

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 8 March 1994

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

**Mr Speaker** offered the Prayer.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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### AIRPORT RAIL LINK

**Mr CARR:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. In answer to my question last Thursday did the Minister say the airport rail link is proceeding? Has Transfield in fact told him that it has now withdrawn completely from the project? When was the Minister told by Transfield that it had pulled out? Does this mean no prospect of the rail link for the Olympics?

**Mr BAIRD:** As I think I mentioned last week, the whole of the airport link is proceeding, and there is no question about that. But the nature of it has changed because CRI and Transfield were wanting an underwriting. The nature of the project was changed so that they would develop the infrastructure for the stations and State Rail would develop the tracks and the tunnel. The matter was referred to the ICAC to determine its view as to whether we could get an independent assessment of the quotations that had been received for the development of the tunnels and proceed on.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** The ICAC's ruling was that it be re-tendered and not go down the lines of the old tunnel route, whereby no tenders were called, there were no expressions of interest and no quotations.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** The ICAC determined the rules and following the decision by the ICAC the matter was referred to the capital works committee. It was decided by that committee that we should follow the ICAC recommendations.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** Because of that, it has been decided to call for tenders for the development of the infrastructure.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** Following that meeting both Transfield and CRI were told of the decision. It is not that they pulled out. They were told that if they were to go ahead, they must re-tender as per the guidelines of the

ICAC.

## CLOTHING INDUSTRY HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

**Mr MORRIS:** I address my question without notice to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Employment and Minister for the Status of Women. Is the Minister aware of allegations about breaches of health and safety standards in some sections of the clothing industry? If so, what action is the Government taking on this matter?

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** It is timely and appropriate that the honourable member should today ask a question about the clothing industry. I am sure that all honourable members on this side of the House are aware that today is International Women's Day. The Fahey Government is absolutely and totally committed to improving and enhancing the status of women in this State - unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who obviously is not interested in women in this State, for he has left the Chamber yet again. He is not even interested in women on his own side of the House. Honourable members will have noticed in the newspapers recently how well he has been looking after women members of the Labor Party! Where were Labor Party members when Franca needed them?

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

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** Where were they when Pat Staunton was asking for a fair go? They very quietly disappeared, because their commitment to women in this State is abysmal.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much interjection from both sides of the Chamber. Question time will proceed much better if the Minister is heard in silence.

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** We are well aware of the commitment the Leader of the Opposition has to women, not only in his own party but women who are trying to get into the Labor Party. How about the women who are already members of the backbench in this place? How are they going in the reshuffle? We all know that the boys in the backroom have already worked it out. The honourable member for Smithfield, the honourable member for Riverstone and the honourable member for Campbelltown must be outside discussing this matter already, for they have left the Chamber. The question asked by the honourable member for Blue Mountains today is

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entirely relevant because, as honourable members will be aware, most of the people involved in the clothing industry are women. Today is International Women's Day.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Excessive audible conversation is making it extremely difficult to hear what the Minister is saying. Though members who might be totally disinterested in the Minister's answer may wish to conduct their own conversations, I am sure that people in the public gallery would like to hear what is going on. Certainly, Hansard would like to record what is being said. I ask members to extend courtesy to those people, if not to their colleagues.

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** It is typical of Labor Party members to talk about a commitment to women but do nothing; they are not even prepared to listen. Today I released the results of an investigation by a task force of inspectors into employment and occupational health and safety aspects of the New South Wales clothing industry. That investigation was carried out by 12 highly experienced investigators, six from the Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education and six from the WorkCover Authority. I ordered the investigation last November following allegations raised in the media and after representations to me from the union movement.

In the space of two weeks, without publicity, the task force of inspectors visited almost 180 premises in the Fairfield, Cabramatta and Surrey Hills districts where much of the clothing industry is based. The task force

found instances of workers not being paid the legal minimum wage, employers not keeping accurate employment and payment records and other accounts, and breaches of safety regulations, ranging from lack of insurance documents and blocked fire exits to dangerous electrical installations. In some cases the inspectors came across female outworkers being paid as little as 80¢ for garments that took at least 20 minutes to make. The finding of this task force indicates that exploitation still exists in the clothing industry, exploitation that this Government will not tolerate.

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

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** As a result, the task force issued more than 140 notices. Those employers who fail to rectify the breaches will be prosecuted and will face maximum penalties of \$5,000 for breaching minimum wage conditions and up to \$250,000 for failing to meet adequate safety standards. However, the task force concluded that the problem, though serious, was not as widespread as originally alleged, due largely to the depressed state of the industry. In fact the inspectors reported that many of the alleged sweatshops had closed down or appeared to have only a small number of people working there who were usually family members. This does not mean that we can ignore the problems and concerns uncovered by the task force, which is why I have accepted its recommendation of a review of section 154 of the Industrial Relations Act to look at ways to ensure that businesses are responsible for payment to employees and contractors, the more rigorous enforcement of clause 126 of the State clothing award, and an education campaign aimed at both employers and employees, highlighting industrial and safety issues. I have also given the go-ahead for the setting up of a strategy group to go through the findings of the task force.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** That strategy group will include representatives of my department, the WorkCover Authority, the Retail Traders Association, the Labor Council, the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Ministry for the Status and Advancement of Women. The Fahey Government is strongly supportive of the clothing industry in this State and will continue to encourage small and medium businesses in this highly competitive area. The Government also recognises that the majority of employers in this industry are decent and hard working. They are facing very tough times - a recession, lower tariffs, and, of course, the large influx of cheaper imports from places such as China. However, let there be no doubt: this Government will not tolerate cases of exploitation. It will continue to monitor the industry, serve notices, and where necessary prosecute.

#### **NORTHSIDE BULLET BUS SERVICE**

**Mr LANGTON:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport. Does the Minister recall his June 1991 launch of the Northside Bullet, an executive bus service for North Shore commuters? At that time did the Minister say, "Passengers will have the added comforts of being able to relax and watch the news on television or read the newspaper"? Has the service been discontinued?

**Mr BAIRD:** The Government launched 50 14.5 metre buses - the super buses - which have proved very successful on the North Shore. These air-conditioned buses have set a new standard of comfort. The Government has ordered 250 environmentally friendly gas powered buses, which is the largest order for gas powered buses anywhere in the world.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** No other city can claim to have such environmentally friendly buses.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** Our buses compare with the best in the world and there is no need for me to apologise for

that.

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## **GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY HEALTH SERVICES**

**Mr ZAMMIT:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. What initiatives is the Government taking to address the health needs of greater western Sydney? In particular, are there plans for additional funding for health services in western Sydney?

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** I thank the honourable member for Strathfield for his question regarding greater western Sydney. He shows much more concern for the people of greater western Sydney than the former Labor Government did in the 10 years that it was in office. Western Sydney was absolutely neglected. Hospitals were allowed to run down and expanded health services were not provided in what is the largest growth area in Sydney.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** It is remarkable how health services for western Sydney have improved under the administration of this Government since 1988. It has been part of a three-pronged attack which is on track in terms of our commitment to the people of western Sydney, a commitment which started before the 1988 election. Since the Government came to office it has been fulfilling that commitment all the way down the line. That three-pronged attack comprises \$122 million additional funding for new services over the next five years in western Sydney. That is over and above the record \$1.1 billion we are already spending on health care in the greater west.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** The Government is continuing the \$1 billion infrastructure program in Sydney's west, including developments at the state-of-the-art international standard Westmead Children's Hospital at a cost of \$315 million for the kids and the mums of the west. We are also improving Liverpool teaching hospital at a cost of \$196 million. Yesterday I had the pleasure to be present at the opening by the Premier of the Caroline Chisholm Centre for Mothers and Babies. It seems that the Premier and this Government are offering more help to the honourable member for Liverpool in his attempt to gain preselection than is his own leader, who has ignored him. Why is it so hard to support him on this occasion?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister for Health, the Leader of the Opposition and others to desist from conversing across the Chamber. Remarks should be addressed through the Chair and should be relevant to the question asked.

**Mr PHILLIPS:** As I was saying, yesterday I was delighted to be at the opening of the \$50 million Caroline Chisholm Centre for Mothers and Babies at Liverpool, something that Labor when in Government neglected. Labor had no idea what it was doing.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** The honourable member for Liverpool was dumped by the people of Penrith and lost that seat in 1988, and it is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition stood by the honourable member for Liverpool and asked Mark Latham to step down and did not support him in the 1989 preselection for the seat of Liverpool. Why is the Leader of the Opposition not supporting him now? Is it because the honourable member wants to be leader? The Government is offering great support to the honourable member for Liverpool by the

\$196 million development of that hospital.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** By the end of 1996, because of what we have been doing out in the west -

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** - the people of western Sydney will have not one, not two, but three teaching hospitals provided by the Government.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** They will have an expanded network of district hospital services as well - and I am sure the honourable member for Strathfield is pleased with that - on the basis of the arrangement between the State Government and the Federal Government in purchasing Concord Hospital to provide a new network, and there will be a new inner west hospital, a new hospital at Bankstown and further upgrading throughout that area. The Opposition would not support that. It would not even support its own Federal Government in this arrangement relating to Concord Hospital. Also, that area will receive more than one-fifth of the State's funding allocation for health. That will be a record for the people of western Sydney. The west is already experiencing the benefits of the Government's commitment. By the middle of next year 1,600 new health jobs will be created in the west.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** The honourable member for Cabramatta was out there.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** Yesterday I noticed that the honourable member for Cabramatta was looking at the wonderful new facilities the Government is providing

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for the people of his area. I did not see the honourable member for Moorebank there. I did not hear an apology either, but maybe he also appreciates the wonderful job the Government has done in providing additional health services. Not only did the Government yesterday open the Caroline Chisholm Centre for Mothers and Babies but also it opened a new pathology department. Later this year a new renal cardiology facility and extra nursing services at Liverpool will be provided and in 1995 there will be a new cancer care centre for the people of Liverpool. Under the former Labor Government those people had to continually traipse into inner city hospitals to receive cancer treatment. The Government has expanded day surgery, mental and dental health services, and a fourth operating theatre will be provided at Fairfield Hospital this year. Dental and day surgery facilities at Camden hospital have been expanded.

That is just the tip of the huge iceberg in health care that this Government is pushing to the west. Health care is progressively unfolding for the west. I do not hear honourable members who represent the west complaining - the honourable member for Penrith and the honourable member for Liverpool. All those people are congratulating the Government on providing care for which the people in western Sydney have been desperate for so long. The Labor Party failed them. The Government is fulfilling its promises all the way down the line.

#### **SYDNEY FISH MARKET**

**Mr FRASER:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Mines. Will the Minister advise the House about the response of the fishing industry to the

Government's offer of a lease on the wholesale operations of the Sydney Fish Market?

**Mr CAUSLEY:** I thank the honourable member for Coffs Harbour for his interest in the fishing industry and, of course, the Sydney Fish Market. On a number of occasions I have made it clear that the Sydney Fish Market has a huge problem, a legacy from the Labor Party - a debt of \$34 million. This has caused considerable problems in the fishing industry and, in particular, the Sydney Fish Market. There is no doubt that the former Premier, the current Premier and I have made it clear that we believe the fish markets are an integral part of the city of Sydney, and should remain. They certainly are not available for sale - unlike what has been bandied around by the honourable member for Port Stephens - but they are available for lease on a long-term basis.

The Government called for expressions of interest from parties who might be interested in leasing the fish markets. I am pleased to inform the House that we have received six non-binding expressions of interest. Two of those parties will proceed to final evaluation. Initially the Sydney Fish Market Tenants and Merchants Pty Limited put in a bid, as did the New South Wales Fishermens Co-operative Association Limited. I am pleased to inform the House that both of those bodies, probably with similar interests, have combined their bid so that bid is continuing. The second bid is from the fishing industry and comprises a group of licensed fishermen from the South Coast, namely, Messrs Harasymiw, Musumeci, Bagnato and the Innes family of Batemans Bay.

So far as the Sydney Fish Market is concerned, I have always expressed confidence that it could be run by the fishing industry. This vindicates the position because the fishing industry has made the bid to run its own markets. Obviously it has been proved in the past that government is not a good manager of the markets, as evidenced by the \$34 million deficit. I notice the honourable member for Port Stephens shaking his head. That is of interest to me because he is supposedly the Opposition spokesman on fisheries. I never cease to be amazed by some of the comments of the honourable member for Port Stephens.

Only recently the honourable member was in the Coffs Harbour electorate and was reported to be talking about the need for the protection of breeding grounds and fish habitats. I could not agree more, except that the article does not say anything about how he was going to do it. That is similar to a lot of his other policies. When he was written to by Sea Pak about Labor Party policies, he wrote back, "We do not really have any policies, but if you talk with me I might be able to develop some". He was so keen to get his photograph in the local newspaper to assist the Labor Party candidate for Coffs Harbour that in posing he did not closely peruse the title of the book he was holding. The honourable member has no knowledge of the fishing industry, but he is shown in the photograph, if one looks closely, as holding "The Illustrated Guide to Fish". There is no doubt that the honourable member needs it.

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

**Mr CAUSLEY:** I am sure that the fishing industry is well aware that the honourable member for Port Stephens knows very little about the industry and does not contribute much to the debate. I assure the House that those groups will now be asked to proceed with due diligence to look at the facts and figures of the operation of the fish markets and to report by 13 April so that we can ensure that those markets are running efficiently, that they will be part of the central area of Sydney, the CBD, and that they will be run by and on behalf of the industry.

### **BUSINESS RAILCARD**

**Mrs LO PO':** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. Did the Minister on 9 July 1991 launch the business railcard scheme claiming that CityRail would undertake a "comprehensive marketing campaign" to attract business travellers? How many business railcards have been sold since 1991? What was the cost to the taxpayer of this project before it was abandoned?

**Mr BAIRD:** The honourable member for Penrith has asked questions about reforms of the ticketing system, and they are well under way. The honourable member asks about the business railcard, which was trialed. Undoubtedly, it was reviewed and it was determined as not appropriate in the circumstances. I should tell the honourable member for Penrith that I have made a number of public announcements.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** I made the announcement about Penrith station, and that work has been done.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** We announced the upgrading of Kingswood station, and that has been done. We announced the upgrading of Emu Plains station, and it is now a first-class building.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** Despite all the claims made by the former Labor Government about what it was going to do about car parking at Penrith, what did it do at Penrith station? It did nothing at all. Which government went there and announced initiatives on parking? It was this Government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Blue Mountains to order.

**Mr BAIRD:** What did the honourable member for Penrith, when she was mayor, do about that? Absolutely nothing.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** What did the honourable member for Kogarah do about it? Absolutely nothing. What did previous members do about it? Absolutely nothing.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There has been enough childish echoing of the Minister's words by those on the Government benches. I ask members to desist.

**Mr BAIRD:** Some members of this House use the M4 regularly. Which government provided the opportunity for a toll road for the missing section of the M4, which commuters in that area use every day? This Government and this Minister provided that opportunity. During the lead-up to the election the honourable member for Kogarah and the Leader of the Opposition said -

**Mr Langton:** On a point of order: as I heard it, the question asked by the honourable member for Penrith related to the business railcard. I would ask that the Minister be brought back to the subject of this specific question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads commenced his answer by relating it to the question he was asked. I note that the Minister has probably drifted a little in his answer. I ask him to return to address the subject-matter of the question that was asked of him.

**Mr BAIRD:** Ministers look at issues in terms of their portfolios. I make no excuse for that in terms of trialing. That is why we have so many changes. That is why we have the road up to Lapstone that the other side did not build. That is why we built the missing section of the M4. That is why stations are upgraded as they never were under the previous Labor Government. That is why Penrith station has a parking station, which the honourable member for Penrith and the commuters of that area never enjoyed before.

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

member for St Marys to order for the second time.

**Mr BAIRD:** I went to Penrith and made announcements about roads, railway stations and railway line upgrading. They went very well. Achievements in the Penrith electorate have been outstanding. We are all proud of what has been achieved in the west.

#### **CENTENNIAL PARK AND MOORE PARK LAKES WATER QUALITY**

**Mr YABSLEY:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for the Environment. What action is being taken to clean up the historic lakes and ponds of Centennial Park and Moore Park to ensure they remain in a healthy condition?

**Mr HARTCHER:** I thank the honourable member for Vacluse for his question and his ongoing interest in Centennial Park, Moore Park and other areas associated with eastern Sydney. The ponds and lakes of Moore Park and Centennial Park are significant waterways for the people of Sydney. These pools of serenity for park users and refuges for wildlife may be ailing at present, but our commitment is clear: these jewels will again sparkle. It is a commitment of this Government to ensure, as with all recreational parks and garden facilities, that these pieces of history are returned to their magnificence and maintained properly.

Effective solutions are needed, and that is exactly what the Government is implementing. The deteriorating water quality at Centennial Park and Moore Park became apparent just over one year ago when, in January 1993, blue-green algal blooms were discovered in a number of the lakes. The Government has immediately swung into action; it has committed funds to clean up the lakes and is developing long-term plans to keep them clean. Members of the Opposition clearly show that they are not interested in my answer. Their minds are all on one thing - preselection is under way. They are all conscious of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition when he said it was a tall order to back the honourable member for Liverpool or the honourable member for Ashfield.

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

**Mr HARTCHER:** The Leader of the Opposition interjects. On this International Women's Day let it be recorded that he intervened in the Gosford preselection to stop a woman winning preselection.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The level of interjection today, for some reason, is worse than normal. That is intolerable. I have often said that excessive interjection creates a very bad impression with members of the public. The only conclusion I can come to is that members are excited at the prospect of going to the Legislative Council. I ask honourable members to exercise decorum and to allow question time to proceed in a more orderly fashion, in keeping with the dignity of this Chamber.

**Mr HARTCHER:** Almost \$900,000 has been committed to the project to clean up the ponds in this financial year, or within this year.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair has endeavoured to be patient with honourable members. Some seem to have taken no notice, or have responded inappropriately. A considerable number of members are on from one to three calls to order. They shall now all be deemed to be on three calls to order, and if they are called to order again, they will leave the Chamber.

**Mr HARTCHER:** An amount of \$825,000 has been allocated to address problems being experienced in Centennial Park, and \$50,000 has been committed to clean up Kippax Lake in Moore Park. In addition, extensive water testing is now being conducted by Australian Water Technology. New pumps and filters will be installed, and Kippax Lake will be drained and the polluted sediment removed. In February stage one of the



Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust's water quality management study was completed, and stage two has now commenced. This essential data will facilitate further measures to solve water quality problems in the system.

The Urban Parks Agency and the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust have developed long-term measures which include tackling the fact that stormwater flows into these lakes and ponds. Stormwater from the Sydney Cricket Ground, the Sydney Football Stadium and Victoria Barracks, as well as from surrounding streets, flows into these waterways. This is a problem in many areas of Sydney. It is one of the toughest water quality battles we face, but we are tackling it. The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust is conducting a water management study, while other valuable expertise is being added through the Centennial Park stormwater task force. These farsighted actions are raising public awareness. It is all part of cleaning and greening our city, and everyone plays a part.

People using the parks can help by keeping in mind that some of what goes down the drain ends up in the ponds and lakes. It may seem unrelated, but picking up litter and droppings can help keep our waterways clean. The stormwater task force was set up in September 1993 to specifically address the problems within the Centennial Park water system. This task force comprises representatives of the Environment Protection Authority, the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, the Water Board, the Department of Water Resources, and Waverley, South Sydney, Randwick and Woollahra Councils. The task force has already adopted an action plan and is preparing an extensive community education program. This multi-faceted program that is being pursued will culminate in one thing: cleaner lakes for park users.

I have outlined five effective steps that are being used to achieve our ambition of cleaner ponds and lakes. The water quality study, pond dredging, pollution traps, community education programs and park depot pollution control measures will deliver cleaner waterways. The lakes and ponds of Centennial Park and Moore Park are being given the attention they deserve. The amount of almost \$900,000 that the Government has committed within this year, and the actions already undertaken to drain and clean the waterways, show that the Government is providing a long-term solution which will work. The Government is cleaning up the environment right across New South Wales. It is doing that in your area, Mr Speaker, on the Hawkesbury-Nepean rivers system -

**Mr Moss:** What about Cooks River?

**Mr HARTCHER:** The honourable member for Canterbury interjects about Cooks River. There has been a 45-fold reduction in toxic waste in the Cooks River - from 7,500 tonnes of toxic waste to less than 120-tonnes, on the figures supplied to me by the Environment Protection Authority. The honourable member for Canterbury is not even aware of what is going on in his own backyard.

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

**Mr HARTCHER:** If the honourable member for Canterbury really wanted to help, he would stand by the honourable member for Ashfield in his days of travail and bitterness, because as he sits next to the left-wing in this Parliament he can think of only one thing - Steven Crawshaw.

#### **TRANSPORT AND ROADS PORTFOLIOS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE PAYOUTS**

**Dr REFSHAUGE:** Is the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads aware that his administration spent \$5.7 million in two years paying out five-year contracts for the senior executive service? Have 21 transport executives been paid between \$100,000 and \$180,000 for early termination of contracts? How can the Minister justify these payments?

**Mr BAIRD:** An independent tribunal looks at all those matters. The honourable member should refer his question to that tribunal.

### GENERAL MANAGER, SYDNEY FERRIES

**Ms NORI:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. Did the State Transit Authority manager of Sydney Ferries receive \$104,614 in September when his position was abolished and his five-year contract terminated after only 18 months? Was this position simultaneously re-created and titled General Manager, Sydney Ferries?

**Mr BAIRD:** My answer to the previous question also applies to this question.

**Mr Carr:** On a point of order: the Minister cannot get out of it that easily. The second part of the question asked by the honourable member for Port Jackson referred to the retitling of a position within the administration of the Minister for Transport. That is not a matter for the tribunal; it is a matter for the Minister.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition is not entitled to debate the subject of his point of order. As he well knows, the Speaker is not vested with authority to determine how a Minister should answer a question. He can do so in whatever way he chooses. No point of order is involved.

### FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL IN NATIONAL PARKS

**Mr WINDSOR:** Given the interest of the Minister for the Environment in wilderness areas, what management regimes will the National Parks and Wildlife Service put into practice to control feral animals, particularly cats? Can the Minister guarantee that these practices will be adequately funded to stop the carnage that is occurring to native animals in these areas?

**Mr HARTCHER:** I thank the honourable member for Tamworth for his question and for his interest in wilderness areas. He has asked about management systems for wilderness areas. Members of Parliament would be aware that on 15 February the joint parliamentary coalition parties passed a resolution that was widely publicised and stated that the Government intends to appoint a system of management trusts dedicated to assisting the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the management of wilderness areas. That process has not yet been finalised, but obviously it will be done within the ambit of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, which provides for the management of national parks and nature reserves.

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

**Mr HARTCHER:** As the wilderness areas which are proposed fall largely within national parks we will extend those provisions to those wilderness areas. That answers the first part of the honourable member's question. The second part related to feral cats. Feral cats and all feral animals are a major issue in the environment and in the protection of our native wildlife. We could single out one feral animal species, such as feral cats, but they all, in their different areas in different national parks, constitute a major concern. Work is under way to investigate feral cat control. The Government has implemented pilot programs and has looked at that problem fairly extensively in Lane Cove River National Park, but feral cats are endemic right along Australia's eastern seaboard. Until we have an effective system of biological control of feral cats, which I believe is some way off, we will have an ongoing problem.

*[Interruption]*

Members of the Labor Party again show their lack of interest in anything to do with Australia's environment or its wildlife. It is quite understandable that the popularity of the Leader of the Opposition, which was 27 or 28 per cent last week, has now dropped to 24 per cent. I hate to give weekly reports to the Parliament on the falling popularity of the Leader of the Opposition, which appears to be endemic because it is reflected in the lack of interest of Opposition members in all environmental issues. The question of cat control

is an important and significant environmental issue. As I have said, until we have a biological control mechanism, which we are seeking, we will have an ongoing problem. I have had discussions with the Premier about feral animal management in national parks, and I hope that those discussions bear fruit. It is the policy of this Government to ensure that it has in its national parks and across the community generally sufficient means to look after issues which arise, such as bushfire control, noxious weeds and feral animals.

#### **COMMISSIONER LAUER AND SUPERINTENDENT MYATT**

**Mr HATTON:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services. In light of the evidence given by Commissioner Lauer to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, his attack on Sergeant Cook, his praise for Superintendent Myatt and the findings of the ICAC against Mr Myatt, does he still enjoy the confidence of the Minister? Why was Superintendent Myatt not suspended when other officers named by the ICAC were? Did Commissioner Lauer suggest or in any way support the favourable treatment of Myatt? What is the position of the Minister?

**Mr GRIFFITHS:** At the outset I point out that on occasions one forms an opinion, but that opinion might change. When I was appointed to this House I had a favourable opinion of the honourable member for South Coast. I might not hold that view now. Let us look at the specific parts of the question asked by the honourable member for South Coast. The Independent Commission Against Corruption did not come down with any adverse finding in regard to Commissioner Lauer's comments concerning Mr Myatt. The commissioner still enjoys my support. As has been mentioned over the last week, the Government is looking at policy on suspending officers. Mr Myatt was treated no differently from any other officer as a result of the findings of the ICAC.

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#### **STATE RAIL AUTHORITY FREIGHT CAMPAIGN**

**Mr JEFFERY:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads. What action has the State Rail Authority taken to attract freight traffic off road and on to rail? Can the Minister advise the House of the impact of the campaign by Freight Rail to keep trucks off roads?

**Mr BAIRD:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I will talk about what this Government has achieved in reality. It has been a whole period of achievement for this side of the House, not the least of which is in freight. The honourable member for Kogarah goes around the State saying, "We will have the answers for you; we will get the freight off the roads and back on to rail". The reality is that the shift back on to rail has occurred more significantly under this Government than under the previous administration. The honourable member for Kogarah was in Queanbeyan recently and talked about getting the freight off the roads. There was a proposal to spend \$37 million on a bypass of the road, and the honourable member said he was opposed to that and that the Government should get freight back on to rail. What is proposed is documented in the local paper.

**Mr Langton:** That is a lie.

**Mr BAIRD:** It is there in black and white. The honourable member for Kogarah told Parliament last year that the only way of achieving a dual carriageway from Hexham to the Queensland border was through a tollway. However, a few months later the honourable member said that a tollway proposal was environmental vandalism and an unnecessary drain on the New South Wales economy. Of course, that has been documented from one end of New South Wales to the other. An article said the Australian Labor Party had backflipped over a \$5.5 billion tollway. Opposition members come into the House and say they are in favour of something and then the honourable member goes outside and says he is not in favour of it. Of course the backflip has been documented in coastal newspapers, where it is stated:

The Opposition Transport Committee must be suffering from amnesia following a radical aboutface on the proposed \$5.5 billion private tollway into the North Coast.

Opposition members simply say one thing one minute and then change their minds. So there is a big claim about how we get freight off roads - such as the Pacific Highway, which has a long record of accidents - and the Opposition then changes its position. The policies of this Government are clear; it wants to build better roads for motorists and so reduce the road toll. No doubt in this State the present Government has built far better roads than those built under the previous Labor Government. Over the past three years, compared with the last three years of the Labor Government, we have achieved an increase of 29 per cent in real terms across the board. The follow-through is the same this year: a 45 per cent increase in new capital works compared with the last year that Labor was in government - a 45 per cent increase.

This Government has been putting better roads out there. Divided highways mean safer roads. Anyone coming into Sydney would recognise the enormous difference in the roads built under this Government compared with those built under the previous Labor Government. At the same time, State Rail is out in the market-place encouraging business to transport freight by rail. I am pleased to inform the House that this campaign is succeeding. In fact, a record 65.6 million tonnes of freight will be hauled by State Rail this year. That is a 15.5 million increase in freight carried during the last year that Labor was in government. It was 50 million tonnes during the last year Labor was in government; this year 65.6 million tonnes will be hauled.

