

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 13 September 1994

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF PARRAMATTA

Issue and return of Writ: Election of Gabrielle Mary Harrison

Mr Speaker informed the House that he had issued a writ on 15 July 1994 for the election of a member to serve in the room of Andrew Charles Frederick Ziolkowski, and that the writ had been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Returning Officer of the election of Gabrielle Mary Harrison to serve as member for the electoral district of Parramatta.

MEMBER SWORN

Ms Harrison took and subscribed the oath of allegiance and signed the roll.

DEATH OF NORMAN JOHN MANNIX, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN

Mr FAHEY (Southern Highlands - Premier, and Minister for Economic Development) [2.17]: I move:

(1) That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of Norman John Mannix, a former Minister of the Crown.

(2) That this House extends to Mrs Mannix and family the deep sympathy of the members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

It is with regret that I move this condolence motion to mark the passing of Jack Mannix, the former Labor member for Liverpool and Minister of Justice, and to offer the deepest sympathy of the House to his family. Norman John Mannix, later known as Jack Mannix, was born in Armidale in August 1920. Educated at St Marys boys school and De La Salle College in Armidale, Mr Mannix left school at the height of the Depression to become a brickies' labourer. His experience of poverty and hardship during the Depression years were later to influence his approach to public and ministerial service.

In 1937 Jack Mannix began what was to become a lifelong career in public service. At the age of 17 years Mr Mannix joined the New South Wales public service as a junior clerk in the Department of Works and Local Government. Mr Mannix later learned shorthand from his wife, Patricia, earning himself a position as private secretary to the Minister for Local Government and Housing, Jim McGirr, who was later to become Premier. By 1951 Mr Mannix had risen through the ranks of the public service to become the chief clerk in the Housing Commission. In 1952 Mr Mannix succeeded Mr McGirr in his seat of Liverpool, a seat Mr Mannix held for the Labor Party until his retirement in 1971.

During this time Mr Mannix resumed his studies, completing a law degree at the University of Sydney before being admitted to the New South Wales bar in 1955. Mr Mannix specialised in mining law and was appointed to the boards of a number of companies, including Abaleen Minerals. Jack Mannix was also a director of the Liverpool Cooperative Building Society and the Liverpool Hospital. In the Parliament Mr Mannix served as Minister of Justice from 1960 to 1965. During that period he introduced legislation to reform prisons, liquor laws, hire-purchase agreements and the Landlord and Tenant Act.

Mr Mannix continued his public service even after his retirement from politics. Requests for administrative assistance from the Intellectually and Physically Handicapped Children's Association in 1972 led to a 20-year commitment. He used his administrative and political skills to secure funding for that association. His efforts were recognised last year when Liverpool's Bambi Nursing Home was renamed the Mannix Children's Centre. Jack Mannix is survived by his wife, Patricia, whom he married in 1942, and their five children. On behalf of the Government of New South Wales I express the condolence of the House, as well as my personal sympathy, to the family of Jack Mannix.

Mr CARR (Maroubra - Leader of the Opposition) [2.20]: The Opposition joins the Premier in extending its condolences to the family of Norman John Mannix. The name Jack Mannix will be associated with that long period of Labor government in New South Wales from 1941 to 1965 because, while it is true that he only entered Parliament in May 1952, he was previously private secretary to Mr McGirr and was involved in public administration. As the Premier pointed out, Jack Mannix was born in Armidale. He came from a country family and his later success in politics confirms the links of the Labor Party of that era with important provincial centres in New South Wales - one of the strengths of the McKell, McGirr and Cahill governments.

He was Minister of Justice from 1960 to 1965, when the Labor Government was defeated and was replaced by the Askin Government. He retired in January 1971. His name will always be linked with that long period of stable, successful and moderate Labor government - a Labor government that survived the cataclysmic party split of the mid-1950s. On behalf of the Opposition, I extend condolences to his family and record our indebtedness to him for the contribution he made to those long periods of successful Labor government, so important in the Labor tradition in this State.

Page 2885

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan - Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Ports) [2.22]: On behalf of the New South Wales National Party I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in expressing my sympathy to the family of the late Jack Mannix on the loss of their father and husband. Jack Mannix's record has been well articulated by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. He was a man from the country; a self-made man. That was an era when members of Parliament, people who were in public office during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, tended to be self-made, self-educated people. We appreciate the dedication of Jack Mannix who, when he was 17 years old, worked for the Department of Housing and the Department of Public Works, put himself through a university education and, at the same time, persevered with public life. There was a commitment that is sometimes lacking in this day and age.

