet". I organised and chaired a meeting that was called to discuss not so much violence in the schools but violence when children leave school. In October a vicious machete attack took place on a young boy at Regents Park station, in the suburb where I live. He was cut up and his friend was held down and kicked. Those boys came from Birrong Boys High School. The problem of violence on trains will not be resolved unless the Government provides additional police on railways or in the area.

I have a press release by the principal of Birrong Boys High School. He suggested that each high school should have access to one police officer who would liaise between the school and police. That has been agreed to and it will take place. A meeting of student leaders will be held at Birrong Boys High School to discuss the issues associated with violence in the community. That was my initiative. Every captain and vice-captain from every high school in my electorate, whether they be Catholic, Muslim or public school children, will be present to discuss the matter. The prevalence of graffiti was condemned and it was resolved that any graffiti in public places should be removed. I propose to introduce legislation to outlaw the use of spray cans as graffiti instruments.

Mr Hartcher: They are already outlawed.

Mr NAGLE: Is the Minister for the Environment telling this House that he wants spray cans legalised so they can be used to spray graffiti?

Mr Hartcher: I said they are already outlawed.

Mr NAGLE: That proves a point. Graffiti is all around Sydney, even on trains, though it has been outlawed by the Government, which cannot enforce the law. We can deal with this issue. If an under-age person is sold alcohol in a hotel, a \$5,000 fine is involved. But it is fine to sell that person cans of paint for graffiti. At Regents Park people had to walk past walls where four-letter words had been written in spray paint. This matter can be resolved only by legislation. These principles were enunciated at the meeting between principals of high schools, police chiefs and me. Everyone has a right to be safe, especially in public places. It is terrible that a meeting has to be held between principals and police chiefs to emphasise the fundamental principle that everyone has a right to be safe, particularly in public places.

The next point that was enunciated was that everyone has a role to play in stamping out violence, and young people have a vital role themselves. We intend to make sure that young people in schools in my electorate govern themselves and try to resolve the problem. The high school principals all believed that their schools were places of safety and security because of their well developed pupil welfare programs. I accept that because I know that Ross Beckhouse from Birrong Boys High School and Ross McBride from Birrong Girls High School are good disciplinarians. They have a good system for dealing with problems within the school, as do the Catholic schools and other schools. Parents of children at the Christian Community High School at Regents Park are fearful that their children will be attacked. These matters must be resolved, and it is up to the Government to resolve them.

I refer now to road transport. The honourable member for Myall Lakes spoke about the 3 x 3 program. He is behind the times; it is now the 5 x 5 program. He said most of the money is going to country roads. St Hilliers Road in Auburn, which is a continuation of Silverwater Road, has been under construction for the past four years. Each time I ask questions about it I am told it will be finished one day; they will finish it. Four years have been spent constructing one and a quarter kilometres of roadway, yet 20 kilometres of dual highway has been completed in a year and a half in the electorate of the honourable member for Myall Lakes. That is hypocrisy.

I shall speak now about breast cancer prevention. My wife's mother died of breast cancer, which is of serious concern in the community. A lot of money is spent, and rightfully, on AIDS prevention. Additional funds should be made available for research into prevention of the number one killer of women - breast cancer. I call on the Government to put its rhetoric aside and provide more for research into breast cancer. My wife, Karen, tells me that her mother used to attend Westmead hospital and wait for up to five or six hours, in terrible pain, to have chemotherapy. Prevention is better than cure, and money is needed to find the prevention. It is a tragedy, and if money is not made available for that purpose and the disease is allowed to spread, money will have to be spent on chemotherapy and proper treatment.

More school funding is needed. Recently a tragedy occurred at Lidcombe TAFE. Thirteen young men wanting jobs turned up to do a course in concreting, rigging and scaffolding. The course was funded by the Federal Government but, because the

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policy was to have a minimum of 15 students, the course could not start. I kicked up a big stink and we managed to find 15 students. The principal, Mr Peter Wright, to his eternal credit, agreed to go ahead with the course. I am upset that three of the students dropped out - one went to Fiji - and the course collapsed. The college had advertised the course but if we had known about the minimum number requirement something could have been done.

I congratulate Mr Wright on his effort. An officer at the Commonwealth Employment Service told me that the course could have started with fewer than 15 students. The CES was providing \$40,000 for the course and paying \$45,000 to the students for doing the course. There was a fighting chance. I have invited the principal to speak to the Mayor of Auburn, who has now started an employment committee in my area. The Federal member, Mr Laurie Ferguson, and I will take action.

Mr Acting-Speaker, I think you mentioned Southern Cross University. I have been to that university and I am a great supporter of it. The idea of having Seniors Cards is great but why do my staff in my office have to photocopy every single page to be given to the seniors? It is incredible. Finally, in the last minute of my speech I wish to thank people in my electorate. I refer to some of the councillors on the local council: Chris Cassidy, for the good work he does; Councillor Pat Curtin; and Mayor Stan Hedges, who has been there for many years and done a great job; and Councillor Shirley Haslem. On Bankstown Council I thank Councillor Grant Lee, Councillor Bill Lovelee and Councillor David Blake. I thank George Dunn, the former mayor of Auburn, and Councillors John Hachiti and Lee Lam, who have worked very hard for the community. There are many people in the community who go unsung - Bernie Donaldson; Dave Eagleson; Peter Cox, who was a member of this Parliament; Olive Cox; John Donnellan; Vince Cribb; Charlie Kensie; Stan Green and Edna Fox. These are people in the community. Frank McGlynn from the St Vincent de Paul Society and Tom and Dot Bolderson are also good people. There are many more who could be mentioned for the work that they do for the community. [*Time expired.*]

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Kerr.

House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.