The honourable member for Kogarah runs around the State saying, "Look, under the current Government we have had all this freight go onto the road". The reality is quite different. There has been a 15 million tonne increase in freight hauled, from 50 million to 65.6 million, under this Government. This year a record amount of coal, almost 47 million tonnes, will be carried by rail to the ports of Newcastle and Port Kembla. The new 4,000 horsepower locomotives coming on line in the next few months will make these operations more efficient. Similarly, the bumper grain harvest means that State Rail will carry more than three million tonnes of export grain to the ports. The operation is proving so successful that the managing director of GrainCorp has written to praise the efforts of Freight Rail in ensuring that the export grain program is achieved. The Government is responding to that challenge, and is opening up some of the longhaul rail lines to ensure that we get more of the produce onto Freight Rail.

It is only natural that haulage of some commodities will increase. But the Government is doing more. It is carrying a record amount in general freight, for example, a record amount of rice and a record amount of cement. State Rail recently won a long-term contract to move 100,000 tonnes of mineral concentrates from Tarago, which is near Goulburn, to Newcastle. The business concerned was moving its minerals by road last year but State Rail proved that it was more efficient and won the contract back to rail. That is all about being more commercial, more efficient and winning contracts back to rail. That will result in nearly 9,600 loaded semi-trailers being kept off the roads between Goulburn and Newcastle each year. This sort of thing is happening throughout the State when new contracts are won - trucks are being kept off the roads and freight is being carried by rail instead.

*[Interruption]*

The record is here for everyone to see. There was 50 million tonnes of freight carried in the last year of the Labor Government and 65.6 million has been carried under this Government this year. The record speaks for itself. Freight Rail is seeking to expand business, and over the next few years we expect almost 200,000 tonnes of general freight, including fuel, rice, cotton and cement to come to

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rail. Freight Rail anticipates that 3.5 million tonnes of new business in products such as solid waste, timber and river sands will be attracted over the same period. As the Minister for Energy and Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives knows, the Government has encouraged oil producers to send fuel over the mountains by rail. The honourable member for Kogarah went up to Orange and said it will never happen. It was happening within weeks of his visit to Orange.

**Mr Langton:** I made it happen.

**Mr BAIRD:** I am sure you did not. This Government is committed to an official rail system. It is this Government that is improving the resources in Freight Rail, putting in new high-powered locomotives and the reforms that are necessary. It can be seen that in almost all areas State Rail has made a very great achievement. The Government is very proud of its achievements. Freight is moving off the road and back onto rail.

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*[Notices of Motions]*

**Mr W. T. J. Murray:** On a point of order: there have been rulings by many Speakers -

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Blacktown to order. I call the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services to order.

**Mr W. T. J. Murray:** There have been rulings by many Speakers as to the length of notices of motions given in this Parliament. The notice of motion given by the honourable member for Kogarah is excessively long; it includes matters of debate and determinations, and it contains more than one matter for debate.

**Mr Whelan:** On the point of order: the notice paper currently contains notices of motions that are as long as that read by the honourable member for Kogarah. The essence of a notice of motion is not intended to put facts but it assumes that a debate will occur in the House on the matter raised. The notice of motion given by the honourable member for Kogarah is adequate in all respects. I draw to your attention item C5 in today's notice paper standing in the name of the honourable member for Kogarah. The point of order should have been raised at an earlier stage.

**Mr W. T. J. Murray:** Further to the point of order: I raised a similar point of order some time ago when a point of order was taken as to the length of a question. At that time you ruled that any objection to the length of a question or to the argumentative content of a question should be raised at the time the question was given. That is the reason I have taken the point of order now. Any motions on the notice paper would be entitled to remain if a point of order was not taken at that time.

**Mr Knight:** On the point of order: I recall the last occasion on which the honourable member for Barwon raised a point of order of this nature. It related to the Packard notice of motion. On that occasion you eruditely and correctly ruled that although that motion was even longer than the present one, it was appropriate for the motion to be on the notice paper. Though that ruling has not yet been incorporated in the printed rulings of Presiding Officers, I am sure that you would have the endorsement of the House if you followed that ruling on this occasion.

**Mr W. T. J. Murray:** Further to the point of order: I took the point of order when the motion was about to be debated, not when it was put on the notice paper.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Barwon first took the point of order when the motion to which the honourable member for Campbelltown referred was before the House. It was in relation to the replacement of a motion on an earlier business paper. As it had remained on the business paper unchallenged for some time, I took the attitude that it was beyond the point of challenge. In that regard the honourable member for Barwon is correct.

The number of issues raised in the motion of which notice has been given, and those aspects that may apply to questions without notice, do not necessarily relate to the terms of reference for a select committee. As the motion was being read I was somewhat concerned about its length and the way it was framed. At this stage I do not intend to give a ruling on that issue. Before the motion is confirmed on the business paper there will be ample time for it to be examined and checked against precedent. If I deem it to be in acceptable form, it will be

printed in the business paper tomorrow. If I have any concern about the matter, I shall discuss it with the honourable member for Kogarah and the honourable member for Barwon before making a final decision.

## **PETITIONS**

### **Azzopardi Inquiry Legislation**

Petition praying that the House not pass the Azzopardi Inquiry Bill 1993, received from **Mr Hartcher**.

### **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**.

### **East Toukley Traffic Lights**

Petition praying that traffic lights be installed at the corner of Evans and Main roads, East Toukley, adjacent to Toukley Public School, received from **Mr Crittenden**.

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### **Lake Menindee**

Petition praying that the water level of Lake Menindee be maintained at its original level, received from **Mr Beckroge**.

### **Shellharbour Public Hospital Children's Ward**

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

### **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**.

### **Warilla Police Station**

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

### **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 **Ms Allan**.

## **REGULATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

## **Twenty-sixth Report**

**Mr CRUICKSHANK** (Murrumbidgee) [3.21]: I bring up and lay upon the table of the House the Twenty-sixth Report of the Regulation Review Committee dated March 1994, drawing special attention to the fact that certain requirements of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989 appear not to have been complied with in connection with the making of the local government approvals regulation 1993.

**Ordered to be printed.**

## **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE UPON ROAD SAFETY**

### **Twenty-fifth Report: Dangerous Driving**

**Mr HAZZARD** (Wakehurst) [3.22]: I bring up and lay upon the table of the House the Twenty-fifth Report of the Joint Standing Committee upon Road Safety, entitled "Death and Serious Injury on New South Wales Roads: An Examination of the Provision of the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) regarding Dangerous Driving", dated March 1994.

**Ordered to be printed.**

I table also the minutes of evidence taken before the committee. I seek leave of the House to move suspension of so much of the standing and sessional orders as would preclude me speaking to the report.

**Leave not granted.**

## **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE UPON THE SYDNEY WATER BOARD**

**Motion, by leave, by Mr West agreed to:**

That the reporting date for the Joint Select Committee upon the Sydney Water Board be extended to 19 April 1994.

### **Message**

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution and inviting it to agree to a similar resolution.

## **SENATE VACANCIES**

### **Joint Sitting**

At 3.29 p.m. the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to choose Senators in the place of Senator Kerry Walter Sibraa, resigned, and Senator Bronwyn Kathleen Bishop, resigned.

*The House having reassembled at 3.49 p.m.,*

**Mr Speaker** reported that at a joint sitting this day Belinda Jane Neal and Dr Robert Leslie Woods had been chosen as Senators in the place of Senator Kerry Walter Sibraa, resigned, and Senator Bronwyn Kathleen Bishop, resigned.

**Mr Speaker** laid upon the table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting.

**Ordered to be printed.**

## **MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MINISTER FOR ROADS**

### **Consideration of Urgent Motion**

**Mr LANGTON** (Kogarah) [3.50]: I move:

That this House condemns the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads for further evidence of broken promises and waste in his portfolios.

Last Thursday the Opposition revealed a string of promises made and broken by the Minister for Transport - 16 schemes announced and reannounced; 16 schemes never started, let alone completed. Today we have revealed more: an executive bus service and the business rail card. And, most significant, we have revealed the collapse of the city airport link, announced on 13 occasions by this Minister for schemes that remain dreams. Let us face it: this Minister, as with most of his colleagues, has given up. He hates his job. He lost the Olympic portfolio. Basically, he does not want to be here. This may be a symptom of his midlife crisis, but at least the Minister is doing something about it. He is hawking his curricula vitae around every head-hunting agency in Sydney. And it is right that he does so. The New South Wales taxpayer cannot any longer afford the Minister's indifference.

Today the Opposition presents a scandalous waste of taxpayers' money, the failure of the senior executive service and the maladministration of the Fahey Government. Millions of taxpayers' dollars

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have been paid in compensation to SES officers who have had their contracts terminated. Today we reveal who they are, how long they worked and how much they were paid. Senior executive service positions are being simultaneously destroyed and re-created. SES payouts total \$5.7 million in the transport portfolios alone, that is, \$5.7 million in compensation to Fahey's fat cats and Baird's bureaucrats. Members of the senior executive service right across the transport and roads portfolios have been resigning and collecting huge payouts of up to \$180,000. In fact, 20 per cent of the SES in the Roads and Traffic Authority have jumped ship. And why not?

More than \$500,000 has been paid to the one in five SES officers at the RTA who have failed to work their contracted term. The new catchcry echoing through the offices of the RTA is "Take the money and run". The Government has hidden these figures. The Minister has tried to keep this information secret, yet leaks from his administration reveal the extent of the scandal. Payouts to SES personnel in the Minister's administration amount to \$5.7 million. I shall list a few of the details. The General Manager of the Logistic Services Branch of the RTA received \$103,000 compensation last September when his position was abolished. Is it good news that an SES position was abolished? Not quite, because the position was simultaneously re-created and retitled General Manager, Logistic Services Branch.

The position of Manager, State Transit Authority, Ferries, was abolished in September at a cost to the taxpayer of more than \$104,000 and later re-created and retitled General Manager, Sydney Ferries. The longer the new title, the higher the payout on the old one - that is the way it works. In August the position of General Manager, Human Resources at the STA was abolished, with a total payout of more than \$118,000. It rapidly reappeared as General Manager, Corporate Human Resources Development. The Director of Corporate Development of the RTA received the chop last month, and with half of his contract to go he received \$157,000.

All honourable members would remember Dr Paul Grimwood, appointed by the Minister to head the Department of Transport in February 1990. He was removed from that position less than a year later and moved to a newly created Transport Institute, a transport planning think-tank, while the terms of his sacking were negotiated. In July 1991 he was quietly paid out more than \$180,000 after working only 18 months of a five-year contract. And with him went the Transport Institute, a bureaucracy created and destroyed to find a



place for an SES officer out of sight of this petulant Minister.

SES officers whose contracts were terminated for poor performance still received compensation. In other words, they were rewarded for poor performance. The former North Shore business unit manager at the State Transit Authority received six months compensation totalling over \$46,000. That was 29 months into a five-year contract and after the STA had assessed his efforts as a poor performance. A senior STA manager in the Hunter had his contract terminated and received over \$105,000. Yet leaked government documents note that he received 12 months' compensation because the STA, while not happy with his service, would not pursue an unsatisfactory service claim. Similarly, another SES officer in the STA received \$106,600 when his five-year contract was terminated after approximately 20 months. Government documents state that "certain outstanding financial matters relating to use of STA vehicles were not taken into consideration". The list and the scandals go on.

Two-and-a-half years and \$5.7 million later, we are left asking why? Why create these positions in the first place? Why employ people for five years if they will not last the distance? Why pay salary rates for public service fat cats that the private sector would not entertain? Finally, why create positions only to abolish and re-create them, leaving the taxpayers shortchanged by millions? These examples spread across the transport portfolios, the SRA, the STA and the RTA. Name the acronym. At any given time a six-figure SES position is being simultaneously created and destroyed. The payouts are huge. The General Manager, Human Resources, at the State Rail Authority received over \$118,000 last August after working 47 months of a five-year contract; that is \$182 per day.

The Director of Corporate Development at the Roads and Traffic Authority received over \$157,000 in January - or \$430 per day. Two years ago the General Manager, Group Commercial Services, at State Rail received \$120,000 after serving half of his contract - a payout of \$330 per day. The senior executive service in the transport portfolios has become a grasping parody of itself, as the Opposition predicted it would. In February 1991 the Opposition first raised in Parliament the coalition Government's wastage of taxpayers' money on excessive salary packages for members of the senior executive service. The Opposition revealed then that the Government had secretly granted the State's 1,500 top public servants 100 per cent more than the salaries they received in 1988.

**Mr Hazzard:** On a point of order: I am concerned that the honourable member does not recall the standing order that provides that he should not read his speech. Thus far he has read every word.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I do not intend to uphold the point of order at this stage of the honourable member's speech.

**Mr LANGTON:** The Opposition showed that those public servants were receiving salaries 30 per cent higher than their Commonwealth counterparts received, though they managed similar budgets or in some cases smaller budgets and smaller departments with fewer people. The Opposition demonstrated how this State's 2,500,000 taxpayers were paying more than \$70 million each year to maintain these exorbitant salary packages. The Opposition revealed that a confidential report commissioned by former  
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Premier Nick Greiner at the end of 1990 showed that many of these overpaid, poor performers were only being kept on because of the expense of their being let go.

It does not appear from the figures released by the Opposition today that there is any such reluctance any more. They are all being paid out, their jobs only to be re-created and retitled for another generation of this Government's and - dare I say it - Fahey's fat cats. The Minister stands condemned for his continued failure in his administration of his portfolio to provide this State with any decent transport policies or schemes and for his continual broken promises and waste. The waste and maladministration which the Opposition has pointed to over the past three sitting days is sufficient for any fair-minded and fair thinking member to vote in favour of this motion of condemnation.

**Mr BAIRD** (Northcott - Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads) [4.0]: I should have thought the honourable member would have learnt his lesson. Last Thursday he lost his censure motion, but today he moves another. His allegations today contain nothing of substance. He had not a clue what he was talking about. He had to read his whole speech. His research officer did it for him. The honourable member came into this House without any knowledge of this matter. Once the point of order was taken, it was clear the member had nothing else to say. He could only look away from the page for half a minute. The reality is that the honourable member tried it before and failed - and he is trying it again.

The number of promises made throughout this State by the honourable member for Kogarah is legendary. In time those promises will be released and costed; we have every one of them. The previous Labor Government had the honourable member running around the State making promises: this Government puts its promises into practice. All members opposite have been beneficiaries of this Government's achievements in the electorates they represent. Recently I attended the opening of a rail line extension. The honourable member for Keira, with his son and family - a nice family, too - was also present. On that occasion the honourable member commented on how great the Minister was and what he had done. During its 12 years in office Labor had the opportunity to extend that rail service in what is Labor's heartland, but failed to do so. The Government promised that work, yet the Opposition knocked it, as it always does. The reality is that this Government did it. The Government put the rail line in, just as it did with the one-stop spot in Wollongong. The honourable member for Kogarah has said the northern distributor should be extended. This Government put the northern distributor in place, in Labor Party heartland.

The honourable member for Campbelltown has not spoken yet, but I look forward with pleasure to hearing from him. A large amount of money has been spent on the railway station in his electorate - the interchange. It took this Government to do that. The honourable member admitted he was glad this Government was refurbishing his station, because he knew there was no hope when the Labor Party was in government; the station was tatty, old and tired. The honourable member for Smithfield was pleased at the announcement of new services. The Passenger Transport Act enabled the introduction of new services such as after hours services, weekend services and new roads.

*[Interruption]*

The honourable member for Smithfield interjects. He was there. The honourable member for Kogarah has a brand new station. Under the Labor Government it was a damp, wet cavern. This Government built a brand new station at a cost of more than \$1 million. This Government has delivered its promises. Some promises have not eventuated, for various reasons, but the Government tried; it had the vision. Where is the Opposition's vision? It does not have any. The honourable member for Penrith asked about the corporate card. It is still being sold.

**Mr Langton:** You did not know that.

**Mr BAIRD:** The honourable member for Kogarah thinks this is a great joke. He comes into this House with some obscure point, as he did last week, about a light rail proposal that I had never announced - as well he knows. He made claims that I promised it. He also made claims about the corporate card. The corporate card is still being sold; it is being sold at Wynyard. His claims about these promises are a load of rubbish. The honourable member for Kogarah knows the realities. He knows that the Government has delivered transport reform, by way of rebuilding State Rail from top to bottom, signalling, upgrading stations, new Endeavour trains, Xplorers, sleepers, RiverCats, JetCats, new safety systems which have been installed on stations, help points, video cameras, and private security guards at Campbelltown station. Did the honourable member for Campbelltown's Government do anything about security guards? Absolutely not. But this Government installed them at his station.

Opposition members are a lot of hypocrites. There is no doubt that State Rail was run-down, but this Government reformed it and made savings of \$1.85 billion in operating costs. The Government has contributed \$850 million. It is saving \$1 million a day compared with transport costs under the previous Government, but

the Opposition says there have been no savings at all. I challenge the Opposition to prove that that is right, because it knows that the Government is saving large amounts. When Labor was in government it was overbureaucratic, overstaffed and highly inefficient, as was highlighted by Booz Allen. The Government has made many promises, commitments and reforms. The honourable member for Kogarah goes around making all sorts of promises, saying he will deliver anything. There are pages of his promises, of the bonanza that everyone can expect. They include the Maldon to Dombarton line, at a cost of \$200 million - it started off at \$180 million when the Government first came to office - and the Badgerys Creek rail line, at a cost of \$380 million to \$450 million.

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**Mr Langton:** That will be federally funded.

**Mr BAIRD:** I am sure! The moment the Government mentions federally funded, the Opposition says, "We did not know this before". They say they will find the money through Federal funds. It has not found too much in the past, so good luck to it. The cost of the promised cross-regional rail link between the main north line and Parramatta is \$864 million. The Opposition promises also that it will not reduce staff at all.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** I refer also to restoration of night train services and improved bus services. Despite the fact that the number of people using Nightride services trebled when buses were put on because people felt secure and the buses provide a good service, the Opposition says it will revert to night trains - at a cost of \$7.7 million. The Opposition promised to electrify the line to Goulburn in the long term at a cost of \$130 million. On 8 December it was stated that a better alternative to a Pyrmont rail system would be an underground system which would fully integrate with the existing rail system and not interfere with the pedestrian traffic - at a cost of \$200 million.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** The honourable member for Kogarah is the first to criticise. The Government attempted to obtain private infrastructure; he did not do anything about it, although his mate Laurie Brereton was trying to get it in.

**Mr Tink:** He signed the signs.

**Mr BAIRD:** Of course he did. All he did was sign the signs. The Government tried to get private infrastructure and all the Opposition did was bag it. Whether it relates to financial reforms or to commuters, the bottom line is that there has never been such a high on-time running performance, with 92 per cent of trains running on time. Never have trains been as graffiti-free. Currently 85 per cent of trains are graffiti-free, compared with 50 per cent when this Government came to office. State Rail has been reformed from top to bottom. Each year \$75 million is being saved in the State Rail Authority, with newer buses, newer ferries, and newer services. The Government is proud of its achievements in transport.

**Mr KNIGHT (Campbelltown) [4.8]:** How the mighty have fallen! What a pathetic performance from the increasingly sad figure the Minister for Transport has become - a Minister for Transport who used to be a significant parliamentarian, a person who used to have some authority in the House. Today we see he has gone the same colour in question time as he did in those days in Opposition when Neville Wran accused him of being an agent for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service while he was a trade commissioner. Today the chickens have come home to roost. The Minister for Transport had his good days; he had a good period - what one might call his salad days.

**Mr Baird:** On a point of order: the honourable member for Campbelltown is speaking of my integrity. He is accusing me of being a member of ASIS, a spy. He said these allegations were made before. These are

serious allegations. If he is going to suggest that I was working for ASIS, he should put forward the reasons for that suggestion and the proof. These claims should be made by way of substantive motion.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Campbelltown is well aware that serious allegations against members of Parliament can be made only by way of substantive motion. I ask him to desist from that line in his contribution to the debate.

**Mr KNIGHT:** We remember the Minister's salad days, between 1988 and 1991 - indeed even parts of 1992 and 1993. There he was, full of confidence, full of schemes and seemingly full of ideas. Of course, we subsequently discovered that he was only full of wind. But in his salad days he was a very different, much more confident performer than the embattled prevaricator we have seen today. He used to have two great catch phrases.

**Mr O'Doherty:** On a point of order: I can clearly see the honourable member reading his speech. The standing orders state that members cannot read their speeches.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I find it difficult to believe that a research officer has prepared notes for the honourable member for Campbelltown on this occasion. But in the event that he is reading his speech I remind him of the standing orders. Whilst I extended some tolerance to the honourable member for Kogarah, who was leading in the debate, I will not extend that tolerance to other honourable members.

**Mr KNIGHT:** Mr Speaker, as you well know, you do not have to extend that tolerance to me. The Minister needs assistance today; he cannot even cope with a five-minute speech without interjecting, without taking spurious points of order to use up time and without getting the tame animals on the backbench to do the same thing. That is an indication of how low the Minister has sunk in the esteem of the Parliament, in the esteem of the public and in the esteem of his own colleagues. Remember when he used to have a wonderful catch phrase? "This," he used to say, "is a can do Government". We do not hear that from him any more. We do not hear it from him any more because what can he do about the airport rail-link? He can make 13 separate announcements, but he cannot build it. What can he do about the northern beaches light rail? That took only 10 announcements not to do. What can he do about the Pyrmont central rail link? What can he do about the tilt train? What can he do about the east-west city tunnel? What can he do about the Devlin Street underpass? What can he do about the metro west underground rail system? He can do nothing other than announce them.

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

**Mr KNIGHT:** The Minister seems to be a devotee of the film "The Field of Dreams," where a mysterious voice continually says, "If you build it, they will come". He has misapplied that statement. He believes it means that if one goes to a press conference, someone else will build all these things. The Minister is incapable of building them, just as he is incapable of carrying the argument in this Parliament today.

**Mr Baird:** We will see.

**Mr KNIGHT:** "We will see," says the Minister. One of the things we see from the Minister is a quite charming photograph of him and his daughter Julia announcing a recycling scheme. However, he disparaged his daughter by stating that she was a feminist and a black activist. That indicates that she has not only the beauty but also the brains in that family. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr MERTON** (Baulkham Hills) [4.13]: This condemnation motion is a rerun of last week's monstrous failure. The honourable member for Kogarah failed last week and he will fail again today.

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

**Mr MERTON:** The honourable member for Kogarah needed a speech writer, so what do Opposition members do? They do not bring out the broken down club comedian who writes speeches for the Leader of the Opposition; they bring out a man from the acting agency to give the honourable member for Kogarah finesse, character and charm - an impossible task.

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

**Mr MERTON:** When the honourable member for Kogarah was presented with the script he could not read it. We saw the way in which he handled this matter today. What can be expected from a man who possesses a room temperature IQ? He is Kogarah's kamikaze kid - positive proof that Kogarah has given us as a comedian not only Clive James but also this poor, pathetic member. At a meeting at Penrith the other day the honourable member for Kogarah tried to make some promises about what was going to happen. The trouble is he ran out of promises; there were not enough to go around. He is all about idle, insincere promises that can never be fulfilled because he will never be in a position to do so. But they do make good reading at the time.

Let me take the people of New South Wales back to pre-1988, when one was lucky to get on a train if one turned up. That situation has changed dramatically now. Pre-1988 one would get on a 60-year-old carriage in which the doors and windows would not open. The great transport system that was operating pre-1988 was costing taxpayers \$3 million a day in losses. Those losses have been dramatically reduced. The transport system is now costing taxpayers about \$1 million a day. We are not satisfied with that and will work to reduce it. Members of the Opposition thought that public transport was a joke. They thought that taxpayers could underwrite all the liability for losses. That is not what this Government is about. This Government is about providing an efficient form of public transport with nice, decent carriages.

In 1990 the average age of carriages was down to about 19.3 years; in 1992, 13 years; and, in a year or two, the average age will be less than 13 years. Compare that with the 60-year-old, worn-out red rattlers that could not even take part in a vintage train rally because they were so old and decrepit. This motion is about insincerity; it is a cheap thrust for political power; and it has been moved by a man desperate to retain his seat. If a worthwhile candidate stood against him I believe he would lose pre-selection. This is the last fight of a desperate political operator who has come into this Chamber and treated Parliament as a joke. Let me say this to the honourable member for Kogarah: the performance is over. The people of New South Wales realise what the Labor Party is all about. They will re-elect the Fahey Government in 1995.

This motion is full of lies, lies, lies. In the last six years this Government has transformed the New South Wales transport system and saved the people of New South Wales an enormous amount of money. The State Transit Authority has saved New South Wales taxpayers about \$1,100 million - \$1.1 billion - over the past six years. Total operating costs of agencies within the transport portfolio have fallen in real terms from \$2.7 million in 1987-88 to \$2.1 million in 1992-93. In 1992-93, 27,350 passengers were carried for every CityRail staff member, compared to only 16,619 in 1988.

**Mr Knight:** Are you reading your speech?

**Mr MERTON:** At least I can read, which is more than the honourable member for Campbelltown can do. This is reform at its best. Ninety-two per cent of CityRail suburban services arrive within three minutes of schedule. In the old days when the Labor Party was in government people would bring their alarm clocks, their beds or camping stretchers because they never knew when a train was likely to turn up. That was offered by the previous Government as a reasonable public transport system. Opposition members are hypocrites. They are stupid enough and have the gall to come into this Chamber today and say, "This Government has done nothing so far as transport is concerned".

**Mr SCULLY (Smithfield) [4.18]:** I strongly support the motion of condemnation moved by the honourable member for Kogarah, which every member in this House should support. The Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads has been caught using the two-card trick. He is an expert at it. The

political maxim, "You can fool all of the people some of the time but not all of the people all of the time" applies to him. But this fool opposite believes that he can fool all the people all of the time.

The Minister's media unit issues glitzy press releases. He comes out of the make-up room and makes grand announcements as though he were holding the levers of a bulldozer. He puts up all these grand projects and fools the media. He has the media conned. Full marks to his media unit, because it created all those wonderful photo opportunities. But this Minister is a disaster. It is easy to make those sorts of announcements. The Minister does not care about private funding and he does not care whether or not the money is available to fund those sorts of programs. He looks for excuses when programs do not go ahead. He ought to be ashamed of himself. We should be considering whether the Minister, when he made those false promises which he could not deliver, wilfully lied or was recklessly indifferent about whether they should proceed.

It does not really matter because in the end result the intention is clear: he could not care less whether they proceeded. I think the Minister had no intention at all. This disease of untruth seems to have infected other members of the Cabinet. I hope the Minister for Health is listening because he tried the two-card trick in my electorate and I can assure the House it was not appreciated. The Minister for Health came to my electorate using Baird's bluff and announced that an ambulance station was to be built there. I thought that would be great, as our electorate needs an ambulance station. But, surprise, surprise! There is no money to build it. When the department was challenged they said that they could not build the ambulance station because no money was available. That is what the Minister has been doing all along: making announcements.

**Mr Baird:** On a point of order: the honourable member has made allegations with nothing to back them up; no press statement, nothing, totally unknown to the Government. It is easy to make allegations. I ask the honourable member to provide proof of this allegation.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! No point of order is involved. Members can say whatever they wish. Of course, if their comments are without veracity, other mechanisms will see them called to account. It is not for the Speaker to ask a member to substantiate whether his claims are factual.

**Mr SCULLY:** The Minister is touchy about this; he does not like being caught out. I am concerned about him personally. The Minister must acknowledge this disease, he is sick. I think he must realise that if he does not know that -

**Mr Merton:** On a point of order: if the honourable member is to make outrageous statements like that, let him at least appear to be sincere in his comments.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! No point of order is involved. However, I do believe that the honourable member for Smithfield has had more than enough latitude and is straying from the text of the question before the House. I ask him to come back to the leave of the question.

**Mr SCULLY:** Basically this motion has been brought before the House because the Minister has made a series of announcements which have been found to be false. I stand by that. All honourable members are aware that we are one year from an election, and I will be watching you, Minister. Do not dare make any false announcements on any false projects. Because I will be calling for you; every time you make an announcement I will provide the warm water and the soap and I will be taking it down to your media conference and I will say, "You wash that man's mouth out with warm water and soap".