Sometimes we take things for granted. It takes something like a condolence motion for the late Jack Mannix, when we look at the history of a man like that, for us to realise that commitment was very much a part of the ethos of the generation before ours. It has been said that in May 1960 Jack Mannix was Minister of Justice, a portfolio that was previously held by Mr Reg Downing. Coincidentally, today we are to have condolences for Mr Reg Downing. Jack Mannix not only served the public but, as the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have said, upon his retirement from the Parliament he was so touched by the plight of children that a temporary position in the Intellectually and Physically Handicapped Children's Association became a 20-year period of unselfish dedication to those less fortunate than most. Again the message is that we should get out and do something and not sit back and bleat. The men and

women of that era who served in the community did have an ethos. Those people who came up the hard way were prepared to give of themselves when the opportunity arose.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [2.25]: I support the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party in this motion of condolence for Norman John Mannix, more affectionately known as Jack Mannix, who passed away recently. I was one of the hundreds of mourners who attended his funeral mass at Liverpool. Amongst the hundreds of mourners were many ordinary members of the public who came to pay tribute to a man who had helped many of them during their lives. Jack Mannix was the Labor member for Liverpool from 1952 to 1971. In 1942, when he was a public servant, the then Premier McGirr realised his talents and potential and appointed him as his private secretary. When McGirr became Premier, Mannix continued as his private secretary. So lasting was their relationship that Mannix succeeded McGirr in his seat in Parliament. Mannix, in his role as Minister of Justice, was particularly vigorous in his pursuit of the rights of prisoners and justice for all those in public housing - the latter probably due to his former Housing Commission status, as he was the chief clerk for the Housing Commission.

McGirr and Mannix launched the State's first public housing program. Many thousands of new homes were built for people who were otherwise unable to afford a reasonable place in which to live. In researching what I have to say today I read through Mannix's maiden speech which was given in this Chamber on 19 August 1952. Not surprisingly, like most, he canvassed many issues of a local nature relating to the electorate of Liverpool - some might say a typical maiden speech. But his speech varied because he referred to the fact that his wife had given birth that very day to his fourth child, a son. It might also have been a first for a new member of this House to be presenting his important first speech while at the same time his wife was in hospital presenting him with a new son.

As previous speakers have said, Jack Mannix had a lengthy and distinguished career in this House. His contribution to the people of New South Wales was not only restricted to his role as a member of Parliament and Minister. Upon leaving Parliament he became the Executive Director of the Intellectually and Physically Handicapped Children's Association. He worked assiduously for that body. It is common knowledge that Jack Mannix saved the Intellectually and Physically Handicapped Children's Association from financial ruin. Such was his contribution that the association named the hospital for severely intellectually and physically handicapped children after their sponsor and mentor, Jack Mannix. Jack Mannix was a most noble member of Parliament and a great humanitarian.

Mr ANDERSON (Liverpool) [2.28]: I join with previous speakers in this condolence motion for Jack Mannix. Anyone who, like me in the early 1960s, grew up in and around the Labor Party, knew of Jack Mannix. Quite apart from his feat in getting into Parliament and becoming a Minister at that time, the thing I remembered most clearly about him was the example that was held up of his not only passing law examinations but, more particularly, conquering shorthand. It was seen as a tremendous gift to be able to do it, both in his public service role and, more particularly, when he got into Parliament. As we all know, being a member of Parliament, let alone a Minister in those days, was vastly different to today. One did not have an electorate office and staff to support one. Interviews were conducted at various places around an electorate. Even in the early 1960s a number of members shared the assistance of one member of staff for the typing of some correspondence.

That Jack Mannix was able to represent the people of Liverpool in the way in which he did and perform, as he did, as a Minister of a long-term government, is a great credit to him. Even today, so many years after he retired in 1971 as the honourable member for Liverpool, there are many residents of the Liverpool area who still speak in glowing terms of his parliamentary performance representing their needs and desires, on behalf of Liverpool. All speakers have spoken of his contribution with regard to children, particularly handicapped children. There is,

Page 2886

I suppose one could say, a monument to him in respect of what has been done with the former Bambi Nursing Home. Those who really want to see testimony to the works of Jack Mannix need simply walk

around the Liverpool electorate. I am pleased to support this condolence motion on behalf of the people of Liverpool.