**Mr O'Doherty:** On a point of order: it is not in order for the honourable member to do other than address the Chair, and it is certainly not in order for him to point.

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

**Mr SCULLY:** This man made no defence of the senior executive service port. We have heard all

through this motion that \$5.7 million was wasted on a roort. You defend it. You defend those unproceeded projects. Stop the lies, stop the stealth, stop the sneaky behaviour, and do not tell me what you are doing in my area. You would not know where to find Smithfield. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr LANGTON** (Kogarah) [4.23], in reply: Let us make it perfectly clear: this is not a rerun of the debate we had last week. This is a motion raising very serious matters of maladministration and waste in this Minister's portfolio. The Opposition has raised very serious and substantive matters relating to the senior executive service and the waste of \$5.7 million over the last 2½ years on redundancies and payouts to SES personnel who for one reason or another have not kept their jobs. The Minister asked where is the substance in the matters that I have raised. I advise that there is \$5.7 million worth of substance here. I advise that the taxpayers of New South Wales believe there is a lot of substance in \$5.7 million.

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

**Mr LANGTON:** The New South Wales taxpayers believe that there is a great deal of substance in \$5.7 million. The Minister wants to keep harping back to what happened six, eight or 10 years ago. This Minister has been in the job now for nearly six years and it is about time he started to account for his actions in that time. Let us not have the old reruns of what happened in the 1960s or the 1970s. Let us talk about the Minister's administration. They are the matters I have raised in debate today. They are the matters the Minister has

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not answered. You have failed, Minister, to make any mention whatsoever or to provide any response whatsoever to the extraordinary waste of \$5.7 million of taxpayers' money in payouts to the senior executive service, many of whom your department, and possibly you, found to be poor performers.

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

**Mr LANGTON:** Minister, if you believe you do not have to worry about that side of your administration and believe you will allow someone else to worry about that, that is all the more reason why this motion of condemnation should succeed. Let us compare some of those quite extraordinary matters that I raised today about payouts to the SES and compare that with the case I raised last week of Tracy Ann Lynch from Green Valley; a girl employed in this Minister's department, in Transport House, a girl who was told along with some others that they were to work for a contractor rather than -

**Mr Baird:** On a point of order: the honourable member is introducing new material into this debate, quite outside anything he mentioned when introducing the motion. By way of a summary honourable members know he does not have too much after he has stopped reading, but the reality is that he is introducing new material rather than speaking in reply to what other speakers have said.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I was about to interrupt the honourable member for Kogarah to remind him that he must confine himself to replying to matters raised by members during the course of debate. He is not permitted to introduce new material at this stage.

**Mr LANGTON:** At no stage during his 10 minute speech did the Minister try to answer one of the very substantive matters which I raised in this Parliament today.

**Mr Baird:** It was the tribunal.

**Mr LANGTON:** Do not give me this tribunal business. You are the Minister; you employ these people; you are responsible for their performance; you decide whether they are going to be good enough in the job. Do not tell me it is the tribunal.

**Mr Tink:** On a point of order: the honourable member for Kogarah is even more than unusually excitable this afternoon, but he should at least address the Chair.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There has been a tendency during this debate for members to engage in exchange across the table. This is not in keeping with good debating practice. I ask the member to direct his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr LANGTON:** With the greatest respect, Mr Speaker, it is very difficult when this Minister has nothing to do except babble every time someone is trying to say something. If the Opposition does it, we are called to order. This Minister wants to absolve himself of responsibility for running his own department. Where does that leave him as a Minister? Where does that leave him in his position? Where does that leave him, receiving a huge salary allegedly to run the State Rail Authority? If the Minister will not take responsibility as Minister, we will find someone who will and let me tell you it will be a Labor administration -

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to order. I call the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the second time.

**Mr LANGTON:** - who will worry about the people who pay taxes.

**Mr Armstrong:** On a point of order: Mr Speaker, it is incumbent upon members of this institution, particularly in the fourth session of the Fiftieth Parliament, to exercise an appropriate degree of self control. Obviously the honourable member for Kogarah has been here for some considerable time and is having difficulty in handling himself and his responsibilities. Quite clearly it is not in the interests of the constituents or the Parliament for a member of the Opposition to be able to lose control in this place. It is not in the interests of proper debate and it is not in the interest or propriety that such conduct should be accepted here. I suggest that the honourable member might retire to restore himself to some composure before he continues his response. [*Time expired.*]

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 45**

Ms Allan	Mr Markham
Mr Amery	Mr Martin
Mr Anderson	Mr Mills
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Mr Moss
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Bowman	Mr Nagle
Mr Carr	Mr Neilly
Mr Clough	Mr Newman
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 Iemma	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
Mr McManus	Mr Davoren



**Noes, 49**

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
Mr Chappell	Mr Petch
Mr Cochran	Mr Phillips
Mrs Cohen	Mr Photios
Mr Collins	Mr Richardson
Mr Cruickshank	Mr Rixon
Mr Downy	Mr Schipp
Mr Fraser	Mr Schultz
Mr Glachan	Mrs Skinner
Mr Griffiths	Mr Small
Mr Hartcher	Mr Smith
Mr Hatton	Mr Souris
Mr Hazzard	Mr Tink
Mr Humpherson	Mr Turner
Dr Kernohan	Mr West
Mr Kinross	Mr Windsor
Mr Longley	Mr Yabsley
Dr Macdonald	Mr Zammit
Ms Machin	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Merton	Mr Jeffery
Ms Moore	Mr Kerr

**Pairs**

Mr Hunter	Mrs Chikarovski
Mr Ziolkowski	Mr Fahey

**Question so resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

**GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**Third Day's Debate**

**Debate resumed from 3 March.**

**Mr ARMSTRONG** (Lachlan - Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Ports) [4.37]: His Excellency the Governor has detailed the Government's continuing program of reforms, which build on the magnificent economic reforms already achieved during the past three years and demonstrate the Government's commitment to securing the future of New South Wales as the leading and most dynamic State in Australia. Since March 1988 the Government has not deviated from its program of reforms; and its accomplishments in sound economic management see New South Wales leading the way out of the recession and well placed to capitalise on the growth that will flow as the economic recovery gains momentum.

Our microeconomic reforms have cut deeply into public administration inefficiencies, costly duplications, ridiculous work practices and lack of productivity. In their place we have introduced increased productivity, greater efficiencies, and better service to the consumer and have put a significant hold on costs and charges. We have been working at that for years while other States, languishing under Labor rule at the time, sank further into the mire of debt and despair. It has taken a long time, but the Prime Minister has now discovered the need for serious economic reforms. At the Council of Australian Governments meeting in Hobart recently he urged the States to open up government business to competition. The New South Wales Government is streets ahead in the reform stakes and will continue to lead the nation in that respect. His Excellency made reference to two significant, but starkly different, events: the success of Sydney's bid to stage the year 2000 Olympic Games; and the horrific bushfires that ravaged Sydney and the east coast just six weeks ago.

The bushfires were a brutal reminder that Australia is the continent of fire and that nature periodically demonstrates its absolute might through fire, flood and drought. The destruction caused by the fires, the tragic loss of life and property, and the sheer ferocity of the holocaust dealt us a lesson to never take nature for granted. There can be no argument that the losses would have been greater had it not been for the magnificence of the firefighting teams and the great Australian spirit that saw firefighters converge from around Australia to bring the many blazes under control. In the critical days of the great fire threat, more than 800 fires raged around Sydney and along the tablelands and coast. More than 800,000 hectares were burnt out, four lives were lost and 188 homes destroyed. Never before had urban Sydney been exposed to such a threat, and hundreds of thousands of Sydney residents experienced for the first time the awesome might of bushfire. Lessons have been learned and the merit of traditional measures to reduce the fire risk have been reaffirmed.

In the aftermath of the fires the State Government appointed a Cabinet committee with wide-ranging terms of reference to review all aspects of the fires, with particular focus on fire hazard reduction, the safety of the population, the management of our national parks and forests, the funding of our firefighting organisations, the standard of our firefighting equipment and the strategies used to fight fires. The committee, of which I am chairman, is operating in tandem with the coronial inquiry presently being conducted by the senior deputy State coroner, Mr John Hiatt. Already, the committee has amassed a voluminous amount of material in the form of written submissions from individuals, businesses, organisations and government departments, including submissions received from other countries. An interim report to Cabinet is in its final stages of preparation, and legislation dealing with fire hazard reduction and fire management and control will be introduced into Parliament this session. It is considered necessary to have this legislation in place as soon as possible to allow fire hazard reduction measures to be taken in the cool months ahead. Future reports and recommendations will focus on all other aspects of the fires and will deal with overall firefighting controls, planning regulations, building designs, local government responsibilities, aerial firefighting, advanced technology, the standard of firefighting equipment used by the volunteer brigades and the funding of the brigades.

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I emphasise that the terms of reference governing the committee's inquiry are comprehensive. They are designed specifically to establish why the fires were so devastating and to ensure that in future lives and property will be better protected. Much material is yet to be collected and considered but the inquiry will be exhaustive in its search for information and solutions; so, too, will the coronial inquiry being conducted by the senior deputy State coroner, Mr Hiatt. Mr Hiatt's inquest will inquire into the Como fire, the Double Duke fire, the Mount Horrible fire, and the Lake Macquarie fire, all of which are believed to have caused deaths. The coronial inquest will then examine six other major bushfires which occurred in the period from 30 December last year to 14 January this year, and it will take into account some 200 other fires. In conducting his inquiry, Mr Hiatt will take evidence in open court or will examine statements supplied by the Commissioner of Bushfire Services from all persons appointed under section 41F of the Bush Fires Act to take charge of serious fires which occurred in January, relevant police officers and emergency services officers, other witnesses who may have information to assist the inquiry, and experts from organisations such as the CSIRO.

The coronial inquest will make a finding on each of the major fires which occurred during January,

including findings about the losses and damage on private and public property and on bushland. Under the Coroners Act, Mr Hiatt is able to make recommendations on any changes in procedures which he considers would be desirable. In addition, the Police Service has established task force Boyne to prepare a brief for Mr Hiatt. An expert team of officers is working on task force Boyne and is taking statements from all persons who have information to assist the coronial inquest. All in all, every aspect of the fires will be thoroughly probed, findings will be made, recommendations will go to Cabinet and Cabinet will authorise appropriate legislative action, all of which will be designed to better protect people and property in the future.

Two high level inquiries are proceeding and yet the Opposition wanted, first, a hugely expensive royal commission and now wants a parliamentary inquiry, also completely unjustified, at taxpayers' expense. What is it the Opposition wants to do? Does it want to undermine the independence and integrity of the coroner's inquest? Does it believe the coroner is not up to the job? Does it want to muck-rake for the sake of political grandstanding or does it want to put 7,000 dedicated and heroic firefighters against the wall and make them feel guilty? Or, are members of the Opposition belatedly making an attempt to get into the act after having been invisible when the emergency was on? The Leader of the Opposition was not even in Australia and made no attempt to return when the crisis was at its worst. Everyone, members of the Opposition included, had the opportunity to make submissions to the Cabinet committee on bushfire management and control. There can be no more thorough or objective inquiry into the bushfires than the two-pronged inquiry now under way. Any support for a parliamentary inquiry would be support for a huge waste of taxpayers' money and an unnecessary duplication of what is already up and operating.

His Excellency made reference to Sydney winning the right to stage the year 2000 Olympic Games and remarked that it had brought the people of this city and this State to the attention of the world. His Excellency said the confidence engendered by the winning bid will provide a significant boost to employment and investment in the New South Wales economy. Indeed, the New South Wales Government is determined to capitalise on the opportunity to generate strong economic growth and employment in the period leading up to the Olympic Games in the year 2000. Already there has been an upsurge in tourism to New South Wales, a timely boost to a wide range of goods and services industries. There has been a dramatic boost in real estate activity and property prices, both strong indicators of a New South Wales economy very much back in the game. The Olympic Games will provide benefits to New South Wales long after the year 2000.

Apart from the facilities the community will inherit and the massive economic surge in the year of the games, international experience shows tourism is boosted by re-visitation for many years after the event. The Olympic construction program itself will provide New South Wales companies with a unique opportunity for growth; and the Government has put in place a preferential system for Australian content as part of the tendering process. This will give Australian manufacturers and suppliers of goods and services a competitive edge. As Minister for Public Works I head up the Olympic Construction Authority, which is now bringing together a comprehensive program of works at Homebush Bay on schedule and within budget. The \$300 million stage one works will be substantially completed this year, with the area cleared of the former abattoir buildings, and the new Sydney athletic centre opening on Saturday next, 12 March.

In October this year the greatest indoor aquatic centre in the Southern Hemisphere will open, not only for serious competitive swimming, but for mums and dads and the kids to enjoy seven days a week, up to the time of the Olympics and well beyond. These magnificent, much needed facilities are just the start of a continuing program of construction right up to the Olympic Games. The Public Works Department has played a significant role in advancing the Government's program of economic reforms. Since 1988 the department has experienced dynamic changes, involving a new charter in 1991, a revised role as manager of the delivery of public infrastructure for the Government and a move to a fee-for-service arrangement. In that period staff numbers have reduced from 5,500 to around 2,200, mainly through the divestment of non-core activities, natural attrition and a voluntary redundancy program. Output remains constant around \$1 billion and output on a dollar-for-dollar basis compared to input continues to increase - up 31 per cent last year and rising.

The reform strategy of the Public Works Department required that it operate off budget and without any government subsidy, which reached \$105 million in 1985-86 under the then Labor Government. The result was that the Public Works Department returned a \$4 million profit in 1992-93, its first year as an off-budget agency. I pay tribute to my predecessor, the honourable member for Barwon, who was Minister at that time and who oversaw the massive changes that occurred in the structure and management of the Public Works Department.

The department has played a key role in effecting reforms in the building and construction industry. Reforms include a major overhaul of government contractual standards and policies, and the production through the Government's construction policy steering committee of new codes of practice and tendering for statewide application, thus ensuring high standards of public accountability and probity in the construction industry. The Public Works Department is also driving further reforms, including the concept of "partnering" between all parties involved in selected government projects. As the first State organisation to trial the concept, the Public Works Department now has more than a dozen projects under this arrangement, including health, education and public utility projects across the State.

In terms of economic reforms, the Maritime Services Board, which comes under my responsibility as Minister for Ports, has undergone a major reorganisation, with significant benefits flowing as a result. The reforms have meant millions of dollars in savings to port customers and flow-on savings to consumers. The Government has been able to reduce significantly wharfage charges on the movement of containers through its major ports. The reforms have dramatically enhanced the competitiveness of the State's ports and encouraged increases in export activity. The Government will continue to support export industries and play a key role in ensuring New South Wales attains its full economic potential.

As Leader of the National Party in the coalition Government, I am proud of the role the National Party has played in being involved with the Liberal Party in undertaking an unprecedented program of reforms since its election to government in 1988. The National Party has been to the forefront in determining and refining policies to meet the changing face of politics in the 1990s and is determined to build a better social and economic future for people living in the rural and urban areas of the State. The National Party has always brought strength and unity to coalition, both in government and in opposition. Since returning to government in 1988, and inheriting a massive \$46 billion debt incurred through Labor's economic illiteracy and neglect, the National Party has played a key role in charting a whole new course in government administration and management.

His Excellency has touched on the ongoing reforms and initiatives which this Government will carry out and continue through its next term of office after the March 1995 election. Those initiatives will be fully articulated in the period leading to the next election and will embrace family and community services, with emphasis on the Government's participation in the International Year of the Family; the needs of older people; wide-ranging reforms in education and training; improvement in the status of women in New South Wales, with particular attention to programs for rural women; the promotion of private sector investment in New South Wales to improve employment and economic development; and further reform of government trading enterprises to continue the improvement in the quality and efficiency of the services the agencies provide to the public.

Agriculture remains the cornerstone of the New South Wales economy and the State Government fully recognises the need for a healthy and economically viable agricultural industry to guarantee the future prosperity of New South Wales. The Government recently launched a \$17 million, three-year statewide campaign to help farmers improve their business management practices. Improved marketing, greater efficiencies and better business practices last financial year resulted in a 6 per cent increase in New South Wales farmers' receipts. The Government's program aims to assist farmers to take full advantage of improving economic conditions in Australia and throughout the trading world.

The Government is taking positive steps to place timber industries on a sound economic footing through the establishment of the forestry policy unit within the Department of Conservation and Land Management. The unit will formulate policy to develop supplementary timber resources in order to provide greater long-term

viability to the timber industry. In regard to reforms affecting the State's management and regulation of water, an independent catchment assessment commission is being established to make recommendations on water quality and water allocations.

In addition, the Government is undertaking an extensive algal management program to deal with the problems of blue-green algae in our river system. These are but some of the reforms and initiatives being undertaken by the Government to demonstrate its commitment to providing improved services and conditions for the people of New South Wales. The Government is totally committed to the individual and to the broader community of this State, whether they are city, urban or country dwellers. It believes in a single State. The Government will respect its constituents and will always service constituents in the most positive and practical way. New South Wales has an enormous future and the Government is determined to ensure that every advantage is given to enable each person in New South Wales to take advantage of future prospects. I commend the Governor's Speech.

**Mr DAVOREN** (Lakemba) [4.55]: I felt a bit sorry for the Governor because his Speech contained plenty of rhetoric but little of substance and practicality. I am disappointed that the legislative program set by the Government is so light. I do not

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know how the time of this session will be utilised. It is no wonder that the House is sitting a limited number of days. It is remarkable that the House is sitting at all, considering the legislative program enumerated by His Excellency. I am reminded that during last session the Government ran out of legislation on one occasion. Anyone who has been a member of this House for some time may find that hard to believe.

Having examined what the Government claims to have accomplished and what it says it will accomplish, I feel compelled to make some remarks. The Government intends to do little. Only this morning I read in the press that the Government will accumulate \$1.1 billion in dividends from government trading enterprises. That was lauded as a great accomplishment. The Government, in wringing money out of government trading enterprises, is most likely subjecting them to long-term borrowings. That has been the case with Sydney Electricity and undoubtedly with Prospect Electricity. Those bodies had to borrow to make the dividend payments.

In today's *Sydney Morning Herald* the Treasurer is quoted as saying that there is a 12 per cent reduction in real terms for consumers of electricity and water. I am a typical electricity and water user and my bills certainly have not gone down; indeed, they have increased. I am reminded of the financial controller who was asked by his superior, "What does two plus two make?". The reply was, "Boss, what would you like them to make?" From an economist's point of view the reduction is probably 12 per cent, but that is not indicated in the charges to consumers. Over the past week a number of my constituents have complained bitterly about increases in their water bills, in particular excess water rates. I suppose no one will escape a marked increase in those charges.

The Government's so-called excellent management has allowed the education department building to remain untenanted for years and it is depreciating because it is unoccupied. The Government is spending all this money on alternative accommodation yet claims to be a clever manager. The Government moved the fisheries department to Orange - an action similar to an admiral being appointed to the Swiss Navy. Why would a fisheries department, which depends upon water, be moved to Orange?

**Mr W. T. J. Murray:** To be close to Menindee Lakes.

**Mr DAVOREN:** Menindee Lakes are well stocked with fish. According to a recent television blurb, fishermen on those lakes can just about help themselves. There was not much publicity about moving the fisheries department out of Orange. Lord knows how much that move cost. Last week the Minister for Transport - the flavour of the month - gave me approbation which I did not seek. He said that I knew something about the SRA. I do. I know, for example, that the XPT had 64 non-movable or non-reversible seats. A decision was made to convert those seats to reversible seats. The XPT, which previously had 64

seats, now has only 56 reversible seats. Reversible seats are far more popular because most people want to face the direction the train is travelling. The computer, however, was not told. A passenger unfortunate enough to book a seat and be allocated seat No. 58 would find, on boarding the train with that ticket, no available seat. Conductors were nearly driven stupid running around trying to find other seating for ticket holders for whom there were no seats. That is typical of the way the SRA is run.

I read in last night's newspaper an article about the new beaut ticketing machines. It is estimated that the SRA will lose between \$12 million and \$14 million per year because the machine is not clever enough to differentiate between passengers entitled to concession fares and those who are not. The newspaper article revealed that passengers who are not entitled to concession fares press a concessions button on the ticket vending machine, receive the half-fare ticket and travel with it. However, as a general rule, no one collects tickets from passengers. Recently a number of members and I visited the Residential Tenancies Tribunal and inspected its excellent operation. All visitors would applaud Ray Collins and other members of that tribunal on the way it is run. Recently I walked through Wynyard station, which the Minister has said in a number of statements will be upgraded. That station is probably the busiest in the urban network yet, as at many other stations, not a soul was collecting tickets.

The Governor's Speech made no mention of any capital works being contemplated by the Government this session. However, money is being collected by the Government. Special grants from the Commonwealth of \$161 million have been received, of which about 49 per cent will be spent on roads, with the rest to go into consolidated revenue to try to balance the budget deficit at the end of the fiscal year. Surely that money could have been spent on capital works. John Thomas Lang, Labor Premier at the height of the Great Depression, decided that the way to get things going was to spend money on capital works, which would give people employment and provide for the betterment of the State. He electrified the suburban rail network, established the underground rail system and built the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The money spent on those projects was probably an outstanding amount during that period, yet that was done.

This Government is a crowd of bean-counters who want to accumulate money for money's sake. No capital works have been carried out. Surely the Government could be putting people to work by undertaking capital works. Some of the projects on which the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads has been expounding will put people to work. What has been accomplished, for instance, by reducing the number of railway staff? That action has not brought cheaper fares to the average consumer. One could ask whether that reduction has provided better service. The demise of the red rattlers could be described as an improvement, but that initiative was

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commenced by the Unsworth Government when it let contracts for the Tangara. Stations have been tarted up. On one occasion I remarked to the Minister, "You have made it nicer to sit on the stations waiting for trains that are cancelled".

**Mr McManus:** When the service is bad, the stations are painted.

**Mr DAVOREN:** That is correct. On one occasion I said to the Minister, "Why did you paint the lamp standards red?" He replied, "So people could see they were painted". I suppose a silly question will attract a silly answer. All that has been done is that stations have been tarted up, but no better service has been provided. The Bankstown line used to have a 15-minute service but now has a 20-minute service. Fares have not been reduced. However, a large number of people have been thrown out of work. I know the philosophy behind that but I cannot understand it. The Government believes that getting rid of employees makes them a burden upon the Federal Government through social security payments.

I can recall when the railways employed people who obviously were unemployable elsewhere. That work gave them a reason to get up in the morning, provided them with companionship during the day, and gave them a little self-respect. The Government has got rid of those employees by taking them off its payroll and transferring them to the Commonwealth payroll. That attitude is typical of the bean-counters who comprise the Government. The Government is not interested in spending money. Any real work that has been good for this

State has been started by a Labor Government. These conservative governments have never built anything.

**Mr W. T. J. Murray:** What about Copeton Dam?

**Mr DAVOREN:** They have built a number of dams, but that has occurred through the efforts of the National Party. The National Party builds dams. Everyone near Inverell says that Copeton dam - and that is about all the Government has built - was built in the wrong spot. Labor governments build dams and hospitals.

**Mr Collins:** Tell us about the children's hospital.

**Mr DAVOREN:** The Government is spending something on hospitals but has closed a large number of them. The Treasurer, when shadow minister for health, spoke at great length about hospital waiting lists and trotted out details of elderly people who, it was said at that time, had died because of lengthy waiting lists at St George Hospital. The waiting list has not been reduced. It is still difficult to get into hospitals. I repeat: the only thing of any value that has been built in this State over the past 100 years has been built by a Labor government, certainly not by the conservatives.

What has the Government done? It destroyed a large number of good people - they have been sacked from jobs they were performing successfully, jobs that gave them some reason to exist - and employed a large number of senior executive service people. We were told at the commencement of the senior executive service project that all these clever people who had made huge amounts of money in private enterprise were now going to make the Government something to be proud of. Big money had to be offered to them because, it was said, if you pay peanuts you get monkeys. A few such people might have been employed, but I do not know whether they have been retained. We probably got rid of them at some expense, in redundancy payments, but the efficiency of the public service has not improved to the extent that we were told it would. I do not know that public bodies are operating any better than they were.

The Leader of the Opposition has produced an alternative speech that he would have given to the Governor indicating what his government, a Labor government, would do during its session in Parliament. I would urge all honourable members to obtain a copy of it and see what can be done with a progressive, active Labor government, instead of hearing the nonsense that the Government is contemplating during this session. The Government's proposals concern me. It is interesting that during the fiscal year 1992-93 the Parliament sat for 48 days. I am of the opinion that 100 sitting days is as much as this Parliament could manage and still be economically progressive. The work necessary to keep the Parliament operating for 100 days in a year would probably be as much as could be done.

Who is running the State? It is certainly not the Legislature. The public servants are running New South Wales. The Ministers are making decisions and then altering them. The Minister for Police indicated that certain things would happen to police who were to be charged with a number of offences. The Premier said those things would not happen, and the Minister's decision was altered. Certain decisions regarding wilderness areas in the State were made without debating whether they would be good or bad. At least the Minister made a decision. I give him some credit for that. But what happened? The Premier decided to change that decision. I am sure the Premier has come to the conclusion that if he does nothing he cannot do anything wrong. That is the way this Government is lurching along to the next election, when undoubtedly there will be a Labor administration progressively operating the State of New South Wales.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! It being 5.15 p.m., pursuant to sessional orders the debate is interrupted.

#### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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## WESTPAC BANK BLACKHEATH BRANCH CLOSURE

**Mr MORRIS** (Blue Mountains) [5.15]: It is with some regret and anger that I raise this matter. Yesterday I learned that the Westpac Banking Corporation was closing its branch in Blackheath.

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This is the second branch in my electorate that Westpac has closed. Recently it closed a branch at Lawson, with a customer base of 2,300 in a catchment area of about 15,000 residents. This left a gap. Demonstrations took place and there was a delegation to see representatives from Westpac. The bank in Blackheath was the old Commercial Bank of Australia. The line of banking goes back well over 85 years. The closure of the bank is a tragedy for the people of Blackheath. Blackheath has a population of about 5,000 and there are about 9,000 people in all from Medlow Bath to Mt Victoria, the Megalong Valley - which is a rural area - and the picturesque areas of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

Without warning yesterday the customers of the bank, which number about 3,000, were notified of the proposed closure. I have been in touch with the bank manager today but I could not get very much out of him. My office has received more than 80 telephone calls today about this matter and I expect to receive many letters. The regional manager has not been in touch with anyone. Some customers of the bank include two hotels, the local chemist and a couple of oil distributors. The bank apparently expects people to travel to Katoomba for their banking needs.

The Blue Mountains Council banks with Westpac. Its wages and salaries are well over \$23 million per annum. The council met last night with its finance committee; I expect it to decide tonight to take all its business away from Westpac. This is another indication of the operations of big multinationals, and it is the reason why the Government, under the guidance of the Treasurer, has excluded the four big banks from the field in the sale of the State Bank. If Westpac got its hands on the State Bank it would pick up the market share, close down all the small branches throughout country areas and put off staff left, right and centre. My family has banked with the State Bank since 1939.

People in smaller communities have to pay the price for the bungling of Westpac through the 1980s, when it gave away money like it was going out of fashion. It gave money to developers and to people who dug big holes in the city and all around the country areas. Now the bank wants to squeeze the little guys to get its money back. I voice my displeasure. I aim to write personally to the managing director of Westpac and I ask the Treasurer and the Premier to do likewise. In small towns, such as those in the Blue Mountains, banks have a moral obligation to provide facilities. I was informed by my colleague the honourable member for Coffs Harbour that Westpac closed a branch of its bank in his area recently. Two branches have now been affected in the Blue Mountains area. My father-in-law and his company, F. A. Harris and Sons, builders, have banked with this branch at Blackheath for over 35 years. The local nursery people, Harrises, who are not related to my people, have also banked there. People carry out business in the area, and it is a holiday area. Now, six jobs in the area will go. It is a disgrace that a bank such as Westpac has taken these actions. The bank announced the closure of one of its agencies, but gave bank staff only one month's notice. I appeal to the Treasurer and Minister for the Arts, who is in the Chamber, to take strong action and to give me some support.