Members and officers of the House standing in their places,

Motion agreed to.

DEATH OF ROBERT REGINALD DOWNING, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN

Mr FAHEY (Southern Highlands - Premier, and Minister for Economic Development) [2.31]: I move:

(1) That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of Robert Reginald Downing, a former Attorney-General and Minister of the Crown.

(2) That this House extends to the family the deep sympathy of the members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

It is with regret that I move this condolence motion to mark the passing of Robert Reginald Downing and to offer the deepest sympathy of this House to his family. Reg Downing is a former Australian Labor Party member of the Legislative Council. In a long political career he served as the New South Wales Minister of Justice and Attorney-General. Mr Downing was born in November 1904, in Tumut. He was educated at the Tumut convent school and Saint Patrick's College in Goulburn before undertaking odd jobs in Tumut from the age of 15. His first job was sorting rabbit skins.

Upon moving to Sydney, Mr Downing worked as a labourer in the bleach house at the Bonds textile factory. It was during this period that Mr Downing joined the Australian Textile Workers Union, serving as an organiser and State President between 1928 and 1934. Mr Downing went on to become Federal President of the union between 1934 and 1941 and was also a delegate to the Trades and Labor Council during this period. He married Rose in 1932, and they had two sons and one daughter. In 1933 Mr Downing was badly injured in a tram smash and was forced to spend nine months in bed recuperating. His period in hospital prompted him to resume his studies, and he matriculated from Sydney University in 1938.

At the time of his first ministerial appointment he was in the third year of his law studies. He was called to the bar in 1943 and became a Queen's Counsel in 1972. Mr Downing became a member of the Legislative Council in April 1940, remaining in the Parliament for 32 years, until his retirement in 1972. He began what was to become a 24-year career in Cabinet when he entered the ministry as Minister of Justice in May 1941. He held the justice portfolio for a record period of 19 years and five days, until May 1960. During this period he was responsible for legislation which covered prison reform and the protection of the rights of people entering into hire-purchase, lay-by and cash order agreements.

In 1951 Mr Downing recommended the creation of a prisons parole board, comprising a District Court judge, a psychiatrist and two other members, to review all cases for release from gaol. In March 1956 Mr Downing took on the added position of Attorney-General, a ministry he held until his Government lost office in 1965. As Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mr Downing led two attempts to carry out Labor policy to abolish that Chamber. He finally accepted that the community wanted to retain the Council but believed its members should be subject to popular election. From 1965 until his retirement Mr Downing was Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council.

His 32-year devotion to the making and practice of the law was recognised in 1991, when Sydney's old Mark Foys building was renamed the Downing Centre Complex. During his union and parliamentary career Mr Downing was regarded as a key architect of many Labor policies, and he gained wide respect for his political skills. Reg Downing's younger brother, Francis George Downing, followed him into State

Parliament in 1953, serving in the Legislative Assembly for the seat of Ryde until January 1968, when the seat was abolished. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I express the condolence of the House, as well as my personal sympathy, to the family of Robert Downing.

Mr CARR (Maroubra - Leader of the Opposition) [2.35]: What a career! What a link with a previous age! Born in 1904; worked in Bonds textile factory in the bleach house before joining the Australian Textile Workers Union as an organiser; State President of that union from 1928 to 1934; New South Wales Secretary and Federal President from 1934 to 1941; elected as a member of the upper House in 1940, serving as Minister of Justice from 1941 to 1960 and as Attorney-General from 1956 to 1965; Leader of the Opposition in the upper House from 1965 to 1972. That is a life that spans the first half of the Australian Labor Party in New South Wales. Look at the personal elements in his career. Dr David Clune of the Parliamentary Library is quoted in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying:

... Mr Downing ... became chief adviser and confidante to Premier Joe Cahill ...

Yet before that, of course, he had been close to Bill McKell, who became Premier in 1941. All of this from someone who started his working life sorting rabbit skins and then working in a textile factory that sacked him every Christmas so that it would not have to pay him holiday pay. He was a pallbearer at Ben Chifley's funeral at Bathurst. He worked with Archbishop James Carroll to stop the Labor split of the 1950s and yet was around to assist both Pat Hills and Neville Wran. Neville Wran's transition to the Labor Party leadership would not have been possible without the contribution of Reg Downing. Without a doubt he was the outstanding representative of that

Page 2887

generation of Labor men and women who lived through the devastation of the Lang period and were absolutely determined that the experience, with all its bitterness, would not be repeated. He took as his guiding principle that there was no substitute for Labor's being in government.