**Mr COLLINS** (Willoughby - Treasurer, and Minister for the Arts) [5.20]: This Government is not able, and I believe governments should not be able, to direct banks on how to run their operations. But the matter raised by the honourable member for Blue Mountains vindicates in every conceivable way the Government's decision to exclude the big four banks as potential purchasers of the State Bank of New South Wales. We excluded the big four banks because we wanted to see the emergence of a fifth force in Australian banking. We wanted a bit more competition for the big four networks which already exist. We excluded the big four because of our fear that they would take the sort of action that Westpac is taking in the electorate of the honourable member for Blue Mountains, namely, if one of the big four banks picked up the State Bank of New South Wales, it would probably integrate the State Bank network with its own, close a lot of branches and sack a lot of people.

I do not think that is in the interests of Australian banking at this time. If, out of the sale of the State



Bank, a fifth bank, a real force, enters the Australian banking scene, we believe it will be for the good of consumers throughout the length and breadth of this State and nation. I thank the honourable member for Blue Mountains for bringing that matter to my attention and to the attention of the House. I can understand why it is a matter of real concern to him and to the people of the Blue Mountains. The honourable member for Blue Mountains, an excellent member, has highlighted the sort of difficulty that his constituents have faced.

#### **GALIME PTY LIMITED AND Mr JOHN TEASDALE**

**Mr E. T. PAGE** (Coogee) [5.22]: Today I wish to speak on behalf of John Teasdale, a constituent of mine, who has been in the building industry for some 20 years and who has built up a good reputation in roofing and sheet metal work. Currently, Mr Teasdale is owed \$143,000 by a group called Galime, which did work for the Department of Housing in Bathurst, Dubbo and Wallerawang. Mr Teasdale got the subcontractor's job because he was recommended by Lysaghts - the firm supplying the materials - because that firm held him in such high regard. Galime has a pretty bad reputation in the building game throughout New South Wales. Mr Teasdale is one of its many victims. I have written to the Minister about this matter. He has made inquiries of the Department of Housing but has had a negative result. The Department of Housing appears to believe that it has no responsibility whatsoever, either legally or morally. But the form requesting progress payments requires the main contractor to declare:

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... that all subcontractors or suppliers of materials who are or at any time have been engaged on the work under the contract have been paid in full all monies which have become payable to the subcontractor under the terms of the subcontract or to the supplier of materials under the terms of agreement for supply.

This is not true in the case of Mr Teasdale and in the case of many other suppliers and builders. The Department of Housing denies any responsibility even though its own form states it has a responsibility to ensure, before it pays money to the contractor, that the contractor has paid due moneys to the subcontractors. When Mr Teasdale had a meeting in March this year with members of the Department of Housing he believed their general attitude was, "Sorry, it is bad luck. You are missing out. The allegations you are making about the contractor are easy to make with hindsight".

From about June 1993 Mr Teasdale was trying to tell the Department of Housing in Orange what he was hearing about the company. But nothing was done, so far as he could see, to bring the matter to a head and to save him and other people from substantial losses. The only thing he found out was that in August an internal memorandum was issued in Orange banning officers from speaking to subcontractors. I will quote from the *Daily Liberal and Macquarie Advocate* of 28 October 1993, which published on its front page an article dealing with this matter. The article states:

Directors of a building company which left some Housing Department homes in Dubbo without walls have gone into hiding.

Investigations by the *Daily Liberal* indicate the company, Galime Pty Ltd owes contractors, suppliers and employees throughout the state up to \$700,000.

Nearly \$200,000 is outstanding to various people in the west.

Constant attempts to contact directors of Galime by former employees and subcontractors have proved fruitless.

My constituent, to his credit, finished the jobs he had in hand even though it was costing him money, because he thought his reputation was at stake. I took up the matter with the building industry task force. I spoke to Mr Ross Dalglish, whom I found quite sympathetic. But he was limited in what he could do for people in this regard. In a letter he sent to me he said:

It has been made clear to Mr Teasdale that he has nothing to gain financially by assisting the criminal investigation, the purpose of which is to lay criminal charges if the evidence justifies it.

Mr Teasdale has spent hours and hours giving that task force information, yet he has been told it will not help him at all. The letter continues:

It has also been made clear that the BITF will not act for Mr Teasdale in pursuing his contractual remedies. He must seek his own legal advice in that regard.

I appeal to the Minister to investigate the Department of Housing. I am informed that Galime was quoting 30 per cent or 40 per cent under the second tenderers. If that is true it is incredible. How, in these times of recession, could a contractor manage such a quote? That would involve an expectation that subcontractors would get more money from the department than the prime contractor. I believe the department has a responsibility to do something about this case. I ask the Minister to investigate the action of the department to determine what can be done to right what I regard as a terrible wrong.

### **CALDERA ENVIRONMENT CENTRE AND Mr HENRY JAMES**

**Mr BECK** (Murwillumbah) [5.27]: I wish to raise a matter of concern to me and to the majority of constituents in the Murwillumbah electorate - statements that were made today in daily newspapers and the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. Those statements were attributed to Henry James of Caldera Environment Centre. He was referred to as a public interest lobbyist - or should he be known as sour grapes Henry, knocker Henry, Australian Labor Party lobbyist Henry, or Bob Carr's mate Henry? I do not know. I am concerned about matters that he has raised by way of press releases. He stated that I influenced three organisations - the National Parks and Wildlife Service district advisory committee, the Cudgen Lake-Round Mountain Reserve Trust and the Tweed Catchment management committee. Mr James also said that there was no documentation on or evaluation of the membership of those organisations.

I would like to refute some of the statements made by Mr James. I will take first the Cudgen Lake-Round Mountain Reserve Trust. Membership of that trust was announced by Minister George Souris on 20 November 1993 as follows: Ms James, an environmentalist; Mr Bob Brinsmead, a successful businessman; Mr Brian Williams, a member of a progress association and a businessman in Cabarita; Mr James McDonagh; Mr Ken Hansen; Mr Frank Wilson; and Mr Syd Williams. I believe all those bona fide people will do a great job. Mr James has taken offence at the fact that Mr Wilson is a member of that trust. However, Mr Wilson happens to be one of the largest landowners in the Tweed Shire and pays nearly half a million dollars in land taxes and rates to the Government and to Tweed shire council. He is a worthwhile person to have as a member of that trust. Another member of that trust, Mr Johnston who lives outside the electorate, happens to be the District Commissioner of the New South Wales Scout Association. I wonder whether Mr James has been critical of him. The catchment management committee has been elected and Mr James said he cannot see any documentation of its appointment. The words used by Mr James were:

... there was absolutely no documentation on the evaluation of members of the catchment management committee.

Mr James makes reference to my wife being appointed to the catchment management committee. My wife is a member of Tweed Council; she was elected by 12 councillors who represent Tweed Council, along with the mayor of Tweed Council, Max Boyd. My wife is there in her own right. I do

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not have to hold Lynn's hand to make sure she gets on or off committees, she will do it in her own right; there is no problem there. That committee is made up of a very good cross-section of people from all walks of life. I am very happy with that committee.

The advisory committee of the National Parks and Wildlife Service concerns me greatly. Honourable members know that local members have an input into all committees. The Minister requested that all these

committees be looked at, and this is normal procedure. Honourable members forward their concerns and thoughts as far as membership is concerned. In this particular instance, once again my wife is an official on that committee. Mr James is making critical remarks on her appointment to this committee. My wife nominated in her own right and was nominated by Tweed Council, but was left off in the first round. I do not know who went to the Minister, or who went anywhere to see that she was put back on that committee. It is most likely the thousands of people who support her in the Tweed area nominated her. Of the 23 candidates who stood for council election, my wife polled fourth. I suppose thousands of people contacted Minister Hartcher requesting that councillor Beck be appointed to that committee. *[Time expired.]*

**Mr HARTCHER** (Gosford - Minister for the Environment) [5.32]: I commend the honourable member for Murwillumbah for his zeal and the keen interest he takes in the betterment and general welfare of his electorate. He is a very worthy member of this Parliament and we are fortunate to have him. Every member of this House is entitled to raise matters with appropriate Ministers in relation to their electorate. That is a well-established procedure of this House and that is why members of Parliament are elected. The honourable member for Murwillumbah is entitled to raise any issue of concern about committees appointed by various Ministers to serve statutory purposes, especially those that operate in the Tweed Council area and generally in northern New South Wales.

The honourable member for Murwillumbah has raised issues in relation to various committees as outlined tonight. The honourable member has sought to ensure that properly qualified, competent people, representative of all walks of life, have membership of those committees. To make that representation is a right owed to every member of this House. That is a right Mr Beck has exercised. For a member of his electorate to seek to impugn his integrity shows gutter politics at its lowest. This action shows a destruction of the whole purpose of members of Parliament and shows contempt for this Parliament and its procedures. Councillor Beck is entitled in her own right to make these applications. She is an elected councillor, a representative of Tweed Council, and she is the fourth most popular of the 12 elected councillors. Councillor Beck is a well-known local figure and the fact that she is the wife of the honourable member for Murwillumbah in no way disbars her from appointment to any committee whatsoever. For people to impugn her too, on the basis of her marriage to the honourable member for Murwillumbah is unacceptable, particularly on International Women's Day. *[Time expired.]*

### ENGADINE RAILWAY STATION PARKING FACILITIES

**Mr McMANUS** (Bulli) [5.34]: In the past couple of years this Government has gone to great pains to talk about communication with the community. The State Rail Authority has shown its inability to communicate with the community of Engadine, the Engadine Chamber of Commerce and me on the necessity for parking facilities at Engadine railway station. Two years ago a senior officer of the State Rail Authority approached the Engadine Chamber of Commerce with a press release from the Minister of the day to indicate that moneys would be available to implement 70 car parking spaces at Engadine railway station. Over the past two years there has been exacerbation of this proposal, and the facilities needed by the residents of Engadine are still not available. Mr John Mountstephen, my contact with the Engadine Chamber of Commerce, is at the point of frustration because his phone calls about the funding promised by the Minister two years ago are not returned.

I am having great difficulty with communications between the responsible people at Hurstville, my office, the Engadine Chamber of Commerce or anyone else interested in this proposal. The urgency of this matter is now critical. Woronora Heights is developing at a rapid rate; hundreds of homes have been built there over the past couple of years. Residents of this area have no transport other than cars to the Engadine shopping centre. Today on Railway Parade, adjacent to the station, traffic is banked up for hundreds of metres. That creates a problem not only within itself but also with regard to access and egress for people who live on Railway Parade, opposite the Engadine railway station.

The situation is critical. Answers need to be given. As a member of Parliament I need answers as to when this proposal is to proceed. The Chamber of Commerce and businesses within the business district of Engadine certainly need answers. Commuters who are catching trains in the morning are using up positions

that shoppers would use during daytime hours. The council traffic advisory committee has attempted to resolve this problem, but it is not working. A constant review is needed about what is happening at Engadine and what is needed there, and an attempt must be made to relieve pressure not only for people catching trains but for people who want to shop in their local business district.

Sutherland Shire Council has done its bit. I am advised by Councillor Ken McDonell that in the past 12 months \$307,000 has been allocated by the council for works on road construction of pedestrian thresholds in the business district to ensure that there is safety for pedestrians. The appropriate Government department is not forwarding answers to these questions. Therefore the person responsible, the Minister who promised that these things would be done, is not answering our questions. The situation is critical, as I have said before. What is needed is a definitive statement from the Minister as to what is to

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happen about the 70 car parking spaces. Also, an investigation is needed into what can be done in the long term. Quite frankly, the provision of 70 car parking spaces would be only a short-term measure to relieve the problem. What is required is a realignment of the railway line westerly towards the Royal National Park on State Rail Authority land, which would allow up to 100 or 150 car parking spaces to be provided so that a permanent solution will be achieved. The situation is at the critical stage and answers are needed. I ask Minister Collins to forward my concerns to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads so that the works can be undertaken as quickly as possible.

### **EASTWOOD ELECTORATE TRAFFIC**

**Mr TINK** (Eastwood) [5.39]: I raise a problem that I am sure I share with other members: traffic on local roads. I know that this issue is of concern to the honourable member for Bligh and many other honourable members. The road system through my electorate is totally inadequate. Carlingford Road, a main thoroughfare, dissects my electorate in an east-west direction, tracking into Epping Road across a narrow overbridge. Carlingford Road has four very narrow lanes and presents an environment of great danger to traffic and pedestrians in the region. As the northwest sector grows, as it inevitably will - and it has already done so - increasing volumes of traffic will come on to the local road network.

Roads that were never designed to carry the volume of traffic that now passes along them are in a state of overload and unable to cope with the number of cars that use them. Residential streets - narrow streets not built for the purpose - now carry the major load of through commuter traffic. I know traffic has been a problem for the Treasurer and Minister for the Arts. Following the construction of the Gore Hill freeway people in the Artarmon-Crows Nest area and down through to North Sydney have been given enormous relief. Before most of those people get to the Minister's electorate they have come through my electorate. That traffic is likely to increase exponentially. I know that the honourable member for Baulkham Hills shares a similar problem, as do some Labor members, especially those in the Blacktown and Riverstone areas.

The reality is that the lifestyle of people in one part of the community is adversely affected by the inaction of others. There has been inaction on this issue since World War II when the area to the northwest of Sydney began to be developed. The roads that had to carry the burden at the end of World War II still have to carry that burden. However, the population in the region has expanded enormously and is slated to expand by approximately 250,000 in the near future. Having in mind the nature of the issue, all of the work that has gone into efforts to arrive at a solution to it, and the toing and froing that has occurred, I was absolutely dismayed by the motion foreshadowed today by the honourable member for Kogarah for the establishment of a select committee on the M2 motorway proposal. After six years of intensive work on the issue, inquiries, the receipt of 14,000 submissions from the public, endless toing and froing, and despite the strong community support for the M2 by the overwhelming majority of people, the honourable member for Kogarah has foreshadowed the establishment of a committee.

At the end of the day it seems that double standards are at play. It was all very well for the M4 and the M5 to proceed, to alleviate the traffic problems in the west and southwest of Sydney, but when it comes to the

northwest of Sydney that sort of approach is not tolerated by the honourable member for Kogarah. However it might be dressed up, I have no doubt that the motion is designed as a stalling exercise to prevent the project from getting off the ground and to spoil in perpetuity the amenity of about two million residents of Sydney, many of whom are Labor supporters living in Labor held electorates. They are fed up to the back teeth with this type of delay. It is not good enough and should not happen. It is time that part of Sydney was treated in the same way as the rest of the State.

## **COURT INTERPRETERS**

**Mr NAGLE** (Auburn) [5.44]: In correspondence I wrote on 31 January to the Attorney General and to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice I raised a matter of concern to me. I am pleased that the Minister is present in the Chamber and I hope that he will take action on this issue. Court interpreters play an important part in the administration of justice, the cost of which is extremely high and is added to by the adjournment of many court cases. Recently when I was doing pro bono work at Burwood court I was asked to go to one of the courts there as an interesting situation had arisen. An 83-year old Russian lady - to whom I shall refer as Mrs K - who lives in the Homebush area, had been brought before the court, having been arrested on 22 August 1993 for allegedly stealing a \$2 packet of chocolate-coated licorice lollies from a store known as the Ten Dollar Shop.

I was shown a statement of the facts. This lady was born in Russia in 1911 and lived her childhood under the threat of the Russian Revolution. She was seven years of age when the Czar died. I understand that she came to Australia shortly after World War II, when she was 59. Mrs K had attended Burwood court on three previous occasions. On the first occasion, as no one could understand her, the case was adjourned to another day so that the services of an interpreter could be obtained. The second occasion she attended the court was during the week of the bushfires; the temperature outside was 40 degrees Celsius. This woman had to travel by train from Homebush to Burwood in the heat and then walk from the station to the court house. She sat all day in the precincts of the court waiting for a Russian interpreter to attend. I am told that, although arrangements were made for an interpreter to attend on that day, no

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interpreter arrived. Inquiries were made and it was learned that there were insufficient funds to have an interpreter attend the court.

I wrote to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice. He told me that he received my letter on about 10 February, and I accept what he said. This lady has to go back to the court for a fourth time. The third occasion on which she attended court was when I was there. Again a Russian interpreter had been requested to attend the court on that day, but by 12 o'clock no interpreter had arrived. I spoke to defence counsel in the matter, a legal aid officer. She was distressed. She had to contact Telecom's interpreter service so that someone could speak to Mrs K on the telephone. The matter was again adjourned.

Mrs K has to attend the court again. This will be the fourth time she has been required to go to the court, simply for the purpose of entering a plea to the charge. She is a poor pensioner, 83 years of age. Last night at a meeting I happened to raise this matter and Nadia Repin, a schoolteacher from my electorate who is of Russian descent and speaks perfect Russian, volunteered to go to the court with Mrs K and interpret for her, at least to have a plea entered. If Mrs K pleads not guilty and has to go to trial, how will it be possible to have a Russian interpreter attend if it has not been possible to get one to attend the earlier court hearings? I have spoken to the honourable member for Strathfield. He was concerned but said that he would leave the matter in my hands. I spoke to him again today and he told me he has heard nothing further. I do not complain about the right of the Ten Dollar Shop to have people who allegedly shoplift arrested by the police. I am willing to make an offer to give \$10 to that shop, so that on the next occasion an aged pensioner goes to the store and takes licorice, it will be paid for.

**Mr PHOTIOS** (Ermington - Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the

Minister for Justice) [5.48]: I thank the honourable member for Auburn for his courtesy in letting me know that he would raise this matter, so that I had time to get the correspondence from the file. I share the honourable member's concern about the non-availability of interpreter services on the occasions when this matter went before the court. As I said in correspondence on behalf of the Attorney General and in my capacity as Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, the issue is being examined.

I sympathise with this woman and share the view that interpreter services that are normally made available in the courts should have been provided for this lady. It appears from the evidence that has been given to me by the honourable member for Auburn that what happened to this 83-year-old woman is unacceptable. I intend to follow the matter through. I am grateful that the honourable member has drawn this case to my attention. I enjoy a good and close association with the Russian community in Sydney and am pleased that this matter has been brought to the attention of the Government so that it can be dealt with sensitively, as it should be.

## INSULATION MATERIALS

**Mr COCHRAN** (Monaro) [5.50]: Mr Robert Metzger of Jindabyne has provided me with critical information which suggests that fibreglass insulation bats and insulation in general cause cancer. I refer to an article in the *Health and Safety Bulletin* authorised by Stan Sharkey, National Secretary of the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union. In part the article reads:

Synthetic material fibres, (SMF), fibreglass, rockwool and ceramic fibre products have all been classified as possibly cancer causing to humans (group 2B) by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

In the United States all fibreglass materials sold now have to carry warnings that the product may cause lung cancer in humans. This is a US Department of Labor directive. No such warnings are required or displayed on products sold in Australia. Apart from the cancer risk, working with SMFs can cause irritation of any exposed area, including the nose and throat.

These allegations are particularly serious, and as honourable members know, this sort of insulation is installed in homes, business houses, factories, cars, caravans, boats, and aircraft. It has been used extensively in industry and it would be of incredible concern if these claims were true. It would not only affect the 5,500 employees of the synthetic insulation business in Australia, who supply a market worth \$200 million, but the impact of these allegations, if proved, would be dramatic so far as the New South Wales and Australian wool industry are concerned. Conflicting views have been put by the wool industry, which says that the claims made in this document are true and that in fact there is supporting evidence to suggest that in America and Canada the synthetic insulation industry is required to place advertisements in newspapers and warnings on the product that the fibreglass insulation product causes cancer and can cause respiratory, skin and eye irritation.

I have no scientific evidence to support these allegations. The claims are made in various publications which I will pass on to the Minister for Consumer Affairs. This matter needs to be investigated at great length. The claims being made not only by Robert Metzger but also by those in the wool industry need to be clarified so that people who may be considering installing fibreglass insulation in their homes will be able, given the information that will be available from the Minister's department, to choose in the future whether to install a woollen fibre or a synthetic fibre. I am concerned that these counterclaims are being driven by the dollars and cents involved in this massive market. We really need to establish the truth. I understand that in a publication produced by the Fibreglass and Rockwool Insulation Manufacturers Association of Aust Inc. - FARIMA - counterclaims were made against the effectiveness of the woollen products.

FARIMA called upon Ministers for consumer affairs, both at Federal and State level, to immediately act to protect Australian consumers from the current misleading product performance claims by the

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Australian sheepswool insulation manufacturers and suppliers. FARIMA also requested in an article called "Sheepswool Insulation in Australia: Thermal Performance Research Report" that Ministers direct sheepswool manufacturers and suppliers to compensate Australian consumers who have been sold substandard insulation to date, and that as a matter of urgency the Minister support the development of an Australian standard of

sheepswool insulation. There is conflict between the two groups, the natural fibre on the one side and the synthetic fibre on the other. It is causing considerable concern within the market-place. The matter has been addressed by the South Australian Government and I believe it behoves this Minister and this Government to investigate the matter, to provide an answer, and certainly to alleviate any further pain among consumers of the product.

**Ms MACHIN** (Port Macquarie - Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport) [5.54]: I congratulate the honourable member for Monaro on raising this issue. He has hit the nail on the head: it is of concern to consumers and those who may have installed any of these bats, whether they be natural or synthetic fibre, to hear the claims and counterclaims. I have received representations from FARIMA, and the product safety section of my department has looked at some of these issues, as has the WorkCover Authority. I believe WorkCover has done some tests on the synthetic fibre products, which to date are inconclusive. I am told that the fibre is different in nature to asbestos and cannot be compared to that product. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the concerns of some people.

I think the human headline, Derryn Hinch, also raised this issue last year and alluded to the experience in the United States. My department is keen to receive evidence about those case studies, but to date the people involved have not provided any details or evidence. In summary, I am more than happy to have my department do further work on this matter. It may well be that we need to liaise more with the WorkCover Authority. Obviously it has done some work on the matter as well, but I think it is important for both the industries involved - and a considerable number of people on both sides are involved - that ultimately their customers feel confident that the product they are using is safe and of a reasonably high standard. I thank the honourable member for Monaro for raising this important matter. I will certainly pursue it and report back to him.

#### **WYONG HOSPITAL OBSTETRICS FACILITY**

**Mr CRITTENDEN** (Wyang) [5.56]: Honourable members will recall an episode a few years back in that highly successful television series "Yes Minister" in which the most efficient hospital in the system achieved its target by the simple expediency of not admitting patients. Under the Fahey Government, Wyong hospital has not gone quite that far. Wear and tear of the building has been minimised as a result of the failure by the Minister for Health to honour past promises that medical staff would be appointed to use expensive facilities - which now lie idle - an undertaking, for example, that a fully functioning obstetrics facility will be up and running by Christmas 1992.

I am not speaking about a hospital situated in a declining area. Wyong shire is one of the fastest growing regions in the State and will continue to grow strongly. In the next decade and a half more than 9,000 housing lots will be developed in Warnervale alone. Another 8,000 lots will be developed in the North Wyong, Kanwal and Blue Haven areas. It is time that the Minister for Health honoured promises to give Wyong the fully functioning obstetrics facility it needs. It is time also that we stopped hiding behind protracted inquiries and investigations which serve no purpose other than to provide the Government with a pretext for not staffing the obstetrics facility built for mothers at Wyong.

At present some people are trying to distract attention from the merits of the case by throwing up bogus arguments. A review panel from the University of Newcastle has provided the Minister with two rationalisations for breaking his undertaking. First, they argue that mothers who live near Wyong hospital should be forced to go to Belmont because "Belmont Hospital is at the hub of an expanding population area" which is growing faster than "the immediate environs of Wyong Hospital". Let us look at this first argument. The immediate environs of Wyong hospital are primarily open fields and farmhouses. Since they know Wyong shire has an extremely high growth rate they say, "Let us forget about that and talk about the farmland surrounding the hospital".

They hope honourable members will not realise that these open spaces are one reason there will be a strong and increasing demand for maternity services at Wyong. They hope honourable members will not realise that if

the Belmont area is also growing at such a remarkable rate, there will be enough mothers to warrant maternity facilities at both hospitals. Basically, the review panel has decided that the Wyong hospital obstetrics facility is to be sacrificed to enable Belmont hospital to be built up. At present 30 per cent of babies born at Belmont hospital are the children of mothers from the Wyong shire. However, the situation gets worse. The demographic analysis on which the review panel based its decision is fundamentally and fatally flawed. The so-called demographic data cannot even ascertain the correct population number in the Lake Macquarie area. The figure is in excess of 165,000, whereas the demographic data suggests it is 120,000. Birth rate statistics per thousand of population are as follows: Wyong shire 15.3, Gosford 14.9, New South Wales 14.8, Sydney 14.5, and Lake Macquarie a pathetic 13.7. The reality is that Lake Macquarie is not booming ahead as claimed.

The second argument is that the achievements of Belmont hospital over 25 years could not be matched immediately by any new service. Does this mean that a new maternity service will not be initiated because

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it could not immediately match existing services? With this logic the Belmont maternity hospital would not have been opened 25 years ago because it could not equal the present standard. Such a statement 25 years ago would have been just as absurd as it is now. The clear majority of the Central Coast Area Health Board supports the immediate establishment of a level two obstetrics facility at Wyong. The overwhelming majority of expectant mothers in the region supports its establishment. Is it too much to hope that the person responsible for making the promise, with the authority to honour the promise, and on whose desk this particular buck most clearly stops, will now do the right thing and approve the establishment of an obstetrics facility at Wyong hospital? The Treasurer and Minister for the Arts was the Minister for Health at the time that stage two of Wyong hospital was approved and developed. I ask that the present incumbent ensure that recurrent funding is available for facilities to be fully utilised.

**Mr COLLINS** (Willoughby - Treasurer, and Minister for the Arts) [6.1]: I was not aware that the honourable member would be raising this issue and, therefore, have not had a specific briefing on the matter.

**Mr Crittenden:** The Minister for Health was told.

**Mr COLLINS:** The honourable member interjects that the office of the Minister for Health was told, and I do not dispute that. In relation to Central Coast health services, over a six-year period the Government has done more than any former government to improve facilities within that expanding area of New South Wales. It is acknowledged that a larger population must be serviced and that additional medical services are necessary to cater for the expansion. In acknowledgment, the Government has undertaken a major expansion and upgrading of Gosford District Hospital. I admit that when I was the Minister for Health I actually broke a promise. At the 1988 election I promised 60 additional beds for Gosford District Hospital; I delivered 120 extra beds to that hospital.

Through representations by the predecessor of the honourable member for Wyong and from my own observations, the construction of Wyong hospital was expedited. The present hospital is an improvement on the hospital in place when the present Government came to office. That is not to say that the task is complete. More work is required and I undertake to raise with the Minister for Health the issues canvassed by the honourable member for Wyong so that the local community will be aware that the Government's support for the area is firm, undiminished and will extend into the future.

### **JONATHAN WILSON-FULLER**

**Mr MERTON** (Baulkham Hills) [6.3]: Tonight I speak on a matter of great importance to me as it concerns a special young man, Jonathan Wilson-Fuller, who lives in my electorate. I have received a letter from his mother, Yvonne Wilson-Fuller, who states:

Dear Mr Merton,



I wish to request your assistance in the following matter concerning my son Jonathan: After being funded for three years under the Commonwealth Special Education Program, Intervention Support Program, Children with Severe Disabilities - School Age Component, I have received notification that the funding has been withdrawn this year solely because Jonathan is studying a university course.

I consider this action devastatingly unfair as Jonathan is 14 years old and is therefore still of school age. I contend that consideration of the Commonwealth guidelines prove his eligibility for continuance of the funding and to deny Jonathan continued support is to discriminate against him because of his ability and to set him up to fail because of his disabilities.

The story of Jonathan Wilson-Fuller is a sad and moving one. Briefly, the young man is 14 years of age and is severely disabled. He has finished his schooling and at the age of 14 years is a first year external Bachelor of Science student at the University of New England. An article in a local newspaper dated 18 November 1993 states:

Jonathan Wilson-Fuller is a very special boy. He's allergic to the 20th century and confined to two specially airconditioned, pollutant-free rooms of his house.

He doesn't complain and, in fact, that rarefied atmosphere of his house, uncontaminated by the noise, the jostling, the constant compromise in human interaction has produced a purity of thought and ideas that are for everyone's benefit.

Jonathan Wilson-Fuller has made a considerable impression on many people. Also, he has written a number of publications entitled, "Will you please listen, I have something to say". I also produce a cassette of his entitled, "Will you please listen, I have something to say". The cassette features Caroline Jones talking to Jonathan Wilson-Fuller. I inform the House that he has received recommendations from people such as Dr David Suzuki, the environmentalist, who states:

You are an inspiration to me.

I think of you often and am filled with admiration for your courage and strength.

Caroline Jones writes of Jonathan's works as follows:

Jonathan's poems heal, teach and inspire. He sends out into a needy world this book of prophecy - the warning and vision of a vulnerable, passionate child, who has something to say.

His mother writes and says:

Jonathan is confined to three rooms of the family home. He is continuously supplied with purified air and everything that is to enter Jonathan's environment has to be arduously chemically decontaminated. People entering this environment must spend the four days prior to coming avoiding all forms of personal chemical contamination . . .

The necessity for a chemical free environment isolates Jonathan from normally available social contacts, educational resources and creative materials. The tutoring program, made possible by previous grants in 1991, 1992 and 1993, has helped enormously towards decreasing this isolation.

Today those grants have gone. His mother continues:

The other reason for Jonathan's isolation is his pain and suffering. He has with tremendous courage and determination reached out to the world with a positive

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attitude and successfully reached many, including some of our most respected people . . . The tutoring program, by encouraging the development of not only his talents but a positive self image, is vitally important in supporting Jonathan's efforts to reach out beyond his physical confines.

This young man is virtually confined to his own home and his predicament should concern every member of this

Chamber. I have discussed this matter with an officer of the Department of School Education who has indicated that as Jonathan is no longer a school student, therefore the Minister has no jurisdiction over the issuing of grants. However, some other government instrumentality or agency should be able to assist this young man. The tutoring required to continue his university studies amounts to \$23,000 per year and his parents can ill afford that expense. This matter deserves the sympathy, compassion and understanding of the House. [*Time expired.*]

## SHOALHAVEN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr HATTON** (South Coast) [6.8]: The support for hospitals in the Shoalhaven area is nothing short of fantastic. Three meetings held by the Illawarra Area Health Service attracted 1,200 people. As well, 250 turned out at Milton-Ulladulla in support of the hospital and 8,000 signatures have been appended to a petition. I wish to speak about the underfunding of Milton-Ulladulla Hospital and later I shall speak about health services generally in the Shoalhaven area. More beds are needed. I acknowledge recently announced improved X-ray services and provision of high intensity nursing beds through an additional \$280,000 in the health budget. The level of funding to the Illawarra Area Health Service as a whole is so poor that it is not possible for that service to assist us.

The growth rate of Shoalhaven and south Shoalhaven needs to be recognised, but that growth rate cannot be translated into financial terms unless we get substantial increases in the amount of money available for general health services. The bed occupancy rate at Milton-Ulladulla Hospital is approximately 92 per cent, with 92 births recorded in the 243 days to date this budget year. The average stay is 3.3 days per patient - so the hospital is efficient. The figures are impressive statistics indeed for a 20-bed regional hospital. That hospital has not grown in proportion to the population it serves. The 24-hour accident emergency service has no resident doctor. So far this financial year 246 operations have been performed at the hospital. Some of the most complex of those operations are caesarean sections.

In addition, there are unnecessary transfers to Shoalhaven and, in turn, unnecessary transfers from Shoalhaven to Wollongong. Shoalhaven city has 25.2 per cent of the population yet receives only 17.1 per cent of the budget from the Illawarra Area Health Service. That service has deprived Shoalhaven of between \$3 million and \$6 million over a four-year period. The Reid-Harris report stated that 15.5 per cent of the Shoalhaven population was more than 65 years of age, compared with only 11.7 per cent of people in that category throughout the whole of the Illawarra. People, elderly people in particular, are waiting years for elective surgery such as hip and knee replacement operations.

I have written to the Minister and invited him to public meetings in Shoalhaven. I would like him to explain to residents of north Shoalhaven the Government's policies on Shoalhaven and Berry hospitals, and to explain to those in south Shoalhaven its policies on Milton hospital. I have given him dates from 21 to 25 March, from 29 March to 1 April or from 5 to 8 April, but I would be pleased to accommodate him in regard to dates so that he could come down to the electorate, have an inspection and stay there for two nights to attend two separate meetings.

I thank the doctors at Shoalhaven and Milton-Ulladulla hospitals. I thank also the interagencies in Nowra, in particular the interagencies in Milton-Ulladulla, and Tony Weldon for their interest in those hospitals. I have tried to work within the system. When the Greiner Government came to office it destroyed the Shoalhaven Area Health Service by including it in the Illawarra Area Health Service. We were told there would be greater efficiencies, less administration, and that we would be better off. We are worse off. Hospital and health services have suffered. We are worse off in terms of capital funding and recurrent funding at both hospitals. The fact is that we have been able to prove - as underlined by the Reid-Harris report - that we have been underfunded. This morning I attended a meeting in Wollongong. Without doubt there are severe problems with Port Kembla District Hospital, Wollongong Hospital and other hospitals in the area. We cannot continue to wind down hospital facilities.

**Private members' statements noted.**

*[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Rixon) left the chair at 6.14 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]*

**GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**Third Day's Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr HUMPHERSON** (Davidson) [7.30]: It is my pleasure to take the opportunity to respond to His Excellency's Speech, which he delivered last week. One of the first matters I would like to focus on is the proposed corporatisation of the Water Board, which is one of the further reforms that this Government has proposed in addition to reforms of other government trading enterprises since 1988. Corporatisation itself is not the end that we seek to achieve but it is a means of achieving a more efficient Water Board that is concerned about providing service to its customers in a more efficient way. Corporatisation will lead to a greater transparency and accountability of the Water Board with a greater commercial discipline and performance focus within the organisation. I turn to some of the objectives of corporatisation. Improved accountability to the Government and the community will enable the separation of the Government's role as a regulator and a shareholder. Maintaining environmental standards will be separated from the Water Board's role, and bodies such as the Environment Protection Authority will be responsible

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for such functions. This will clarify the functions and role of the Water Board and establish a more arm's-length relationship with the Minister, avoiding the political interference that occurred in the more distant past, certainly before 1988.

The introduction of some of the market disciplines that apply to the private sector will enable a number of benefits to be passed on to customers. They will have greater protection of their rights and a clear understanding of the standards of service the board will provide. Customers will receive clear pricing signals in relation to consumption of the resource. Charges will be independently regulated, with a reduction in cross-subsidies from one group of customers to another. Community service obligations can be more clearly identified, agreed and explicitly funded by the Government as or when they are needed. In summary, a more efficient, more open and more accountable Water Board will result from corporatisation. One of the primary focuses of corporatisation - in fact pre-corporatisation - should be the level of staffing within the Water Board. There has been debate in recent weeks about the reduction of 3,000 jobs within the Water Board. There has been no significant reduction in the enterprise's staff of 8,500 people since 1988. In view of the staffing reductions in other government trading enterprises, one must seriously question the desire of some of the former managing directors.

The core business of the Water Board should be focusing on the provision of water to customers and the removal and disposal of wastewater, at appropriate standards, from those very customers. Yet the Water Board contains some 150 minor businesses within its organisation, involving about half its work force and half its annual expenditure. I shall give the House salient examples. The Water Board, within its trading arm Australian Water Technologies, operates a catering business with 14 staff; a printing business; a micrographic business; a video production business; a display business; a hire service business; a fleet management business with 22 staff; a security, inquiry and investigation business with 32 staff; a building maintenance business; a real estate business; a property management business; carpentry workshops; and office fitout businesses. It also has a range of medical services from doctors through to nurses and others comprising 55 staff. These are some of the small but pointed examples of the variety of businesses existing within the Water Board's trading arm, and 45 per cent of the total staffing resources of the Water Board are within the trading arm. One should question whether these non-essential, non-core services are appropriate areas in which the Water Board should be developing expertise or whether their functions could be better performed by the private sector. I believe the latter is the case.

I shall give two examples. In 1992-93 it cost \$203 per metre for the Water Board to renew a water main and \$103 if the work were to be performed by external contractors. The conclusion is that Water Board work is twice the price of work performed in the competitive environment. Electrical maintenance costs \$7,600 per station per year for Water Board operated pumping stations and just under \$2,000 per annum if the work is performed by external suppliers. So the Water Board cost is four times higher when its day labour force provides the service. There must be a reduction in the work force and a focus on efficiency within the Water Board, and I believe corporatisation will go a long way towards achieving that.

I wish to acknowledge some of the achievements of the Water Board over the past five to six years. It is true that it has focused on its role in looking after the environment, with 8,500 of 13,000 properties targeted having been connected to sewerage services. This is an area the previous Government paid only lip-service to. I am pleased that the Warringah Peninsula is one of the areas included. The beneficial reuse of sludge has been investigated and control of odours emanating from sewage treatment plants has been looked at. Action has been taken against illegal connections between stormwater lines and sewerage lines throughout Sydney. At the end of last year the Water Board had smoke tested 478,000 properties and found that 113,000 had defects, with 82,000 customers having complied with the connection requirements. The board has relined 175 kilometres of pipeline to exclude infusion of water during periods of rain, which compounds problems of sewage treatment.

Since the completion of the deep ocean outfalls, problems on our beaches and coastal waterways have declined. In the two years since the commissioning of the deep ocean outfalls the initial improvement in water quality has been maintained, although some sewage grease is still being deposited on beaches. Off-shore, measured levels of contamination in the water column and sediments have been low. Contaminant levels in fish, previously high in some in-shore dwelling species, have now returned to levels found in fish from sites away from sewage impacts. There has been significant upgrading in sewerage plants, with up to 40 to 50 per cent of solids, sludge and grease being removed at the deep ocean outfall treatment plants. In the context of deep ocean outfalls we should also look at the improvement of the plants which are currently performing only primary treatment. The cost of performing secondary treatment is estimated at \$600 million. This must be weighed against the reduction in pollution to our waterways. I note in particular sewerage system overflows problems with stormwater in catchments and runoff from the urban environment. The community, the Water Board and the Government should focus as much on those problems as on secondary treatment from deep ocean outfall plants.

I acknowledge the role the Water Board has played recently by focusing on user-pay principles by ensuring that charges for water reflect the cost to the Water Board of providing services to the community. Demand management has become a key focus of the board. With the support of the Government Pricing Tribunal there should be an increased focus on installation of water efficient devices such as dual

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flush toilets and low usage shower roses. This should be encouraged with rebates where this is cost effective. Water bills should clearly reflect to the customer the charges paid for the water used. The education program initiated by the Water Board will go a long way towards making people realise where they use water. The average residential customer uses about a quarter of total annual water use outdoors in the garden and an equivalent amount in flushing toilets. So savings can be made in these key areas.

I refer now to the bushfires which ravaged New South Wales in the early part of January. I join with His Excellency in acknowledging the terrific job that was done by all volunteer agencies throughout New South Wales, and supported widely by the community. In the Warringah-Pittwater area the volunteer bushfire brigades, together with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the State Emergency Service, the New South Wales Fire Brigades, the Ambulance Service, police and local councils co-operated in a way none of us could have hoped for in advance. They worked well together, with a clear focus on addressing the problems that beset the northern area of Warringah, from Cottage Point, Terry Hills, Cromer, and Oxford Falls to St Ives.

The fact that more homes were not lost to the fires can be put down to a large element of luck and the commitment of the many volunteer firefighters, with assistance from outside the area and outside the State. An

excellent example of co-operation came from two of the key people involved, Bob Dobson and Bill Herbison. They deserve an enormous amount of credit. The community gave a great deal of support. When evacuations took place, the Salvation Army and volunteers from the local area came to assist at some of the evacuation centres. It was an impressive effort. The commitment of the community through donations of food, drink and other materials to the volunteer firefighters in those four or five days in Warringah gave heart to observers.

One aspect of the bushfire issue which deserves some attention, after two months to assess the matter in hindsight, is insurance. I am concerned that 30 per cent of homes in Sydney are apparently uninsured and a further 30 per cent are underinsured. In the event of a catastrophe such as bushfires home owners are dependent on the State, the community and the Federal Government. People who are not insured ultimately have to be supported by the rest of the community. There has to be a strong obligation placed on home owners, particularly those in high risk areas, to take out their own insurance.

A number of people have complained that the uninsured were among the first to receive assistance, receiving assistance even quicker than those who had taken the precaution of insuring their homes. The uninsured are not contributing to the cost of fire services through the 15 per cent insurance levy. It is worth considering the proposal of the Insurance Council of Australia that the 15 per cent insurance levy should be levelled by local government through a mandatory rating system to ensure that all home owners, all property-owners in New South Wales contribute in some fashion to the fire services.

A number of initiatives have been taken in transport in recent years. One initiative that I have raised in the Parliament on a number of occasions is the need for a stronger and more effective transport link between the Manly-Warringah community and the city of Sydney. This area basically has three limited roads, which are highly congested in peak times. The northern light rail system or transport system has been referred to. I am pleased that in recent times the Minister for Transport has announced a section 22 committee which will involve local councils, local communities and local members of Parliament considering some of the existing options.

I have no doubt that people of my electorate and many others in the northern area of Sydney are looking to the Government to provide clear directions and to provide a transport link of one sort or another in the short term. The proposal of a tunnel under Middle Harbour, bypassing Military Road, Mosman - be it with a road system or a light rail system, but hopefully both - needs to be a primary focus. If there is a shortfall in private sector funding of that project, the redundant corridors of land leading out of Manly-Warringah and set aside for that purpose should be sold, with funds hypothecated towards this project.

There has been much community debate in recent months on the wilderness issue. It is good that widespread debate has taken place, because more people throughout the community are informed as to the relative merits of retaining pristine bushland for future generations and recognising the existing access enjoyed by many people. I am delighted that we have come to a sensible position on that issue. The Government recognises that it has an important role in protecting pristine areas of bushland throughout the State so that future generations - not those 10 or 20 years down the track but those who may be here in a couple of centuries - can observe and appreciate what some of the original bushland areas in Australia were like.

At the same time it should be recognised that many people want to be able to appreciate those areas but do not have the time or ability to access them on foot. Trails, whether horse riding trails or four-wheel drive tracks, which enable people to go into those areas to appreciate the qualities that are offered in them, must be maintained. Worthwhile exercises are being undertaken to identify existing trails and to ensure that access is not denied. I am certain that by the end of this year additional wilderness areas will be gazetted in New South Wales.

I now refer to the environment. I acknowledge the problems faced by the timber industry in New South Wales. In recent months I have had the opportunity to travel up and down the coast and have come to appreciate the difficulties faced by the many communities that rely heavily on the timber industry. It is clear that there is a need for some resource security legislation and assurance so they know where they going in the coming years. It is not good enough to expect them to operate on a year-to-year basis and perhaps in many cases

much less than that. They

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need to be given clear signals that they have access to resource securities so many of them can invest substantial amounts of money to increase their efficiency and safety. That can only occur if there is clear security of access granted to them. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

With regard to law and justice, I welcome the legislation proposed by the Government to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of mental illness and HIV status and the proposals to outlaw racial vilification. These significant moves are a sign of a mature and sensible community. It was interesting to note that about half a million people attended the recent gay and lesbian mardi gras. That reflects that Sydney as a whole is a mature and tolerant community that recognises, after a number of years, that gays and lesbians exist in our community. Those half a million people were prepared to go along and observe the mardi gras, on whatever basis they chose to observe. I understand most of them found the parade entertaining.

It is important to note that while the general community is tolerant of the gay and lesbian community, the reverse does not necessarily apply. Earlier this year Denise Annetts, an Australian woman cricketer, failed to be selected in the Australian women's team. She faced a problem in trying to have her case considered objectively. She felt she had been discriminated against, not on the basis of being homosexual but of being heterosexual. There was no forum, no avenue - certainly not the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board - from which she could seek an investigation of her complaints.

That area must be addressed if people such as Denise Annetts are being denied rights that are enjoyed by the homosexual community. The law should be changed to prohibit discrimination on the ground of homosexuality or heterosexuality. I have some anecdotal evidence regarding someone who has similarly suffered. He is a heterosexual male undertaking a HIV-related course at a tertiary institution. The others in his class, homosexual males, vilified and criticised him on the basis of his heterosexuality and for his involvement in a heterosexual relationship. The tolerance that the homosexual community expects from the heterosexual community should be repaid in kind.

I turn now to petrol pricing. The draft report of the Industry Commission inquiry into petrol pricing in New South Wales is due to be published in the near future, with its final report due in May or June. Importantly, that particular inquiry identifies the uneven playing field that exists throughout New South Wales, particularly in parts of Sydney. It is evident that country areas are disadvantaged pricewise compared with Sydney. Indeed, some areas within Sydney are disadvantaged compared with other Sydney areas because of not only competition but a number of retailers and wholesalers benefiting from an unfair advantage, whether through rebates or discounts of a non-transparent kind or through the use of illegally blended products that influence the market price.

Significant changes are needed in the petrol industry in this State. Pricing throughout Sydney should not vary to the extent we have seen in recent years. Clearly, a number of areas in Sydney, certainly in the area I represent, are disadvantaged by prices. The problem is exacerbated in country areas, notwithstanding that those areas must recognise the cost to freight fuel product across the State to some remote locations. I refer now to the foreshadowed proposals of the Leader of the Opposition, who put forward what he termed an "alternative Governor's Speech" and some alternative policies. A brief perusal of his suggestions can only lead one to the conclusion that they are little more than motherhood statements.

His proposals contain very little in the way of substance, but his comments arouse a lot of nice, soft, warm, inner fuzzy feelings. It is a shame that he reiterates a number of themes and assertions that can only be referred to as patent lies. He continues to assert that he will replace about 2,500 teachers in classrooms. I have no doubt that he will not and cannot achieve that because he simply will not have the financial ability to do so. It is interesting in that context to note that those teachers he has flagged to be restored to the education system will not be replaced according to any pre-existing formula but by a new formula he intends to introduce.

One can only assume that those teachers will not ultimately be seen by teachers of other schools and by

students of New South Wales. It is another Labor lie. Similarly we have criticisms from the Opposition about the efficiencies of the Government Cleaning Service. Magnificent savings of \$250,000 have been achieved over five years through initiatives taken by the Minister for Administrative Services. The Opposition has failed to understand and acknowledge that a reduction in the number of hours actually worked in a school does not equate in any way to the quality of work and cleaning that is carried out. Assertions by the Opposition that teachers, students and principals are undertaking cleaning duties are entirely fallacious and are part of another Labor lie.

Criticisms have continued to be made in recent days about transport. The Minister for Transport deserves enormous credit for the work he has performed over recent years in establishing a number of committees and inquiries and, indeed, calling for expressions of interest to involve the private sector in many of the transport links that this city dearly needs. Until 1988 this subject was never properly addressed by the former Labor Government. Only in the past five years have we seen significant changes and a number of motorways established in New South Wales. It is interesting to note that the Opposition now changes its position and opposes the North Coast tollway, which it initially supported. That is typical of the Opposition's approach to this and other issues throughout New South Wales.

The Opposition has also adopted the same approach in relation to the clean waterways program and some of the initiatives undertaken by the Water

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Board, to which I alluded earlier. The legislative program outlined last week by the Governor is quite significant. A vast number of changes have been proposed in a variety of areas, some of which I have just touched on. They all have the objective of improving the quality of life that the people of New South Wales enjoy. It is the Government's role to look towards that aim. Sometimes while decisions such as reforming government enterprises might seem to be for short-term gain, they are actually for long-term gain.

Though people who are offered voluntary redundancies or who are encouraged to seek employment elsewhere face difficulties, ultimately it is in the interests of providing the most efficient government trading enterprises that such action be taken so that the private sector is seen as a benchmark. If through corporatisation the Water Board, Pacific Power and other Government instrumentalities can compete and trade as efficiently as the private sector, the Government will have done a significant job towards providing an efficient public sector. At the end of the day the more efficient the public sector operates in this State, the less the taxpayers of New South Wales have to subsidise it and the fewer the charges that are passed on to the citizens. I am delighted to have had this opportunity to speak in the address-in-reply debate and I am happy to support the matters raised by the Governor in his Speech.

**Mr GIBSON** (Londonderry) [7.57]: I congratulate Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair on the wonderful job he does, not only on the occasion of the opening of Parliament but also other matters he has attended to since holding the office of Governor. I also congratulate his wife, Shirley. These good Australians have both visited my electorate more often than any other Governor in the history of New South Wales. The Governor said in his Speech in Parliament last week:

My Government is committed to improving the services which are available to assist families and communities, in coping with the rapid social and economic changes which are a fact of life in our modern society.

I totally agree. A very important part of that service is the backing of such services as the local member of Parliament. One of the most important services to constituents in New South Wales is that provided by local members. My electorate of Londonderry is a busy one and I have been placed in an impossible position so far as looking after my constituents is concerned. All honourable members, at the start of each financial year, are given a printing and stationery allowance. The Presiding Officers, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the President of the Legislative Council, determine the allowance that each member should get. To determine that I believe they looked at the biggest electoral office in New South Wales - an office that does not use much stationery - and took an average of stationery usage right across the board. That has resulted in busy electorates being penalised through a reduction in the quantity of stationery they are allocated. Offices that do not work as

hard to keep in touch with their electorates as we do, through letterboxing and what have you, have had their stationery allocations increased. It is impossible for me to conduct my affairs and look after my constituents in the way I should mainly because I have been out of paper for many weeks. My paper quota and printing allowance have gone, which means I do not have any letterheads. That is deplorable. It is a terrible, penny-pinching episode.

The Government has to take the blame for this matter. The Premier should look immediately at this problem. The Presiding Officers, the President and the Speaker, probably made these decisions in good faith. I am not criticising them, but neither of them has an electorate office and would not know what happens in an electorate office. As I have said, the Government must look at this problem because the situation has become ludicrous. Something must change, and it must change quickly. The Presiding Officers have taken control of Parliament House. Parliament House is for members of Parliament and the people of New South Wales. This is the place where members of Parliament come to work. At some stage in the near future members of Parliament have to take control of Parliament House from the Presiding Officers to ensure that we are able to look after our constituents in the best possible way. We are out in the community dealing with our constituents; we know what we need to look after them.

Naturally, I do not support waste in any way, shape or form. But if a member of Parliament is hindered in attempting to do his work he is not able to fulfil the charter the State has given to him. Something else hinders me in the performance of my duty as a member of Parliament. For three years I have been complaining about a telephone in my office - telephone No. 2442. About eleven of every 20 calls I make drop off the board and I get an engaged signal. I have been complaining about it not once a month but every day that this Parliament has sat for the last three years. I have complained when the Parliament is not sitting. Last week a technician again visited my office but today I still have the same problem. This might seem a little issue, but it is not because it shows the inefficiency of Parliament House today.

My electorate office is only a small office of 60-odd square metres. The Presiding Officers, the Speaker and the President, decided some time ago that electorate offices should be no larger than 80 square metres. I have been requesting the Parliament for a long time to provide me with a larger office. As a matter of fact, I keep some files in the barber shop of a mate of mine at Emerton shopping centre. That is not a good situation to be in, but it is a fact of life. I have nowhere else to keep those files. I keep files at Parliament House and at home. I have appealed to the Parliament to provide me with a larger office. An office became available on the same floor of the shopping centre where my office is located at the moment. It would cost this Parliament for only a fitout to move me next door. There might be a slight

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difference in the rent which is payable. At the moment only a lousy \$12,000 a year is being paid for rent. I do not have much office space at Emerton shopping centre. I cannot move into the office next to mine. The reason given to me by the Parliament is that it is over 100 square metres. I have to remain in my little office.

I cannot provide the services I should to my constituents because of the rule that offices should be no more than 80 square metres. The ironic thing about this is that a new shopping centre is being built at Plumpton. That shopping centre will be opened in the very near future. I have been told by the Parliament that, when funding is available, it is likely that I will be provided with a new office in the Plumpton shopping centre because it has office space of 80 square metres. This matter should be brought to the attention of the people of New South Wales. If I accept that offer the rent that will be payable by the Parliament will jump from \$12,000 a year to \$35,000 a year. Somewhere along the line a bit of common sense must prevail in the running of this Parliament. No common sense prevails at the moment. I cannot obtain an office in my electorate for the same amount of rent that is being paid today, excluding the fitout fee, because it is over 80 square metres. But the Government has given me permission to obtain an office of 80 square metres in the new shopping centre about two or three blocks down the road and it is prepared to pay \$35,000 a year for it. The sooner common sense prevails in this Parliament the better. My constituents deserve better treatment than that.

The Governor, in his Speech, referred in detail to health - a subject about which we are all concerned. Today the Minister for Health spoke in this Chamber about how much money is going to western Sydney. I do



not disagree with that, but that is represented in the form of bricks and mortar. In the long run we will benefit from it but, in the short term, services in western Sydney are being cut and a lot of the building that is taking place is being subsidised. Let me give as an example the primary care unit at Westmead Hospital. In January this year the primary care unit at Westmead Hospital was closed without any fanfare. Over the past 12 months this unit treated 15,000 patients. People in western Sydney will be denied a service that has been there for a long time. When the Whitlam Government built Westmead Hospital its original charter was to include a primary care unit. This Government privatised that primary care unit smartly and without fanfare. It simply decided to close it. I can vouch for the fact that, because of the closure of that unit, the average waiting time in casualty at Westmead Hospital is in the vicinity of six hours.

When I went public and attacked the Government for closing the primary care unit, general practitioners in the area attacked me. The Minister for Health said, "That is great. Doctors do not even support the honourable member for Londonderry". Why would doctors in that area support me? Monday to Friday, people attending Westmead Hospital and assessed as primary care patients are referred to one of the local general practitioners. Local general practitioners have had a windfall - over 15,000 patients each year. Why would they not support the closure of that unit? People in that area who could have visited general practitioners decided to go to the primary care unit at Westmead Hospital because it is a one-stop health shop. They could go there, be assessed by the best doctors in the land and get their X-rays, their blood tests or anything else they needed. This Government has turned back the clock probably two decades and people now have to go to a GP. If a patient needs a blood test, that patient is referred to someone else. If a patient needs an X-ray, there is a delay of two days or two weeks. In western Sydney the clock has been turned back two decades. This has been done very smartly with the stroke of a pen.

I have said in this Chamber many times that all honourable members should be concerned about paediatric speech therapy. In western Sydney people requiring paediatric speech therapy have to wait 2½ years. Children in need of this treatment cannot wait 2½ years. In western Sydney people need dental treatment, and it is deplorable that they have to wait two years to have a tooth pulled or filled at a polyclinic. That situation has not improved during the past six or seven years. Last week this Chamber heard of a lady who had to wait 23 days for an angiogram, and that is deplorable. But, the average waiting time for an angiogram at Westmead Hospital is three months - and it has been for a long time.

It is deplorable that there are no dialysis facilities west of Blacktown, an area that accommodates more people than live in Western Australia, South Australia, or Tasmania. Today in this Chamber the Minister spoke about the new teaching hospital at Nepean - but it has no dialysis unit. The Mount Druitt Hospital also has no dialysis unit. Hawkesbury Hospital has no dialysis unit. A 68-year-old constituent of mine, Mrs Norma Whitmore, has to travel from Richmond to Blacktown three days a week in order to go on a life saving dialysis machine. Each treatment takes approximately four hours and the only way she could cope was for her son to help her. Her son virtually gave away full-time work in order to keep his mother alive on a dialysis machine. Mrs Whitmore's situation has improved over the last few months but the fact still remains that there is no dialysis unit in outer western Sydney, and as far as the Government is concerned no one is making a move to have a dialysis unit installed in that area.