The history of the Labor ascendancy from 1941 to 1965 can be neither written nor understood without recognition of the fact that Reg Downing was central to it all. For 25 years he was a force for unity and a source of stability for the Labor Party and the Labor Government. In 1940 he was second only to McKell in ending the split of the 1930s; in 1956 second only to Cahill in preventing, or at least containing, the great Labor split of the 1950s. It can be truly said of all those Labor governments - McKell, McGirr, Cahill, Heffron and Renshaw - that they prospered when Reg Downing's sage counsel and negotiating skills prevailed and that they floundered whenever another course was followed. The State parliamentary Labor Party joins with the Premier in extending condolences to the family of this very fine Australian.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan - Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Ports) [2.38]: On behalf of the National Party I support the motion of condolence for the late Mr Reg Downing. By any standard Reg Downing was a towering force in New South Wales politics, as has been articulated by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. Not only was he the State's longest serving Minister, but he introduced many reforms, such as long service leave, workers compensation, changes to the prison system and consumer protection. He was a shrewd, influential and skilled negotiator. He was also a power broker in party politics and the architect of many of Labor's policies in the 1940s and 1950s. Translated into today's Labor Party, Reg Downing would be without peer.

Reg Downing's story is a classic tale of a poor country boy who made good in the big city. He was a street-wise politician who knew a lot about gambling, particularly about starting price bookmakers and casinos. He decided to set up the Kinsella Royal Commission of Inquiry into Off-the-course Betting in New South Wales, which was mainly responsible for the establishment in New South Wales of the TAB, a decision that changed forever the financial structure of racing in this State. Reg Downing came from the bush and he returned to it when he retired from Parliament in 1972; he headed off to his farm at Goulburn. On behalf of the National Party of New South Wales I extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Reg Downing, an outstanding politician in the old mode.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [2.40]: I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party in speaking to this condolence motion for the late and great Reg Downing. As other speakers to the motion have said, Reg rose from the most humble of social origins to become the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, as well as being the most dominant personality ever to serve in the New South Wales upper House. *Hansard* shows that Sir John Fuller and the Hon. Hector Clayton paid great tribute to Reg Downing on his resignation. Reg Downing was the Minister of Justice, and therefore in charge of the New South Wales prison system, for nearly two decades - a record that I am sure is unlikely to be broken. At the same time he had control of the prison system - and I use the word "control" in both of its senses.

Reg Downing was able to introduce a more humanitarian approach to gaols, in itself an enduring testimony to his skill, judgment and compassion. He achieved many records, as has been said: he was a member of the Legislative Council for 32 years; a Cabinet Minister for 24 years; and Minister of Justice for 20 years. It is difficult to see the latter two records being bettered in the future. On the legislative side his record was imposing, for he improved working conditions for the vast majority of workers through the introduction of the 40-hour week, long service leave provisions and workers compensation. All of those were and are enduring monuments to the contribution Reg Downing made to our society.

He introduced also numerous important consumer protection measures to bring fairness and equity to those people entering into hire purchase arrangements, lay-by and other small credit transactions. Those measures put many predatory loan sharks out of business. It is fair to say that for more than 30 years Reg Downing was one of the greatest thinkers and tacticians ever produced by the New South Wales Labor Party. Clearly he was the master tactician who ensured that New South Wales had a Labor Government from the 1940s until the mid-1960s. Reg Downing was a trusted adviser to several New South Wales Labor Premiers. He was also at home in the Federal sphere; his sagacity and judgment were regularly called upon by his Federal colleagues. He has, justly and accurately, been referred to as the John Curtin of the Legislative Council, a description which is as appropriate as it is accurate. It is also an appropriate epitaph. To his family and friends I extend my sincere sympathy at his passing.