Hawkesbury Hospital has been talked about from the time I entered Parliament in 1988. During that six-year period in the Budget Papers a capital works program provision was made each year to build a public hospital at Hawkesbury costing \$70 million. Two years ago the Minister claimed that the existing hospital would not be privatised, but that a public hospital would be built. However, tenders have now been called to privatise Hawkesbury Hospital, and two non-profit organisations have made their bids. The Labor Party's view about Hawkesbury Hospital is that if those contracts have not been signed by the time Labor wins the next State election, those contracts

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will be cancelled. The Labor Party will build a public hospital in the Hawkesbury area, which the people of that area should have had long ago.

Last year Blacktown Council decided to conduct a school immunisation program and decided to immunise

schoolchildren who had not been immunised in year 10 against poliomyelitis, diphtheria and tetanus. In the Blacktown area 20 schools participated, with a total enrolment of 2,920 year 10 students. Last year, 1,488 year 10 students were immunised at a cost of \$4,400. The Department of Health, through the Government, provided a grant for that program. On those figures, if 1,488 students in year 10 in the Blacktown area were not immunised - granted many of those were migrant children who might not have had the opportunity to be immunised in their native country - how many children in western Sydney, or New South Wales, are not immunised today? Hopefully there will never be an outbreak of polio or any other dreaded disease but if there were, the cost to the State would be devastating. The cost to the families would also be devastating.

This year it was anticipated that the scheme would improve and the Government was asked for a grant of \$5,500 - bearing in mind 1,488 students last year were immunised. The Government gave a big fat no: no money for immunisation. A lousy \$5,500 was denied, yet - and this is what angers me - the Minister sprouts about how the health budget was underspent last year by \$30 million, or \$40 million or \$50 million. Not too long ago the Government stated that in the first six months of this financial year the health budget had been underspent by \$400 million. The reason for the underexpenditure is because the Government has cut services for the poor. This Government is not a Robin Hood government; it is a Hood Robin government - it robs from the poor to give to the rich - and that is what is happening in western Sydney.

This House has heard about people waiting for operations in western Sydney. Today the total number waiting in New South Wales is 45,500. That figure can be argued about but there is no doubt it is very close to the actual figure. In rural New South Wales 10,300 people are waiting for operations, an increase of 40 per cent on last year's figures. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

In my part of western Sydney the Western District Area Health Service has 1,154 people waiting for operations. In the Wentworth area there are 552 people waiting. That is not quality health care. The Government and the Minister can talk about all the money going to western Sydney in bricks and mortar, but there is a big difference when we start talking about how much money has been spent on health in western Sydney and how much money is available for quality health care in western Sydney.

Another service the Governor spoke about in his Speech was the Financial Counselling Service, which was created by the Labor Party Government in 1980. The Labor Party thought that service would be advantageous for people in small business and for families that may have had trouble with household budgets, to teach them how to budget a little better and to help small businesses that might run into problems and not have money to obtain expert help. In that year a service was established at Penrith with a grant of \$20,000 to run the office in its first year of service. When the Labor Party was thrown out of government in 1988 the grant for the Penrith office had increased to \$43,000. From the time the Greiner Government came in, through the Fahey Government, we have seen a gradual decrease in funding for Penrith.

Bear in mind that in 1980, \$20,000 was granted. The amount of money for the Penrith Financial Counselling Service this year, 14 years later, is \$20,000 - the same amount granted by the Opposition 14 years ago. I went public about that and the Minister's office rang the office five minutes after my press release and gave them a further \$5,000, which brings it up to the level the Opposition gave in 1982. With the worst recession in history, with unemployment, with people going out backwards and families in dire straits in western Sydney, all that this Government can give to the Penrith office, which looks after western Sydney, is a lousy \$25,000. The Financial Counselling Service office in Penrith cannot keep its doors open four days a week. It has no secretary to answer the telephone any more; there is only an answering machine that tells people to leave a message. The Government should hang its head in shame when it says it is doing a great job in New South Wales.

The temptation is to compare New South Wales with other States and in this instance it is very easy. This year in Western Australia, \$2.2 million has been allocated for financial counselling services. In Victoria \$2 million is allocated for financial counselling services. Queensland has allocated \$1 million for this service. New South Wales, the State that prides itself on being the biggest, the best and the most progressive, with by far the biggest population, has given a measly \$324,000. That is an absolute disgrace. That is something that this

Government cannot be proud about. I should like to address the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing on a matter that affects my electorate in a very direct way. A large amount of funding for New South Wales is derived through the Totalizator Agency Board. The jewel in the crown so far as greyhound racing in New South Wales is concerned is Richmond Greyhound Club, a club that I am certain the Minister knows very well and is very proud of. Last year in its 47 meetings it broke all barriers, all records. It broke through the \$30 million barrier. The sales turnover last year was \$30,580,220, an increase of \$3.5 million on the year before.

The Richmond Greyhound Club is a great club doing a wonderful job. The average hold per meeting is \$650,000. The average hold for a city meeting - and Richmond is classified as a non-metropolitan club - is \$620,000. Richmond is becoming the leading greyhound club in Australia. At the moment the club needs money urgently for new lighting, running rails,

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boxes, semaphore boards, irrigation and totalisator equipment. As the club is classified as non-metropolitan, it is discriminated against terribly. The money that is returned to the club does not allow it to compete, to stay in the big race; it will not be able even to secure its position in relation to the amount of revenue it returned this year. Next year it could face a deficit of \$200,000.

I am certain that the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing knows that the club needs to be reclassified. I realise that is not easy, because of the TAB implications, but the club needs some form of reclassification so that it will have an even chance to prove what a good club it is. Richmond is not out in the sticks any more; it is part of Sydney. If there is any way for the Minister to reclassify the Richmond Greyhound Club as a metropolitan club, I am certain that the returns would justify that decision.

The Minister for Police has entered the Chamber at an opportune time. An explosive situation exists in the Londonderry electorate, about which all honourable members should be concerned. The problem has been brewing for a long time. Outer western Sydney has an extremely young population, particularly in my electorate and in the Mount Druitt region. At the second-last census the average age in the region was 11. When one is determining how many police an area should have, one says that for a given number of population there should be a proportionate number of police. That does not always work out, because some areas have greater needs. Bidwill is one such area. I foresee a scenario in Bidwill of which no one will be proud. There is no risk in the world that people will be hurt. If a new police station cannot be built at Bidwill, at least a temporary police station should be located there. Paul Clemson, the local policeman in charge of Mount Druitt police station, supports the construction of a new police station at Bidwill, as do the regional police.

Recently a temporary police station was provided at St Clair, which is in a marginal electorate held by a Government member. The station gives a wonderful service to the public. I do not know of what benefit it is, but it provides a good service. I know the benefit that a police station would have for Bidwill. The presence of police would be enough to quell the trouble that has been brewing there for a long time. The Government has allocated funds for the building of a new police station at Lawson in the Blue Mountains, another marginal seat held by the Government. The police there will tell you that they do not need a new police station at Lawson, as there is already a police station in the area; there are stations at Springwood, Katoomba, Penrith and St Marys. The police station is being built at Lawson to bolster the Government's chances of holding the seat of Blue Mountains. That could be seen to be another Ros Kelly affair - pork-barrelling. Let there be a little decency: put a police station or a temporary police station in an area that desperately needs one. I assure honourable members that responsibility for the trouble that will eventuate in the Bidwill area will rest squarely on the shoulders of the Minister for Police and on the Government if they do not heed the advice that I have given tonight.

**Mr GLACHAN** (Albury) [8.24]: I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this debate. At the outset I should like to praise His Excellency the Governor and his wife, Mrs Sinclair, for the wonderful job they do in discharging the duties of the office of Governor of this State. Some time ago they came to the Albury electorate and travelled extensively throughout it. Wherever they went they left a wonderful impression on the people of the electorate, who admire their approach to ordinary people and their dedication to their duties. I am personally delighted that His Excellency's tenure has been extended for 12 months. I sincerely hope that in the

future he will be persuaded to accept another term as Governor. I believe that he and his wife are two fine Australians who have served in that office particularly well.

I add my few words of praise to the volunteers and members of the emergency services who worked so hard to fight the devastating fires that affected parts of Sydney and other areas of the State recently. For the people of Albury it was a frustrating time. Each evening they sat in their living rooms watching television and seeing people's lives and property threatened, and feeling frustrated that they could do little more than watch. Many people from the electorate of Albury volunteered to go and assist in fighting the fires. Some of them were called and went. I pay special tribute to them. Others wanted to go and were keen to, but because it was considered that there could be fires in the Albury area, they were held back in case that emergency developed. They were keen to go because some years ago serious fires swept through the outskirts of Albury, through the suburb of Thurgoona, and destroyed a number of isolated homes. That was a tragic time and one that the people of Albury have not forgotten. For that reason they felt very much for their fellow citizens in other parts of the State who suffered great tragedy.

His Excellency mentioned the wonderful triumph of winning the bid to stage the Olympic Games in the year 2000. I congratulate the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads, the Hon. Bruce Baird, and those who assisted him in achieving that success. I shall never forget the early morning on which the announcement was made. My wife, Helen, and I went to the official function at which the announcement was made, at Circular Quay. We had the experience in the early hours of the morning of walking through the streets in the centre of the city, which were relatively deserted. But as we moved closer to Circular Quay we saw more and more people. When we arrived at Circular Quay we were astounded at the number of young people there. It was interesting to note that there were not many people of our age in the crowd. Most of them were in their late teens, twenties or thirties - singly, in pairs or in groups. They were all out enjoying themselves, looking forward to Sydney winning the right to stage the Olympic Games.

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We had quite a job working our way through the crowd. However, it was a crowd in good humour and generally speaking one that was well behaved. I was proud of those young Australians and their behaviour on that very special occasion. At the official function the tension began to rise as people saw the video clips of the bids of other cities for the staging of the Games. Rumours abounded that the decision had been made already that China would win and that Sydney had no chance. When we saw the video of the Chinese presentation our hearts sank to some extent. When we saw the presentation by Manchester and realised how well done it had been we began to lose faith in Sydney being successful. When the announcement was finally made there was pandemonium, then there was a few moments of silence, and then people began spontaneously to sing "Advance Australia Fair". I shall never forget that occasion. As we left the function, thousands and thousands of young people, all well behaved, were out on the streets enjoying the great triumph for Sydney. It was a very moving occasion.

His Excellency mentioned that it is the International Year of the Family, and he referred to the support that the Government proposes to give to families. I wholeheartedly endorse that proposal. When I was a child growing up it was easy to define what a family was; it was a mother, father and 2.4 children. It was easy to identify the family unit and everyone knew exactly what it was. In those days de facto relationships were frowned upon and were socially unacceptable; divorce was not thought about or talked about much. But I admit that because of those social constrictions many people lived miserable and unhappy lives in unhappy marriages.

All of that has changed and those social values no longer exist. That makes it difficult, perhaps, to define what a family is, but I guess all of us, whatever our position may be, realise that the optimum state is what it was many years ago - mother, father and 2.4 children. I guess we can never go back to those old values. It is impossible to hope that we could, so we have to adjust to the way things are today and the way they may continue to change. We have to accept that our old definitions are quite meaningless now, make adjustments, and see that those who need the help receive it. In my view the people who need the help most are children,

and we must do all we can to assist them.

His Excellency also mentioned the phenomenon of the ageing population of this country. It is quite surprising to realise that as time goes by the average age of the population continues to increase. Society must begin to develop strategies to cope with the future enormous increase in the number of aged people. Next Sunday in my electorate the Lutheran church will open a new nursing home. That nursing home is, in my view, exactly what is required to serve elderly people in their declining years. The facilities are magnificent and I congratulate the Lutheran church in Albury and all those in the community who supported it in raising the finance needed to build this wonderful new nursing home.

Another great problem I see developing relates to the needs and ambitions of people who have retired. Recently I attended a meeting of about 300 people in Albury who call themselves independent retirees. This is a movement that is growing stronger as time goes on. Independent retirees, that is those who have retired from work but who support themselves, see others in the community who have retired and who exist on Government support. They look at their own situation and feel that they are being disadvantaged to a large degree. They say that if this other section of society receives all of these benefits direct from Government, they want their share also. I can understand their strong point of view but I cannot help but wonder who will pay for the benefits that they feel they should have. As a nation we need to quickly develop a worthwhile national retirement scheme - some form of superannuation - so that everyone in the community can contribute to it and enjoy the same high standard of benefits. Only then will these jealousies and discontent no longer exist.

Education was another matter that His Excellency mentioned, and it is one that I consider to be of great importance. Many changes have come about in the education system in recent years and I think now of the change brought about by the sale of the Government Cleaning Service and of the furore that caused in the community - despite the fact that the people involved have been guaranteed work for quite a long period, the standard of cleaning of government schools and offices has been guaranteed, and at the same time a great deal of public money will be saved. I remember some years ago, when the first reforms were introduced by the then Greiner Government, attending a presentation night at a high school in my electorate. The principal said that the introduction of global budgeting would serve to cause the downfall of the public school system, that he and his staff were untrained in handling finance, that it was an imposition so far as they were concerned, that it would never be successful, and it was something that should never have been introduced.

Just 12 months later I again attended a presentation night at the school, where the same principal said that global budgeting was the best thing that ever happened in education, that he had become an expert in it, that he and his staff were so skilled in global budgeting they were teaching other schools how to go about it, that it was the greatest advantage the school had ever had, and that he wished it had been introduced many years earlier. I believe that the sale of the cleaning service will be seen in a similar vein as time goes on.

One of the things that pleases me a great deal in education is the general move back by the community to the technical and further education system. There was a time when everyone believed that their children needed a university degree before they could claim to have any success in life at all and there was an unnecessary emphasis put on a university education. I am not complaining about universities; I strongly support what they do. However, I believe that the community went overboard so far as university

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degrees were concerned. People are beginning to realise that the TAFE system can provide excellent vocational training and can serve well to prepare people for successful life in the working environment.

Another great innovation and one that I strongly support is the co-operation now between TAFE and the school system whereby high school students are able to go to TAFE colleges for part of their education. That is a big advantage for many students and I strongly support the opportunity that young people now have to do their higher school certificate through a TAFE college. When I was 15 I started an apprenticeship as a fitter and turner but I believe that the days of apprenticeships as we know them are numbered. With multiskilling and new approaches to the way Australia works I can see the apprentice system gradually being abolished and new ways of training people for the work force emerging. Pathways in education - the opportunity that people have

to perhaps start a TAFE certificate course, progress to a diploma and, if they wish, extend that into a university degree - gives new opportunities for many people and I strongly applaud that initiative.

His Excellency spoke about women's issues and, of course, today being International Women's Day, that is an important topic. But the most important thing of all we have to achieve for women is an understanding in the community that domestic violence is no longer acceptable. It must be a sign of my age when I keep referring to the times when I was a child growing up, but I remember that in the area where I lived it was common practice for husbands to assault their wives and for the rest of the community to ignore it and consider it to be normal behaviour. Recently in Albury a group of people working in the community health area received an award from the Minister for a program that they are developing which will give a clear message to society that domestic violence is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the future. His Excellency spoke about the important issue of economic development in the State. It is admirable and necessary to have good social programs but they amount to nothing at all if there is no money to finance them, so we need economic development as well as social development.

On Friday the Premier will visit Albury to be involved in the opening of a new recycling plant at Australian Newsprint Mills. The plant will recycle newspapers and magazines into newsprint again. This initiative will save significant landfill, will be cost effective and will help reduce the enormous amount of rubbish that we, as a society, are producing week by week, month by month, year by year. In fact, we have become such a throwaway society that if we are not careful, we will soon bury ourselves in our own rubbish. Recycling is to be commended but we must also minimise the waste we produce. My electorate includes a great deal of industrial development. Macquarie Knitting Mills has recently built a brand new factory that has added significantly to the existing factory. It has installed the most modern machinery of its type in the world, thereby ensuring that the firm is competitive on a worldwide basis. His Excellency referred to the importance the Government places on agriculture to this State and to our economy. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Though the State's tourism and industrial development are often discussed, one must never lose sight of the fact that agriculture provides the foundation of the State's economy and is the backbone of many, if not all, major towns and cities in western New South Wales. His Excellency referred also to urban renewal and to containing the sprawl of the city of Sydney. As a country member I believe that if city dwellers lived in a city such as Albury, their quality of life would be much improved. Efforts must be made to encourage people to cross over the Blue Mountains and experience a country lifestyle, though this will not be achieved unless jobs are provided. That is why developments such as the ANM plant, Macquarie Worsted and the new Gordon and Gotch facility are so important to Albury and to New South Wales. When Sydney was first settled by Governor Phillip his intentions were the best. He sought to lay out what he believed would become a magnificent city, a city he wished to call Albion. The name did not stick - Sydney did - and neither did his plan to have streets 200 feet wide. Sydney grew, and will continue to grow, but it is important that the growth be controlled and planned in order to limit the sprawl of the city.

I am concerned about the road toll. In 1993, 587 deaths were occasioned on the roads. Though that is an enormous reduction on previous years' figures, it is still far too many. The tragedy is that those losing their lives are often young people. Recently in Albury two fine young students from one of the high schools were involved in an accident. These young people had great futures. The driver, who had only recently obtained a driver's licence, travelled in excess of the speed limit in a high-powered car which slammed into a tree. One of the young persons was killed and the other still remains after a number of months in a serious condition in a Melbourne hospital. These sorts of tragedies happen often in Albury with young people who have recently obtained a licence. They have a licence but no experience. They gain their licence through driving around a few blocks in the centre of town, stopping at a few traffic lights, parking in one of the busy streets and then they are let loose in high-powered cars on country roads.

I have been informed that before obtaining a licence in Norway, one has to have experience driving on dirt roads, country roads at night, in the rain, in the snow and under a variety of conditions. We need to examine driver competency rather than merely train people to pass a limited test which does not in any way indicate their real driving ability. Those initiatives should be examined so as to protect the lives of our young people.

A new hospital is being built at Albury to replace the existing hospital, which is merely a collection of old buildings; it has severely handicapped the dedicated work of the fine

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professionals in the health industry. The new hospital will assist them to provide the best health care to the people of Albury - and it will be in no way intimidatory to patients. The hospital is designed specifically to assist those who deliver health care, to make the patients feel relaxed and aid them in their recovery. I am proud that this will be the best country hospital between Sydney and Melbourne. I am grateful to the Minister for Health for his support in securing this hospital. I wish to pay tribute to the Minister for his commitment to building so many new hospitals throughout New South Wales. Today he spoke about the construction of the new children's hospital at Westmead, a facility that will be of world-class standard. I congratulate him on that and many other initiatives that will provide improved facilities for the people of New South Wales. Until recently many of our hospitals were 40, 50 and 90 years old - many even older than that. The Minister's building program has been long overdue.

Reform of government trading enterprises is another achievement of the Government. Many of the reforms have improved service to the public and have resulted in operations being carried out on a much more business-like footing than previously. Dividends these enterprises pay can be used to build the hospitals, roads and schools we so urgently need. I wish to congratulate the Treasurer on his management of the State's finances. I believe that the Parliament and the State can look forward to a favourable budget later in the year.

My colleague the honourable member for Davidson mentioned a discrepancy in petrol pricing in the city of Sydney. I shall inform the House about the discrepancy in prices in regional New South Wales. It is frustrating for country people to visit Sydney or Melbourne where the price of petrol is 55¢ or 56¢ a litre when in their own towns the price is 75¢ or 76¢ a litre, and in some instances even higher. Recently I drove to the Blue Mountains to visit my mother and I could not help but notice that petrol was costing more than 70¢ in Lithgow but was 10¢ cheaper in the Blue Mountains. It annoys residents west of the mountains that the city of Sydney has that advantage over them. The discrepancy exists throughout country New South Wales and though petrol companies try hard to explain it, it is difficult for country people to understand and accept. If the price of crude oil on overseas markets has dropped dramatically over the past few months, why has it not been reflected at pumps in country New South Wales? Try as I might, I find that very difficult to understand. It is of great importance for country people. Sooner or later someone will have to do something about that dreadful situation.

**Mr MILLS** (Wallsend) [8.51]: I am pleased to make my contribution in the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech. I am particularly pleased to note that, although during the week after his Speech the Governor was the subject of considerable white-anting, essentially from the Premier's Office, that, happily, is over, with the announcement that the Governor's term will be extended for one more year. I note the comment attributed to the Premier in the *Newcastle Herald* of 7 March:

Mr Fahey said yesterday that the extension was in order to maintain stability in the Office of Governor until after the next State election, due in March 1995.

That is commendable. The Governor, who we began to think might have made his last speech, will have the pleasure of opening the Parliament again next year. I will have great pleasure, as a member of a Labor Government, to take part in that ceremony. The reasons for that white-anting were not immediately clear. However, I noticed in the *Sunday Telegraph* of 30 January a remarkably arrogant statement from the Premier that if he could find a way to hold an early election he would. He was quoted in the article as follows:

I think it is in the interests of the people of the State for a mandate to be given to us to allow us to take advantage of the moment.

What an incredible attitude to the Constitution of New South Wales. What an incredible attitude to democracy in New South Wales - by a member of a Government that introduced the fixed four-year terms law. At least the Governor recognised the gravity of his oath of office to uphold the law including the fixed four-year term law,

even if the Premier does not uphold that law. I had great pleasure hearing about 160 new Australian citizens uttering an oath on Australia Day in ceremonies in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. This is the oath that Australia's new citizens swore on 26 January this year:

From this time forward, under God, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

It was a wonderful experience to be present and participate in that ceremony. I know of many Australians, lord mayors, local government officials, elected people and parliamentarians who have said about that oath of citizenship, "At long last". I also know a number of local people who at long last took out Australian citizenship because they were able to take that particular oath. When I think about such oaths, constitutional matters come to mind. We have to think about where New South Wales is heading, about its relationships with the monarchy and about its Constitution.

I was pleased to note that on Australia Day the Prince of Wales, the young man whom the Premier's late tackle was intended to protect - being a Newcastle Knights supporter I can recognise a late tackle by a Canterbury forward - was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as giving his blessing to Australia becoming a republic if that is what Australia wants, and suggesting that the republicans may be right. The report stated that he personified the republican debate as the sign of a mature and self-confident nation. One other republican not so well known previously was also willing to declare himself. On Australia Day, the Treasurer of New South Wales was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as follows:

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... I am a committed Republican but, above all, I am an Australian

There are two major sidetracks along the path of the inevitable republic: one by those who embellish the issue to trigger major constitutional change; and the other by those who embellish the issue to prevent any constitutional change.

The Treasurer has adopted a very sensible position on this issue. I look forward to debate proceeding in a week or two on the Crimes Act (Amendment) Bill which will be proposed by the honourable member for Smithfield. That bill will be another contribution to advancing the republican debate in New South Wales. I turn to the bushfires, to which the Governor referred in his Speech. What occurred in the Hunter region was not well reported in the Sydney print or electronic media. The Hunter region blazed earlier than Sydney did. Fires reached 400 metres from my house on Boxing Day. About 100 hectares of bush were burned out at the back of John Hunter Hospital. The fire was stopped by the fire brigades at McCaffrey Drive. Ronald Macdonald House at John Hunter Hospital was threatened but was saved. Before the New Year inland fires started in the Hunter, especially south of Kurri Kurri. Monday, 3 January, was a very hot day in the Hunter, with northwesterly winds and very severe conditions.

The impact on Wallsend electorate was particularly severe. The Kurri Kurri fire spread southeastwards as wind-blown spots. A study of the fire headquarters map shows the way the fire progressed. Sugarloaf Range ignited. The fire crossed the new freeway at Seahampton and went all along the link road towards Wallsend. It went through the bush to the north of Edgeworth, which is mainly private land owned by coal companies. It went on to Glendale, past the TAFE college, jumped Lake Road and travelled on to Glendale East school.

The fire also jumped several kilometres to Garden Suburb and then again jumped several more kilometres to Charlestown, where two townhouses were burned. Many outbuildings, both industrial and domestic, and fences were destroyed in the Wallsend electorate. Many houses were scorched and many gardens were destroyed. One man died - a constituent of mine, Jack Roach of Glendale. Jack had responded to a call from an elderly lady who lived alone in Edgeworth. She saw the fire blowing toward her home. Jack went out to help her clear rubbish from around her house. He got out a lawn mower and started cutting down long grass at the back of her place. While doing so, with the firefighters just the other side of a firebreak, he had a heart attack and died. Despite treatment from the firefighters nearby, he could not be revived. I express the community's



thanks to Jack Roach and extend condolences on his loss to his sister-in-law, with whom he lived for many years.

Those fires in the Hunter continued for the next week, but 3 January was the worst day. It was a frightening day. I received calls from friends and relatives overseas and interstate who saw on their television screens pictures of the whole of New South Wales ablaze. Some television reports in the Northern Hemisphere must have been a bit over the top. However, we were able to assure people that the fire was horrendous for those close to it but that most people in New South Wales were physically safe and a long distance from the fires. I have nothing but praise for the firefighters. Our area was attended by fire brigades, bush fire brigades, the State Emergency Service, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Commission, local government employees especially at Lake Macquarie, and the New South Wales Police Service. They were all out there working very hard. I acknowledge also the Salvation Army, which in our region fed all the firefighting workers, assisted by many residents who supplied food and refreshments. The courage, dedication, determination and effectiveness of those firefighters ensured that damage to housing in the Wallsend electorate and in the Hunter generally was minimal.

I pay tribute to the leadership of people such as Bob Hatton, the regional commander of the Department of Bushfire Services; Steve Sowter, the Lake Macquarie fire control officer; Peter Smith, the Lake Macquarie emergency controller and district officer of the New South Wales Fire Brigades; and John Craige, the regional commander of the New South Wales Fire Brigades, who carried the major management burden in the Hunter during the emergency. I also thank Doug Crotty, the zone commander; Bob Tait from the New South Wales Fire Brigade Employees Union; and Steve Shaw from State Forests for briefing local members of Parliament after the emergency was over.

On behalf of the local community in Lake Macquarie city I express thanks to Cardiff Workers Club and the secretary-manager, Bob Salter, for organising the first of the big thank you ceremonies in the Hunter region on the night of 31 January. NBN TV co-sponsored that event and it was well appreciated by the firefighting workers who came to receive the thanks and to relive some of their memories of the emergency. The show was attended by over 1,500 people and ordinary members of the community were present to pay tribute.

A number of matters emerged from the local community in the Hunter for further consideration in the aftermath of the fires, so we might try to do it better next time. In my electorate, and especially Garden Suburb, it was evident that the greatest fire threat to homes was to those built on tops of ridges. Nevertheless, damage to homes in Lake Macquarie, where a lot of fires burned, was probably reduced because of an unwritten council policy of preserving green ridge lines. It was a policy designed to preserve the scenic beauty of Lake Macquarie but it had an unexpected advantageous spin off by reducing the fire risk, because there were no houses in those fire threatened areas.

If that evidence is combined with the experience in Sydney on the following weekend, it is obvious why the Leader of the Opposition has suggested that an environmental planning policy should be considered to prevent further residential expansion along outlying

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ridges and along western facing escarpments fronting bushland. Media participation in emergency services should also be considered. I was in Sydney during the weekend of the emergency and I saw and heard briefings given by Phil Koperberg and the staff from the firefighting headquarters. All the media presented the same story on the various channels.

Journalists in the Hunter region have told me that in that region, when the emergency was at its height, there was no such central briefing agency actively briefing the media and providing information through media outlets to listeners, that is, the ordinary residents who might have wanted to know what to do. In other words, journalists had to try to find the appropriate person and ask what was happening. Indeed, different services were occasionally providing separate briefings of their own. The point is that outside the metropolitan area the centralised briefing system was not operating earlier this year. We need to consider improving that position.

When I lived for a short time in the mid-west of the United States of America during the tornado season, the emergency service commander in each area had the ability to interrupt all electronic broadcasting to broadcast warning messages to the local population. That is something else we should consider putting into our law. Unfortunately, some Government members went feral in blaming the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the greenies for lack of hazard reduction in the wake of the bushfires. In Wallsend the majority of the bushland that burnt was on private land, almost all of it owned by coal companies. They are not exactly supporters of the greenies and the environment movement. That blame was misplaced and in error. All public and private landowners should pay more attention to hazard reduction when appropriate. Hazard reduction is not a panacea. Even pre-burnt areas were burnt out again on those hot windy days in January. The capricious nature of Australian bushfires must be acknowledged. There is no place for irrational finger pointing.

Public sector reform, which was referred to on page 8 of the Governor's Speech, included the Sydney Water Board corporatisation and the State Bank sale - being close at hand. The criteria for public sector reform must be productivity improvements and a net benefit to the people of New South Wales. How the reform is implemented and its impact on the workers and the public are matters for argument - if necessary strong argument - in the Parliament. The Labor Party will debate the proposed reforms referred to in the Governor's Speech. I will take a particular interest because the Fahey Government has a bad track record in reform, as evidenced by the most recent reform referred to by the honourable member for Albury, the privatisation of the Government Cleaning Service on 28 January.

I voted for the Government Cleaning Service Retention Bill last year. The Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services then gave unqualified guarantees that quality of service would be maintained and that no regular cleaners would lose their jobs. In fact, in the Hunter region the zone 5 contract was awarded to Tempo Cleaning Services. On the first day of school, representatives of school communities complained to me about a sudden and unexpected drop in cleaning hours at their schools. The hours of cleaning services in schools and TAFE colleges were reduced by 25 per cent. I have surveyed the institutions that had been serviced by the Government Cleaning Service. One school had an increase of one hour in cleaning services but the rest had their cleaning hours reduced by between 16 per cent and 34 per cent.

The reduction in hours indicates that the Government has reneged on its undertaking to guarantee standards of cleaning in schools. After the failure of this process, and the headache it will cause the Government throughout this year, the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services will become known as the Tonya Harding of this Fahey Olympic team. Productivity improvements are not possible in most schools because fewer cleaners have to do the same jobs without new equipment. The Minister attacked me in the House last week, but she was wrong on every point. She said:

... the Opposition ... 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 ... is now waging the latest campaign of misinformation ...

Let me tell the House what the cleaners union said. The *Newcastle Herald* of 1 February 1994 stated:

Hygiene standards in schools would fall after cleaning hours were cut by the Department of School Education's new contract cleaning service, a spokesman for the cleaners' union has warned ...

The sub-branch secretary for the Miscellaneous Workers Division of the Liquor and Hospitality Miscellaneous Workers Union, Mr Sam Aache, said the schools had reason to complain.

"They should be complaining to the Education Department about it and the parents of school children should be complaining also," he said.

"If they want to pay less money they get less cleaning, that is a fact."

The Minister was wrong. She said I had a misinformation campaign, and that school communities came to me with their concerns. She said:

The worst they could find from their own surveys was that there was a reduction in hours, not horror stories about cleanliness.

I will give the Minister a horror story. In cleaning blocks in one of my high schools, cleaners are allowed 20 minutes per floor for ten rooms - two minutes a day. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

In another school boys were given Ajax and a cloth to clean the bubblers. In another school schoolchildren were sweeping the schoolyard. A worker who had previously worked inside a school 30 hours per week returned from injury at the beginning of the year to a school which had lost its outside

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cleaner. She had to shift the rubbish outside and suffered severe back spasms and before the end of that first week she was in John Hunter Hospital. The Garden Suburb Parents and Citizens Association has written to me as follows:

It is inappropriate that the children of our school are having to empty garbage bins, help lock up classrooms and do more than the generally accepted level of playground and classroom rubbish removal. All this eats into their learning time. It is not the responsibility of the teachers or students to help clean the school when there is a paid cleaning contract for this very purpose.

In the short term we, and most other schools, will probably get by. But what about the longer term when the inadequacy begins to become obvious? We will be faced with grave health and safety issues.

The Minister said last week:

I ask members of the Opposition: what is the fixation they have about hours?

My reply to the Minister is that if the hours are too short the job cannot be done. How can a classroom be cleaned in two minutes a day? The Minister also gave the example of a contractor saving 15 hours' work at Tighes Hill TAFE by introducing a new machine. That is a good example, which I applaud. The trouble is that the schools in my electorate do not have the ability to introduce such new machines to improve productivity. The Minister also said:

The Government has a special contract monitoring unit in place to monitor the contract.

We do not know who is on that unit. We have heard nothing about it. Where has it been to date? Has it issued a report? Finally, the Minister, in a melodramatic ending to her statement, said:

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*.

I definitely rang the contractor. I met with Mr John Eriani, the group general manager of Tempo, and Phil Norris, the manager in the Hunter region. I do not blame Tempo for school cleaning problems. I told that to the group general manager and the manager. I also told them that I do not believe, in the long term, that the company can meet that guarantee of no loss of cleaning standards that the Minister gave and still make a profit. In the few minutes remaining to me I want to refer to the Australian Parliamentary Group for Drug Law Reform and to the remark made by my colleague the honourable member for Charlestown last week in the Address-in-Reply debate. The honourable member for Charlestown spoke of a problem in the police force in the Newcastle region concerning brothels and prostitution. He said then that this State needs a government with courage to decriminalise prostitution. I say tonight that we need a government with courage to decriminalise the use of small quantities of marijuana.

The charter for drug law reform, which was prepared by the Australian Parliamentary Group for Drug Law Reform, was launched late last year. To my knowledge, at the moment, 14 members from both Houses of this Parliament have become signatories to that charter. The drug law reform charter proposes several important things amongst its long-term goals. It proposes the minimisation of the harmful use of drugs, that is all drugs.

We need to reassess as a long-term goal Australia's commitment to its international treaties on illicit substances. We need, as a long-term goal, the reform of drug laws in planned stages. The short-term goals of the group are, first, to focus on the reduction of harm associated with drug use; and, second, to adopt, on a national basis if possible, the South Australian and Australian Capital Territory model of expiation notices for the reform of laws regarding the personal use of small quantities of marijuana. This would be a major advance.

Most honourable members, if given the opportunity, would take advantage of and be prepared to support an extension of the South Australian and Australian Capital Territory expiation model to decriminalise the personal use of small quantities of marijuana. If we are to achieve progress in drug law reform and move to a stage where we treat not just alcohol and tobacco abuse but also marijuana and other illicit drug abuse as health issues and medical problems rather than criminal problems, which is inappropriate, we need to do so slowly, step by step. We need a bipartisan approach. The drug law reform group is multipartisan. It intends to head in the direction of a harm minimisation approach to the reform of drug laws.

**Mr LONGLEY** (Pittwater - Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for the Ageing) [9.13]: It is with great pride that I speak on the Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor. I pay particular tribute to the role the Governor and Mrs Sinclair have played in New South Wales. They are a great tribute to the people of New South Wales and I believe they have enhanced our lives. I admit to being particularly pleased that the Governor's appointment has been extended. The Governor's Speech reflects the confidence we in New South Wales are feeling. Our historic Olympic win demonstrates that we can compete against the best in the world and win. That is a matter of great pride. People in New South Wales are only too well aware of the great work done by the Hon. John Fahey as Premier, the Hon. Bruce Baird as Minister for Transport, Nick Greiner, Rod McGeoch and many others. We should acknowledge their foresight, their vision and their persistent hard work.

In January we saw in a different light the determination of the people of New South Wales when we experienced those traumatic bushfires. The response of the people of New South Wales to those bushfires was overwhelming. My electorate of Pittwater, one area which was singularly affected, was under massive threat, yet the entire community rallied together. The State Emergency Service, the police, volunteer bushfire fighters, the Salvation Army, local community groups, churches, councils and government employees across all areas did an

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outstanding job. To give an example of the way the community worked together, after the fires, many of the residents of Lovett Bay and west Pittwater did not have access to telephones. Those areas are isolated and it was crucial for people in those areas to have access to at least one telephone.

My office, on hearing about the problem, telephoned Strathfield Car Radio, which lent the local residents association a telephone and picked up the bill for the calls. I believe it was the only telephone Strathfield Car Radio had because it had already lent the rest of its phones, free of charge, to bushfire fighters. I pay special tribute to the Department of Community Services which performed magnificently during this crisis period. I make special mention of Peter Olney, who worked superlatively during the crisis period and after it. Disaster recovery centres, which were set up in key areas, provided victims with a one stop approach to obtaining assistance with legal advice, insurance, social security payments and emergency needs such as clothing, accommodation and Department of Housing assistance.

The Bushfire Relief Co-ordination Committee, chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Community Services, Des Semples, has been working to ensure that victims receive the assistance they require. The principles and processes adopted by the committee have been fully supported by major charities and church and community groups, such as St Vincent de Paul, the Red Cross, the Lions Club, the Seventh Day Adventist church and the Salvation Army. An important point that needs to be made is that that committee is a community organisation - government and community working together. Charities and other key community and government groups are making decisions regarding the distribution of funds which were so generously contributed by the people of New South Wales.

This year is the International Year of the Family. Only last week I and the Premier, the Hon. John Fahey, were pleased to participate in the launch in New South Wales of the International Year of the Family. During the International Year of the Family the Fahey Government will be undertaking projects and activities which will strengthen the image of the family, promote the importance of family relationships and highlight the responsibilities of the community in assisting families. In 1994 the Department of Community Services will be taking a proactive approach in promoting the role of families and in providing services which will enable families to become stronger, more nurturing and supportive. This will lead to the building of stronger communities and eventually a stronger Australian nation.

The first ever Family Week was held in New South Wales in 1993. This year Family Week will be held for the second time in New South Wales, but for the first time throughout Australia. Once again New South Wales has taken the lead. I wish to address an area of great importance and significance to the community at large - a matter of personal concern - which involves people with disabilities. This year school-leavers with disabilities who have moderate to high support needs will have suitable post-school placement options available to them. This is due to the establishment in November 1993 of a \$3.6 million post-school options program. Nearly 300 young people and their families have benefited or will benefit from this package. New South Wales has taken the lead in an important area.

When I first became Minister I identified two key groups of disabilities which I saw as being of prime importance, the immediate post-school age category and the older parents with older children with disabilities. The first we have addressed very significantly in the post-school options program. The second is one on which, in a short period of time, the Government will be releasing a discussion paper aimed at different housing options. That will have a very big impact. Also, during 1993 two most significant pieces of legislation were passed by this House, certainly with regard to people with disabilities. This State again led Australia with the passage of the New South Wales Disability Services Act 1993.

Accommodation services for people with a disability will have to conform, by legislation, to appropriate community based models. Where services do not conform to the Act they will be required to develop a transition plan. This process will enable clients to move into more appropriate community based supported accommodation. The second piece of legislation was the complaints appeals and monitoring legislation, which will enable people with disabilities, as well as all people who use the services of the Department of Community Services, to have their right to be heard built into the processes that are now available to them.

The boarding hostels task force, established by me in 1993, submitted its final report in late December 1993. In summary, the report proposed the revision of the current legislative framework within which licensing is administered; lifting the expected obligations of operators, and subsequently the monitoring mechanisms of the Department of Community Services; and the development of a joint enterprise service initiative to support individuals within boarding hostels to access the necessary community support, medical and day activity programs they require. The Government is now working to develop an implementation strategy on those task force recommendations.

During 1994 the Government will continue to strengthen children's services and will continue the significant advances that were made during 1993, particularly with regard to the new funding formulas, with the assistance of the community based advisory committee. Again the role of this new partnership is being built into what is being done in the Department of Community Services. During 1994 the department will further develop, with key State and Commonwealth departments, a number of child protection protocols which will provide services to adolescents and their families. The protocols will improve co-ordination of services and in turn lead to a higher level of individual and family support.

Following the \$2 million injection of funds in 1993-94 for child protection, new positions are being created. That is, during the term of this Government child protection resourcing will have increased by 38 per cent - a dramatic increase. In addition, across the whole range of family support services - especially support

services for children - the Government is implementing a range of new, innovative ways to keep families together and to support those children in need, such as the intensive family based services project, the family assessment project and the family group conference project.

In 1993 the Government further developed and refined plans for the implementation of the Usher report. During 1994 new agreements with service providers will allow for a more flexible and responsive approach by contracted services to assist young people. The Fahey Government's approach contrasts markedly with that of Labor. Labor wants to institutionalise these young people who have done nothing wrong. Labor's approach is a return to the dark old days of locking up children for no reason. The entire focus of the report by Father John Usher was to get these young people into homelike environments. The Labor Party still believes in the lock them up and throw away the key approach to homeless young people. That is simply wrong. We must proceed with the directions that Father John Usher has outlined.

Another significant area of concern is the ageing population. I am proud to announce that last year I was appointed as this State's first Minister for the Ageing. As honourable members will be aware, the Parliament amended the Anti-Discrimination Act in 1993 to exclude age as a ground of discrimination. The Premier also released his statement on positive ageing. The goal of the Fahey Government is to reduce the attitudinal barriers that limit the full and active participation of older people in our society. One of the positive approaches undertaken by the Office on Ageing has been the seniors media network. The network trains older people to be spokespeople.

The "Age adds Value" campaign is another example of a program which promotes positive images of ageing. The New South Wales Seniors Card is going from strength to strength. It is the largest and fastest growing scheme of its kind in Australia. To date more than 600,000 cards have been issued across the State and there are more than 3,000 separate providers. The New South Wales Seniors Card is not means tested; it is available to any person over the age of 60 not engaged in full-time employment. New South Wales is leading the nation in the provision of services for the ageing population. Undoubtedly New South Wales is so far in front that the Commonwealth Government needs to lift its act and other States also are following our lead.

The Fahey Government intends to build on the positive work in the area of Aboriginal affairs that was undertaken during the 1993 United Nations International Year for the World's Indigenous People. The Government will shortly release a report outlining the substantial achievements of 1993. A key priority for 1994 will be to ensure that government supported recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody are implemented. For the first time, this year an Aboriginal affairs policy statement will be prepared. That statement will consolidate policy initiatives formulated by the Government. It is this Government that is making real on-the-ground improvements. This Government is putting into action the policies about which I have spoken.

Before closing I will speak briefly about the electorate of Pittwater. The Government is continuing its fine record of bringing government services up to standard following many years of neglect by Labor. The two areas of outstanding improvement are schools and the Pittwater sewerage program. The work in our schools has continued. I am pleased to say that the New South Wales Minister for Education has made my former high school, Narrabeen High, a sports high school. The school has developed close links with sporting bodies at the New South Wales Academy of Sport at Narrabeen as well as with other tertiary institutions academically. I expect a fine group of sportspeople to graduate from Narrabeen High School, particularly as we approach the year 2000 and the Olympic Games. I pay special tribute to the principal, Peter Funnell, for his particular hard work over a sustained period. I also compliment the parents, staff and students who have made the new Narrabeen Sports High School a living reality.

This year will also mark the completion of Pittwater's backlog sewerage program. Since 1988, when this program was announced, more than 4,000 homes in Pittwater have been sewered at a cost of more than \$70 million. This sewerage program is another example of a long-overdue program which only a coalition Government was able to deliver and did deliver. Across the range of endeavours, at the senior portfolio levels, across government and at the local level, this Government is making the real achievements. It is with great

pride that I support the Speech of the Governor, His Excellency Rear Admiral Peter Ross Sinclair.

**Mr MOSS** (Canterbury) [9.30]: I found the Governor's Speech at the opening of the Fourth Session of the Fiftieth Parliament to be a little more interesting than usual, because he had more to say than simply what had been done throughout the last session and what would be done during the next session. He commented on the recent disastrous bushfires and mentioned that this is the International Year of the Family. Unfortunately he did not have much to report on what the Government planned to do during the International Year of the Family. That disappointed me. However, he told honourable members that the Government had established an advisory committee to assist it in consulting widely on family issues. That tells me nothing at all.

When governments start talking about establishing advisory committees they remind me of a bunch of frustrated social workers, who are for ever

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establishing advisory committees, formulating strategies, assessing needs, conducting surveys and that type of thing. But they never get far with those committees. By the time this advisory committee makes any suggestions to the Government the International Year of the Family will be over, and I guarantee that any recommendations the committee makes will be conveniently shelved. If the Government were fair dinkum about the Year of the Family, it would be doing something constructive, such as increasing the availability of public housing in the State. The waiting lists for public housing are getting longer; thousands of family require the basic security of having a roof over their heads. No relief is in sight for them, but no mention was made of public housing in the Governor's Speech.

Members on this side of the House know why the Government will not increase funding for public housing. It is not only because of the HomeFund fiasco, but also because the Government is not genuine when it talks about supporting families. If it were, it would be doing something about public housing. What interested me most in the Governor's Speech were his comments on health. I regret that he said very little, though he stated that the continuation of the State's commitment to hospital construction will ensure that resources are placed close to where people live. That is a reasonable statement. I imagine that governments have always seen to it that hospitals are positioned near where people live. However, at times the most appropriate sites for hospitals are not chosen.

Though the Government talks about building hospitals, I am concerned that it also closes hospitals that are near to where people live. The doomed hospitals are usually close to where those most in need of public health services live. An example is Canterbury Hospital, which is doomed for closure in 1996. If ever an area was in need of a public health facility such as Canterbury Hospital, it is the electorate of Canterbury. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* last Wednesday referred to a survey, assessed through taxation returns, that found that the suburb of Campsie had the lowest income per average resident in metropolitan Sydney. It is in areas such as Campsie - and it should be borne in mind that Canterbury Hospital is situated in that suburb - that public health services are more essential than anywhere else. Possibly 95 per cent of people in areas such as Campsie do not have private health cover; they cannot afford private health cover and must rely on public hospitals for their medical treatment.

The proposed closure of Canterbury Hospital is not new. In this Parliament two years before the decision was made I predicted that the Government would attempt to close Canterbury Hospital. In September 1991 I asked the Minister for Health at that time whether it was a fact that when the Concord Repatriation General Hospital was placed under New South Wales Government control the Canterbury Hospital and Western Suburbs Hospital would close. In his usual incoherent fashion the Minister waffled on, wandered all around the place but avoided the question - though he had a lot to say. As he avoided the question, I was convinced that plans were in train to close the hospitals. I issued a press release to that effect in my local area. A week later in the local newspapers there was a massive reaction from the Minister's office; the member for Canterbury was accused by a spokesperson from the Minister's office of scaremongering. That was some scaremongering. My predictions have been borne out two years after I asked that question. Sure enough, Canterbury Hospital and Western Suburbs Hospital are scheduled to close and those two public hospitals will be replaced by one hospital.

When it was announced that Canterbury Hospital and Western Suburbs Hospital would be closed and a new hospital built on the site of the first hospital to close, the Minister set up a consultative committee to advise him on which hospital should close initially. That committee was to make a recommendation to the Minister and it called for submissions from anyone interested in expressing a point of view on the subject. I am disappointed that only last Thursday, 3 March, the Minister stated in answer to a question without notice:

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.

That is untrue. This person, the member for Canterbury, put in a submission to the consultative committee as to what should occur with the inner west hospital. The submission I made was eventually supported by the consultative committee. I went to a good deal of trouble to co-operate with the Government on this issue. My submission was consistent with the Government's intentions in so far as it recommended the building of a new inner west hospital. Though I do not support replacing two hospitals with one, my submission acknowledged the Government's intentions and endeavoured to present realistic options. Basically it argued that Canterbury Hospital's catchment area, which is the entire municipality of Canterbury, could not remain without a public hospital for five years whilst a new hospital was being built. It argued also that Canterbury could not afford to lose its district hospital in the long term, as is planned to occur when the new inner west hospital is built on the site of the old Western Suburbs Hospital

There was co-operation from the Labor Party through this Labor member. The consultative committee consisted of a number of local councillors. One was the Labor mayor of Canterbury, Councillor John Gorrie; another was the Labor mayor of Strathfield, Councillor Leo O'Donnell; and another a Labor Councillor by the name of Counsellor Bonanno of Ashfield Council. Furthermore, Canterbury Council - a Labor controlled council - made its own submission to the committee. So the Government received plenty of co-operation from the Labor Party in this exercise; so much so that the Minister wrote a letter to me acknowledging receipt of my submission in which he said:

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Your positive input into the consultation process was appreciated. The siting of the new hospital at Croydon Park was seriously considered.

My submission recommended that the new inner west hospital be built on a third site at Croydon Park and called for Canterbury Hospital to remain open in the interim and continue to serve its catchment population. I suggested also that the residents of Canterbury municipality should be compensated for the loss of Croydon Park when the new hospital was built by transferring the old hospital site to the council for open space purposes. Those recommendations were accepted to the letter by the consultative committee. Not only did the consultative committee agree with what I submitted; the Southern Sydney Area Health Service also agreed. I did not hear any criticism from the Central Sydney Area Health Service about my submission either, simply because Central Sydney Area Health Service is flat out trying to reduce its deficit and would have been happy to see a new hospital built on the Croydon Park site, which falls within the Southern Sydney Area Health Service region.

After the Government changed its mind on the Croydon Park proposal it was argued that it never intended to build a new hospital on that site. I do not agree with that comment, because after the consultative committee came down with its findings in favour of Croydon Park I received in my letterbox a Department of Health pamphlet which stated emphatically that a new 210-bed hospital called the inner west hospital will be built on a new site at Croydon Park. So the Government was adamant about building at Croydon Park at that stage. However, in the course of two weeks the Minister changed his mind. He went against the wishes of the experts on the consultative committee and the Southern Sydney Area Health Service and decided that the location of the hospital should be on Liverpool Road, on the old Western Suburbs Hospital site, within spitting distance of the Appian Way, Burwood. No one living in that street would require the services of a public hospital. I



guarantee that everyone living in that region would have private health cover, but the new \$62 million high tech district hospital is to be built in the Burwood-Strathfield area, while Belmore, Campsie, Lakemba, Riverwood, Punchbowl and Narwee will lose out on a public health facility.

The Minister's decision was obviously influenced by the honourable member for Strathfield. I do not deny that he had every right to have an interest in this issue, because the site that I proposed was actually in his electorate. He wrote a letter to his constituents in Croydon Park in which he said among other things, "Is Croydon Park a suitable site or should the hospital go to the Western Suburbs Hospital site?" Naturally the people of Croydon Park agreed that the new hospital should be built not in their back yard but on the western suburbs site. Although the people of Croydon Park live within the Canterbury Hospital feeder region, their suburb is closest to the Western Suburbs Hospital. They would not be affected if the new hospital were to be built on Liverpool Road. People in the other suburbs of the municipality of Canterbury, particularly those living on the southern perimeter, in areas like Undercliffe, Narwee, Riverwood and Bardwell Park, would be affected; but the people of Ashbury and Croydon Park did not give a damn about the entire feeder region. They were concerned with their own backyard - which is a common trait, of course.

Though the Minister said initially that the idea of developing the hospital was highly recommended by the local consultative group, he changed his mind to appease a handful of people living in Croydon Park and went against the wishes of some 140,000 residents of the Canterbury Hospital feeder region. The people of Croydon Park objected to the hospital being built at Croydon Park but I also put out the call to my constituents asking for their support. Consequently, I have in my office 595 individual letters of support for a new inner west hospital to be built in Croydon Park within the Canterbury Hospital feeder region. Those letters of support are not a petition; 595 individual letters came back as a result of the appeal to my constituents but of course no notice was taken of what my constituents had to say.

On 22 June I wrote to the Minister in support of the Croydon Park proposal after the decision was made to build at Croydon Park and before he changed his mind. The Minister decided on 2 July to relocate the hospital to Liverpool Road, Burwood, but he did not bother to write back to me until 20 days later, on 27 July, to say, "Sorry, but we changed our minds". That was certainly considered a rebuff so far as I was concerned. Also a group of local residents who call themselves the Committee to Keep Health Services in Canterbury wrote to the Minister on 29 June and said that they considered Croydon Park to be a good location for its proximity to the existing Canterbury and Western Suburbs hospitals. That committee liked the idea of Croydon Park because of its closeness to Ashfield and Canterbury shopping centres, therefore providing good public transport links, and argued the need for a public hospital in the Canterbury municipality to service the low income, high unemployment population of the area.

Their letter went out before the final decision was made but they did not receive a response from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister, the Hon. Dr. B. P. V. Pezzutti, until six weeks later. He had the gall to say that the State Government sought community commitment through the surveying of affected residents, which indicated that Western Suburbs Hospital was the preferred site. Dr Pezzutti was saying that the affected residents were the residents of Croydon Park and not the residents of Campsie to whom his letter was addressed. That was also a gross rebuff so far as I am concerned.

I emphasise once again that I understand that the residents of Croydon Park were concerned at the prospect of a hospital being built in their neighbourhood. However, as well intentioned as they were in supporting their own community, they were not sympathetic to the public health needs of the

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municipality of Canterbury. Though a transfer of the inner west hospital to the Liverpool Road site would not disadvantage the people of Croydon Park, it will have a disastrous effect on the thousands of basic Medicare card holders in the municipality of Canterbury, particularly those living on the eastern, southern and western perimeters who rely on a hospital in Canterbury as their designated public hospital. Since the decision was made to close Canterbury Hospital in 1996 we have seen a systematic series of - [*Time expired.*]

**Mr KERR** (Cronulla) [9.50]: I begin by saying something about the common ground between the

Government, the Opposition and, I would think, the Independents in their response to the Governor's Speech. That is the admiration and respect expressed for the Governor and Mrs Sinclair. I should like to join in the tributes that have been paid to His Excellency for the many services he and Mrs Sinclair have performed for the State. I am pleased that His Excellency's term has been extended. I should like to address some areas that have been covered: first, the Opposition's response to His Excellency's Speech, matching the rhetoric of the Leader of the Opposition; second, the future of New South Wales as outlined in His Excellency's Speech; third, my mission statement for my electorate. The reply of the Leader of the Opposition to His Excellency's Speech was a litany of opportunism and hypocrisy. The Opposition, in an unprincipled grab for power, has moved to embrace an unthinking right-wing agenda.

**Mr Gaudry:** You do not believe that.

**Mr KERR:** Of course I believe it. It should be a warning to members of the Left because there will not be many left. We are now told that the answer to the State's problems is a punitive approach to prisoners and pupils. The Leader of the Opposition has undergone a transformation from being Sussex Street's answer to Michael Foote to Sussex Street's answer to George Wallace espousing redneck popularism. It is hard to believe when one listens to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition that he was a Minister in a government which repealed the Summary Offences Act and which brought in the early release of prisoners and ended up adding to their number with a corrective services minister.

If Labor were in office, Staysafe would be recommending pedestrian crossings outside every prison. The Governor's Speech recognises the importance of law and justice as well as education. Unless a child is taught to read, to write and to add up, that child is hobbled for the rest of his or her life. The education system is providing parents with a greater say in the running of schools and providing equality of opportunity.

**Mr Gibson:** Who will do the cleaning?

**Mr KERR:** If the honourable member for Londonderry were here last week, he would have heard the Minister on the subject. In my electorate we have a selective high school. I wonder how many selective high schools are in the electorate represented by the honourable member for Londonderry. The former Labor Government would not allow selective high schools in the western suburbs, and it is about time the Leader of the Opposition stated his support or otherwise for the initiative.

**Mr Hartcher:** Mr Twenty-four Per Cent.

**Mr KERR:** When Mr Twenty-four Per Cent was Minister the former Labor Government opposed an increase in selective high schools, in particular, in the western suburbs. At that time a child could only enter a selective high school if he or she lived in a certain area or had sibling rights. That education system had the features of a feudal system, with hereditary rights and geographical restrictions. I turn now to law and order. The Government has increased sentences, built more prisons, spent more and recruited more police. Its policy has been dictated by the needs of justice not by the number of prison places we happen to have available on any day. If someone belongs in a prison, that is where they should be, and that is why we are building more prisons. Better the guilty behind bars than the innocent afraid to leave home at night. But, of course, some things never change. Despite the lurch to the right, honourable members opposite will be pleased to know that the heart is still with the left. Under Labor education was and will be run at the behest of the Teachers Federation; industrial relations was and will be run not for the benefit of the workers but for the benefit of the Labor Council.

**Mr Gibson:** Ask about the Board of Studies.

**Mr KERR:** The Castlereagh kid speaks about the Board of Studies. He might consider the censure motion moved by the shadow minister for education and what he said about that board. Good government is not just a matter of the right policy. It depends on the way government is run. During 12 years of hard Labor New South Wales suffered not only from bad policies but also from a cheap and trivial style of government.

Decisions were dictated simply by the desire to catch tomorrow's headline, and short-term gain counted for everything. The long-term objective went out the window. Then, as now, the Labor Party used every device to gain immediate publicity, and government by gimmick became the order of the day.

Perhaps nowhere was the mismatch between rhetoric and reality so apparent as in the environment. I wish to refer to the record of the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister for the Environment. His record on environmental spending is notorious. He slashed the budget of the then State Pollution Control Commission to less than \$12 million in 1987-88. The budget of the Environment Protection Authority this year is more than \$60 million. The failure to fund the State Pollution Control Commission meant failure to protect the environment. The licensing system was a farce, lack of resources meant lack of prosecutions, and morale was at an all time low.

**Mr Hazzard:** That sounds like the Labor Party.

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**Mr KERR:** It does sound a bit like Caucus. The air monitoring program also was slashed by 25 per cent, with a reduction in the amount of stations in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and a reduction of types of pollutants tested. The Government is spending \$10 million to upgrade the system. Having dealt with the Opposition, I would now like to move from darkness into light and talk about the Government's vision for New South Wales. For me, the heart of politics is not political theory; it is people and how they want to live their lives. We live in a world that sometimes seems to be changing too fast for comfort. Old certainties are crumbling; traditional values are falling away. It is all too easy to forget that the old values of decency, courtesy and consideration for one's neighbours are still alive.

The Government is committed to what the Premier has described as a strong civic culture. Its meaning is quite simple. It means acting decently towards one another and recognising not only their rights but their obligations to those around them. It means being reliable, honest and tolerant. It means showing practical concern for those in need or suffering hardship, just as in a family. In a strong civic culture people accept primary responsibility for their own lives and receive help from governments when they need it. People act with care, courage and foresight. They accept a responsibility to put some back into the community and its institutions.

As far back as 1988 the Government first championed the idea of deregulation and devolution of decision-making so that we can return to people control over their own lives. This provides competition to give families the best value for their money, labour market reform, enterprise bargaining, education and training reform, and allows governments to get out of banking and insurance companies, and even to contract out so that citizens' taxes can be spent on providing better services. This is the International Year of the Family and as the Premier said, it is high time we not only said that but in fact shouted that we are committed to family values. Families teach us the significance of basic values - trust, respect, tolerance and a genuine feeling for the needs of others. It is within this framework of a family's pragmatic mix of love and discipline that our sense of ourselves and our confidence as individuals is nurtured.

**Mr Hartcher:** That is very nice; I like that.

**Mr KERR:** The Minister speaks as a father. His Excellency's Speech makes it clear that the State should make the most use of its human and material resources to build a new prosperity and use prosperity wisely and well, helping the elderly and those in need, providing new education opportunities for our children, and investing for the future as well as providing a full life today - a State confident in playing a full part in the nation's affairs while accepting and meeting its responsibilities to others. We seek a State in which material advance goes hand in hand with the deeper values which go to make up quality of life in a society which cares for its cities, towns and villages, such as Bundeena and Kurnell, its rivers, coast and countryside.

This Government is about giving more power to citizens. But citizenship is about our responsibilities,

whether as parents or neighbours. His Excellency's Speech is a testament to our belief in the people's right to be informed and to make choices about themselves. I turn to my own electorate. There is a job to be done, a job of service. In Cronulla we believe in service, and I would like to outline my mission statement to this House. I am committed to clean air for the people of Cronulla and I will work to ensure that Cronulla's beaches are the cleanest and safest in Sydney. I want to work to ensure that Cronulla's youth and our families can safely develop their full potential to enjoy a satisfied life, and to ensure that the people of Cronulla enjoy the best possible health.

**Mr Gibson:** Up the Sharks!

**Mr KERR:** As the honourable member for Londonderry admits, up the Sharks - a mighty team! Let us all join together in wishing them well for Saturday night. I want to work to ensure that the people of Cronulla live in safety, that their homes and streets are safe, and that they enjoy secure and rewarding employment. I want to work to ensure that the people of Cronulla enjoy the best possible transport services and safe roads, and to ensure that the people of Cronulla enjoy protection of their natural environment. However, in seeking to maintain our waterways in the best condition, I regret to advise the House that Sutherland Council has rejected an opportunity of partnership with the State to dredge Port Hacking.

**Mr Richardson:** They do it all the time.

**Mr KERR:** As the honourable member for The Hills said, they do it all the time. It seems that council is the only organisation ever to make the word "no" a political program. Port Hacking is a natural resource of regional, State, national and I dare say world significance. Yet so committed is the Labor Party to the environment that it has refused to take part in the dredging of Port Hacking. Instead, this Labor council and its allies such as Councillor Hurst have adopted the do-nothing option. They have created an atmosphere where doubt, suspicion and recrimination are creeping into public life. Both the State and Sutherland Council could walk away from responsibility for Port Hacking on a purely political basis. But that would be cheap in every sense of the word. That would be literally a tragedy. Apart from navigational constraints, the condition of Port Hacking now poses serious public safety risks. Sutherland Council has managed to find hundreds of thousands of dollars to campaign on State and Federal issues. The ratepayers are saying to Sutherland Council, "Stop pamphleteering and start working". The people want to see Sutherland councillors work with ratepayers, not over them, to stand by their side and not ride on their backs in the State and Federal Parliaments.

**Mr Hartcher:** That would be a change.

**Mr KERR:** As the Minister has interjected, that would be a change. What Sutherland Council needs is a civic agenda. His Excellency's Speech encapsulates the philosophy of the Government - a

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philosophy which could fairly be described as the Cronulla way - that it is not longer hours of harder, drearier work that are needed to solve our problems either on a State or personal basis, but a more effective effort to attain the highest standards to which we can aspire. As the Government, we can provide opportunities. What the future holds for our State depends on what all of us choose to make of our opportunities. That is something we can do together, regardless of status, class or creed. Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it; it must facilitate productivity, not stifle it. What the future of our State holds for us depends on what we choose to make of those opportunities.

That philosophy was evident during the bushfires. The professional bushfire fighters and members of voluntary services organisations who fought those fires came from all walks of life. Many of them did not know whose property they were saving or who the owners were, yet they were willing to put their lives on the line. They were Australians working together, making sacrifices to help their neighbours. That is what the Premier meant when he talked about a civic culture. Returned men in the Cronulla electorate knew that in two world wars. And a generation in the 1990s has shown the same ANZAC spirit those returned men had. The bushfires, despite the tragedy, brought people together and made lifelong friends of those who had never met one another in the same street. As members of Parliament we should dedicate our lives to ensuring that the

spirit they showed and the sacrifices they made can inspire us. The Governor's Speech has shown New South Wales the way to a better tomorrow. I am often asked why the people of Cronulla are so happy and confident. There is one answer to that question: in the Cronulla electorate we know that tomorrow will always be better than today.

**Mr MORRIS** (Blue Mountains) [10.8]: May I commence my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate by saying how proud we were to have the Governor with us to open Parliament. I was also very honoured in October last year to have the Governor and Mrs Sinclair in my electorate when the Governor opened the Leura Garden Festival. The Governor and I have some interests in common, as we are both lovers of the land and breed cattle. He has a property at Tea Gardens, where he has a poll hereford stud. We should all feel very proud to have him as our Governor and to know that he upholds the monarchy. In his opening speech the Governor reminded us of the horrific bushfires in the Blue Mountains. I would like to dispel the theory that the firefighters in the mountains are not good at fighting fire and that their equipment is out of date. In fact, the Government has been able to lift funding to the Bush Fire Fighting Fund by \$8 million in 1992-93, enabling the Department of Bush Fire Services to deploy a significant amount of new equipment throughout New South Wales. We are very proud of our 26 fire brigades in the Blue Mountains and almost 1,300 volunteers that the brigades represent.

I would like to say a personal thank you to some people who played a big role in the fires. To name just one zone captain, Don Nott largely took charge of the fires in the lower mountains with a team of great helpers. But there are just too many names to mention. On the Saturday and well into the night they fought the fires at Winmalee, White Cross and Hawkesbury Heights like heroes. We lost approximately six houses and the large Colour Spot Nursery owned by Mr Morling. The loss to him, including the nursery and stock, which were not insured, was in the vicinity of \$3.5 million. Insurance premiums are prohibitive, at about 25 per cent of the value of the property to be insured. I pay special tribute to people who helped with the fires, namely, the State Emergency Service under Ken Parsons, fire control officer Keith McKellar and his assistant Jack Tolhurst; Gregor Manson from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and all of his people, including Mick Gillies; the two police inspectors from Springwood and Katoomba patrol, Inspector Jim Crannar and Inspector John Carey, and also the chief at Springwood police station, Phil Hopkins, who marshalled over 400 police into the area and helped with evacuations, moving heavy machinery and blocking the highway when necessary for the safety of our residents.

I also pay tribute to the staff of Prospect Electricity under the guidance of Jim McGregor, the regional manager; the Water Board staff under David Manzie, managing the northwest region; and Ian Smith - all of whom kept pumps going and reservoirs filled. I also mention David Kentwell, regional manager of the Blue Mountains area of the Water Board, and his staff based at Springwood and Leura. I thank the many who helped with providing food for firefighters and others, namely, the Springwood Lions Club; the Salvation Army at Springwood under Captain Terracini; Rotary clubs; the Blackheath Traders, under Kerry Race from the Ivanhoe Hotel, who fed up to 100 troops each morning for breakfast. I would like to thank Bruce Balmain, from Rowan Brae Guesthouse, who helped provide food for firefighters at Bell; all firms who donated drinks and food, such as Colles Frozen Foods and many others; and Mr Charles Dalglish with his aeroplane for spotting fires, helping the National Parks and Wildlife Service. I thank also the owners of concrete trucks and water carrying vehicles, road and traffic authorities, local councils, fuel companies whose trucks carted fuel, including my own family company which supplied eight tankers carting water, the RAAF, the army and navy and so many other people too numerous to mention.

But for the effort and determination of over 3,000 men and women, this fire could have devastated the city of the Blue Mountains. It was burning on a 63-kilometre front from Bell to the Hawkesbury on the eastern escarpment of the Blue Mountains, let alone Bilpin and other areas. The Premier visited the electorate to offer help, as did the Minister for Community Services, who spent a day in the electorate and set up a range of services in the

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Springwood Civic Centre to help with clothing, money, trauma counselling and other services necessary at the time. We thank them for their services and kindness. We are also thankful for the speed with which things

happened following the Premier's visit.

In regard to community services, last year \$21,000 was allocated for Christmas vacation care programs, with Blackheath, Wentworth Falls, Winmalee, Katoomba, the Jelly Beans Kids Centre and the Springwood Vacation Care Centre, receiving various amounts of money. The Mountains Women's Halfway Housing Group received \$1,500 to purchase household goods. The Katoomba Youth Refuge was given \$1,250 also to purchase household goods to help people over the Christmas period. The Blue Mountains disability organisation received \$144,000, Greystanes Childrens Home \$1.299 million, Rainbow Lodge \$680,000, and the Hall for Children \$1.6 million.

The Government will spend \$290,000 to purchase a six-bedroom cottage in Katoomba on behalf of the Handicapped Childrens Association, Rainbow Lodge, to house children with intellectual disabilities. Additional funds for children with special needs will be provided to a number of Blue Mountains pre-schools as a result of a State Government grant totalling \$6,298. Allocation of funds was made to the Katoomba Youth Refuge, Mountain Womens Halfway Housing Scheme, the Mountain Womens Refuge Company Open House Foster Care and Accommodation Service, open house medium term accommodation, and so on. The Government is leading Australia in caring for frail older people. The Buckland Convalescent Hospital project at Springwood is one of ten new hostel developments to receive the Government's funding assistance. The Government has called for expressions of interest for the suitable community use of the Clairveaux property, which is an historic property in the Blue Mountains. It was once owned by the Catholic brothers.

The Minister for Health has visited my electorate on several occasions. He visited our hospital auxiliaries and also the hospitals. He has given us \$900,000 to build a new paediatric ward at Katoomba Hospital, and its construction is well under way. He has also helped us with facilities to upgrade dental services at Springwood. I congratulate the hospital auxiliary for its wonderful team effort in raising funds to replace an Ohmeda 7,000 anaesthetic ventilator. The Government will contribute \$3,500 towards the total cost of \$9,000. I also take this opportunity to again thank John Holgate and his Leura Gardens Festival committee for all their hard work and dedication and for the money that has been raised. In 20 years they have raised almost \$1 million to go towards the local hospital.

The health budget for the Wentworth Area Health Service was announced at \$124.8 million. That is an enormous 25 per cent increase in real terms on the 1988 budget allocation, reflecting the Government's commitment to the Blue Mountains. In dollar figures, the health budget for the Wentworth Area Health Service has increased by \$39.13 million since 1988. As well as the recurrent money, \$25 million will be spent in this financial year to rebuild Nepean Hospital. The total cost will be \$78 million. In addition, \$400,000 was granted to pay for operating costs for the new neonatal intensive care unit at Nepean Hospital. Child and adolescent mental health services at Penrith also will be boosted with an allocation of \$200,000. Some of the key programs the Government has in place to care for the elderly include an allocation of \$39 million for the home and community care program, which provides community-based services for the elderly instead of focusing on institutional care. Women's health has also been boosted in the health budget to \$93 million, an increase of \$13 million on last year's figure.

I refer now to roads and traffic. Under the administration of the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads my electorate has been given grants for regional roads as follows: Blue Mountains Council, \$224,000, and Greater Lithgow Council, \$295,000. The work on the highway at Faulconbridge is completed and the Woodford bends will be completed in October or November this year. Work will soon begin on the Appian Way bridge, which is part of this project. The Roads and Traffic Authority has awarded the contract to Coopers, contractors of Sydney. The bridge will cost \$750,000, with funds coming from the State's 3 x 3 fuel levy.

The Woodford bends project, of which the Government is extremely proud, is eight years ahead of schedule and has been funded largely by the 3 x 3 levy. This project is marked by high sensitivity to the local environment and features vertical retaining walls, which minimise disruption to the bushland, with sedimentation fences and traps to control any erosion. The traps will catch any future oil spills on the highway,

thereby reducing the risk of contamination. There is a textured surface finish on the retaining walls, which enables them to blend with the surroundings. The excavations have uncovered historic convict-built walls. One of these, which is in excellent condition, has been carefully reassembled adjacent to Bulls Camp for the public to view. Work costing in the vicinity of \$32 million will then take place at Warrimoo. The first stage will commence as soon as the work at Woodford is completed.

The Linden bends, where a major bus accident took place, are almost completed at a cost of \$4 million. Traffic lights, developed by the Roads and Traffic Authority, have been installed at Hazelbrook, and a major set of lights has been installed at Wentworth Falls at a cost of \$275,000, funded from the 3 x 3 levy, to allow traffic to get on, off and over the highway with safety. The last payment of the \$10 million program that the Government granted to the council is due. This program has resulted in 150 local roads being sealed out of a backlog program of 400. With the downturn in the economy the council has had about \$1.5 million worth of work done, with competition from 30 outside contractors when the work was put out to tender.

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Massive improvements have been made to the Great Western Highway, including the tollway on the F4, the missing link at Lapstone and the ongoing work in the mountains, which, I might add, is among some of the most difficult terrain in the world on which to build roads. One example is that one of the fills on the Woodford bends is higher than the wall of Burrinjuck Dam. The Roads and Traffic Authority has appointed 22 new vehicle regulation inspectors, who recently completed intensive training courses. They will now man the Mt Boyce and Bell heavy vehicle checking stations.

Under the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads, the Hon. Bruce Baird, rail upgrading has continued. Signalling from Lithgow to Sydney has been completed. Concrete sleepers have been laid on almost all the line from Central, through the Blue Mountains, to Mount Victoria. Drainage and re-ballasting have also been completed. Upgrading of Mount Victoria railway station has been completed at a cost of \$460,000. This will make life easier for commuters. Blackheath, Lawson and Leura stations will receive a facelift. Work on those projects has already started. The total cost of this work will be \$1 million. The Government is continuing the Lapstone to Lithgow fencing program, which will make it safer for children living near the railway line and discourage people from using railway lines as a short cut - a practice fraught with danger. CityRail has chosen black fencing for the Blue Mountains as it blends in well with the environment.

Work on platforms at Central, which is progressing well, will enable mountain trains to come in and go out from platforms 14 and 15. Medlow Bath station has been upgraded. Many commuter car parks have had lighting installed for the safety of passengers at night and in the early morning. Many stations have ticket machines and there is a full complement of staff at major stations such as Springwood, Lawson, Katoomba and Mount Victoria. Other smaller stations are manned for one shift between 5.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. Blue Mountains trains have achieved a record 90 per cent on-time running. Telephones have been installed at all stations for the convenience of passengers. Coalex has entered into a new agreement with Freight Rail to move 13,000 tonnes of domestic coal by rail to the Illawarra. This new contract will keep the equivalent of 1,400 truck movements off Blue Mountains and Illawarra roads. This new contract will allow trains to move 1,300 tonnes of coal at a time from Coalex's Clarence mine near Victoria to BHP's Port Kembla steelworks.

Under a new agreement, up to 500 semitrailer loads of fuel will be taken off New South Wales roads and carried instead by rail. I have been campaigning for some time for oil companies to use the rail network. This agreement will take at least 3,000 semitrailer movements off the road each year. A new container terminal will operate at Blayney, in the State's Central West. Approximately 10,000 containers travel by road from the region to Sydney each year. Based on those figures, rail transport from the new container terminal should take more than 3,000 semitrailer movements from local and Blue Mountains roads in the first year, with the potential to double this volume over the next three years.

I turn to education and training, the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Minister for Tourism and Minister Assisting the Premier, the Hon. Virginia Chadwick. This financial year

more than \$2.7 million will be spent on capital works and maintenance for both school and TAFE facilities in the Blue Mountains. This will allow for the provision at Winmalee High School of a bus bay costing \$350,000 and the upgrading of the playground at Faulconbridge Public School. It will also cover maintenance at Hampton Public School, Hazelbrook Public School, Katoomba Public School, Mount Victoria Public School and Warrimoo Public School. Land has been purchased, at a cost of \$1 million, at Wentworth Falls. Plans are well in hand to commence building a new TAFE college, which will employ 120 people and provide places for 2,400 students. Teaching courses, such as hospitality, administration, business and general studies and fashion, that are sympathetic to our local area will be available.

The first stage of the college, which will cost \$11.9 million, is expected to be completed in early 1995 and will accommodate 1,500 students. The other two stages of the college are expected to be completed by 1997. This college will replace existing outdated and inadequate premises at Katoomba and Springwood. I would like to say a special thank you to a real dynamo, the principal of Katoomba TAFE, Ms Marion Shaw, and her helpers for pushing along this wonderful project. Education has seen some big changes in the mountains. I believe our schools are now running efficiently, thanks to the diligent work of the dedicated principals, senior staff and teachers. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I was able to assist Katoomba High School in gaining a safer bus bay and traffic area. The school contributed part of the cost of the bus barriers and the crossing. Other necessary traffic changes were carried out by Blue Mountains Council. Katoomba High School has been given \$4,000 by Minister Chadwick to produce a book to commemorate that school's seventy-fifth anniversary. A special grant of \$2,000 has been made to Warrimoo Primary School to help replace library resources damaged by a fire that was deliberately lit. Mount Victoria Primary School received \$2,000 for a plaque and an official tree planting to mark its 125th anniversary. My wife and I attended prize presentation functions at 39 schools in my electorate - functions which we found enlightening and most enjoyable.

I turn now to youth affairs, which is included also in the portfolio of Minister Chadwick. A new youth centre in Waratah Street, Katoomba, which has been on the drawing board for the last three years, was launched with a \$250,000 State Government grant, which Blue Mountains Council matched dollar for dollar. That youth centre will soon be opened by

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the Minister. I was happy to announce last year the "Get started" employment program of the Sydney City Mission, which is designed to help young people aged 15 to 19 to move from school into the work force. Recently, Mrs Chadwick announced that St Columbus High School would receive assistance under the Government's school building interest subsidy scheme. This project, which involved a total cost of \$1,081,707, met part of the construction costs of four science laboratories, preparation rooms and a chemical store for secondary students at that school. The State Government committed \$300,000 to a sporting complex and new basketball court in Katoomba. That project is well under way.

I turn now to the capital assistance program under the portfolio of the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing, the Hon. Chris Downy. Blue Mountains Council received \$10,000 to upgrade floodlighting at Blackheath oval for footballers and \$5,000 for a watering system at Gloria Park, Hazelbrook. The Blue Mountains Developmental Youth Recreation Service received \$5,000; Katoomba District Little Athletic Centre received \$2,000; Lower Mountains Junior Rugby League received \$10,000; the Mid Mountains Community Centre received \$5,000 to provide playground equipment for the disabled; the Springwood and District Citizens Boys and Girls Club received \$10,000 to assist with extensions to its clubhouse, as more than 800 youngsters are involved in various sporting activities; Springwood Tennis Club received \$10,000; and Winmalee District Girl Guides Association received \$500 to assist in the provision of a camping and play area in Single Ridge Road, Yellow Rock.

I am delighted with the work the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Bruce Baird, and the Premier put into winning the bid for the Olympic Games. My electorate, which is a great tourist area, will receive a huge spin-off from the Games. I am pleased not only for the people of New South Wales and Australia but also for my own people in the Blue Mountains. This work has underpinned a great interest in sporting facilities in my



electorate. The Minister for Industrial Relations and Employment and Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Kerry Chikarovski, who has responsibility for employment and economic development, has visited my electorate on many occasions. While she has been there she has spoken to the 200 women who belong to the Womens Interest Group. I was guest speaker at a dinner held at the Grand View Hotel at Wentworth Falls. At that dinner 12 businesses, which had been helped by the centre, were handed their charter. The people in those businesses were all local people who had been trained in the old Prospect Electricity building at Springwood. I have had contact with most of them and they are all doing well. Businesses included landscaping, gardening, beauticians, hairdressing and accountancy. This is one of the great schemes introduced by this Government.

We are trying hard to get the Main Street scheme up and running. It could be said that the 26 towns and villages in the Blue Mountains have the longest main street in the world. The Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services, a first-class Minister, has delivered services and provided excellent facilities for the people of the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains electorate was visited by the Commissioner of Police, Tony Lauer, an old Springwood boy and a good friend and colleague. He opened a new shop-front police station at Winmalee, which is under the leadership of Constable Terry Frost. The Minister and I have met also with business people and members of the community at Hazelbrook with a view to opening a shop-front police station there. Facilities are being upgraded at Lawson, where \$250,000 will be spent on a new police station. Land has been purchased on the Great Western Highway and plans for its construction are well in hand.

From Bullaburra, Wentworth Falls is the fastest growing area in the mountains, taking in Lawson and Hazelbrook. There is a definite need for a new police station in that area, which has more than 16,000 residents. The Government also provided a computer with a program and printer for the Katoomba highway patrol to monitor and track road accidents in the Blue Mountains. This has been highly successful. Also, an extra policeman has been provided at Blackheath. Both these large stations are fully manned. I thank the new patrol commanders, Inspector John Crannar from Springwood and his troops and Inspector John Carey and his troops at Katoomba in the new police station built by the Government at a cost of \$4.3 million. I also thank the police for their coverage of that area, which has difficult terrain - with people falling over cliffs - and there are many areas in the mountains subject to snow and bad weather. There is a wonderful cliff rescue squad in the area.

The Katoomba fire station has had a major upgrade, with a new fire alarm monitoring facility and a state-of-the-art telephone system for taking triple-0 emergency calls. In all, the upgrading cost is in excess of \$100,000. I assure honourable members that the computer age has certainly arrived at Katoomba fire station. Recently the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. T. A. Griffiths, opened the \$1.8 million emergency services centre at Katoomba. The opening was well attended by more than 300 people who make up the emergency plan personnel in the Blue Mountains. They were completely overwhelmed by the equipment provided.

The Hon. Robert Webster has responsibility for water and housing portfolios. I had the pleasure of visiting Sydney to witness the signing of the contract with the Australian partners, McConnell Dowell and Obayashi, for the last stage of the sewerage tunnel from Lawson to North Katoomba. The contract was worth \$80 million. When completed the quality of the water in the local streams will be greatly improved and benefits will flow on to the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system. The Minister visited my electorate two weeks ago and he commissioned the rolling off of the new machine built in Sweden for the Australian company Atlas Copco. I had the pleasure of unveiling the new Cascade water treatment plant two weeks ago, which was built at a cost of \$21 million.

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Water is pumped from the Warragamba Dam and brought overland from the Fish River Dam at Oberon and the local storage dams. The three waters are mixed together, filtered and sent through a large distribution system over the upper and mid-mountains area from Mount Victoria to Linden. Since 1988 the Government has spent \$15 million to improve the quality of water, building the Cascade plant and Greaves Creek water filtration plant, relining or replacing old water mains and providing roofing reservoirs to prevent water being

contaminated.

Sewerage has been connected to 1,400 homes this financial year. A new \$900,000 reservoir at Mount Victoria will ensure a continual supply of high quality water to the growing population of the upper mountains. The final stages of the project will involve roofing the reservoir and landscaping the surrounding areas. Associated projects in the program include the \$200,000 upgrading of the water pumping station at Mount Piddington Road. The station is part of the water distribution system that supplies water from Lake Greaves to the upper mountains.

Minister Robert Webster opened 14 medium-density accommodation houses at a cost of \$1.584 million during his recent visit to my electorate. The completion of this project brings the total number of public housing dwellings in the Blue Mountains electorate to 356, made up of 123 pensioner units, 200 family units and 33 community housing dwellings.

Mrs Virginia Chadwick, Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, also holds the tourism portfolio. Tourism is the largest industry in the Blue Mountains. The Government has funded \$25,000 to the local council towards a strategy that has been released in draft form. It has received some very favourable comments. It is interesting to note that unemployment in my electorate is 7 per cent, which is very low compared with the New South Wales electorate average. Mrs Chadwick made a grant to the Blue Mountains and Central West Tourism of \$100,000 to fund new advertising and promotions for these two areas across New South Wales and interstate.

My electorate has had several visits from the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. C. P. Hartcher, who has made \$670,000 available for capital works for the National Parks and Wildlife Service budget. This amount has enabled work to be completed at Wentworth Falls and the Katoomba-Leura areas, with repairs to the bridges to the Three Sisters, extensive work on the Giant Stairway, together with other trackwork, upgrading of toilets, et cetera. The Minister also provided national park land for a fire station at Linden. I thank the people of Linden for their patience over the foul-up in the system. I thank the captain of the volunteer bush fire brigade, Mr Analzark, and his wife, who is the secretary of the brigade.

Grants totalling \$100,000 have been made through the Environmental Trust Fund. An amount of \$84,000 has been put aside for the Deanei Forest at Springwood. Eucalypts in the forest are the tallest in the State. Only a small number of trees remain and are in a council reserve which was once part of land owned by the explorer William Lawson. A grant of \$1,950 will assist with restoration of the Minne Ha Ha Falls area; and a grant of \$20,000 will enable the Australian education network to produce a teachers' resource kit for students to develop skills and a commitment to the Blue Mountains bushland. A regional environmental improvement plan is being undertaken in the Blue Mountains, as well as an environment report. They will give a description of physical characteristics of the region and will look at the catchment area of significant reserves, at land rises and hanging swamps, which impact on the environment of our region.

I thank the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, the Hon. G. Souris, for announcing a grant of \$25,000 to the council as well as a low interest loan of \$25,000 for the sites and reserves. I thank Minister Hartcher for the work he has done for the environment in my electorate. Things in the Blue Mountains Council have improved a little but still have a long way to go.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Hunter.**

**House adjourned at 10.38 p.m.**

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