Mr MARTIN (Port Stephens) [2.43]: In my short contribution to the condolence motion I wish to reflect on how fine a family man Reg Downing was. I had great pleasure in knowing him. I worked with his son, Bob Downing, and his brother is a regular visitor to my electorate office when he is campaigning in respect of RSPCA matters. The Downing family has lost a great person who served the State well as a former Minister of Justice. His service has very much benefited the State. This great family man supported his family and those around them. He always taught them to stand up for just and fair matters. Reg Downing will be missed not only for his political abilities but for his devotion to his family. He was a great man.

Members and officers of the House standing in their places,

Motion agreed to.

Page 2888

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CABRAMATTA

Death of John Paul Newman

Mr Speaker informed the House of the death on 5 September 1994 of John Paul Newman, lately serving in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales as member for the electoral district of Cabramatta.

Vacant Seat

Motion by Mr Fahey agreed to:

That the seat of John Paul Newman, member for the Electoral District of Cabramatta, has become, and is now, vacant by reason of the death of the said John Paul Newman.

DEATH OF JOHN PAUL NEWMAN, MEMBER FOR CABRAMATTA

Mr FAHEY (Southern Highlands - Premier, and Minister for Economic Development) [2.45]: I move:

- (1) That this House desires to place on record its sense of the loss this State has sustained by the death of John Paul Newman, member for Cabramatta.
- (2) That Mr Speaker convey to the family the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.
- (3) That, as a mark of respect, this House do now adjourn until tomorrow at 2.15 p.m.

It is with regret that I move this condolence motion to mark the passing of John Newman, the honourable member for Cabramatta, and to offer the deepest sympathy of this House to his family and fiancée. All members of the Parliament were deeply shocked by John Newman's death and by the horrible circumstances in which it occurred. The shooting murder of a member of Parliament has also rightly outraged all of Australia. It is too early to speculate about the motive but if John Newman's murder was a political act, it was an attack on every member of this House and on each one of his constituents. We in Australia pride ourselves on the fact that our community leaders, including our politicians, should be able to serve their communities without fearing for their own personal safety. John Newman's death has caused us to reappraise this view. His death has caused us to wonder whether a unique and treasured feature of our Australian way of life has passed on also.

John Newman came to this House as the honourable member for Cabramatta on 1 February 1986 following a by-election. He was born John Naumenko on 8 December 1946, the son of Austrian and Yugoslav parents, who settled in Cabramatta when John was a small child. John Newman was a man who was proud to have come from Sydney's western suburbs. He was educated at Cabramatta Primary School and Liverpool High School. He went on to work at Borg Warner in Fairfield. In March 1972 John changed his surname by deed poll to Newman. He had a long history of involvement with the labour movement and with the Australian Labor Party, spending much of his working life as a union official. He was a State union organiser with the Federated Clerks Union from 1970 to 1986. He completed post-graduate studies in industrial law at the University of Sydney, and undertook a variety of Trade Union Training Authority education programs.

John Newman was elected an alderman on Fairfield Council in 1977 and remained on the council for 10 years. He was Deputy Mayor in 1985-86 and also served as Acting Mayor in 1986. John Newman was a keen sportsman and a karate fanatic. He took up karate more than 25 years ago and devoted much time and effort to teaching young people in his electorate the finer points of this martial art. He was superfit and liked to boast that he was the only parliamentarian in the nation to be honoured with a fifth degree black belt in karate. His passion for karate saw him become President of the Federation of Australian Karate-do Organisations in 1978-79. He also served as Vice-President of the Asian Pacific Union of Karate Organisations. His interest in sport saw him serve three terms on the New South Wales Health Advisory Council and the Sports House Advisory Committee. John Newman was also a director of the Confederation of Australian Sport from 1979 to 1987 and served as a member of the Australian Sports Commission between 1985 and 1987.

As all honourable members are aware, John Newman was also passionate about his electorate.

For a long time Cabramatta has been a centre for immigrants and refugees - John Newman and his family being, perhaps, a case in point. Recently Cabramatta has attracted a high percentage of migrants from Asian backgrounds, particularly Vietnam, China, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Korea. John Newman saw great potential in this multicultural mix. He believed that Cabramatta's uniquely South-East Asian population mix would draw thousands of tourists to Cabramatta. Last year I visited Cabramatta during the celebration of Vietnamese New Year and John presented me with one of the T-shirts that he had commissioned to promote the tourist potential of Cabramatta. He was keen also to promote his electorate as a business success story.

Honourable members would be aware that a significant number of people in Cabramatta came to Australia as refugees in the 1970s. Many of them had been traumatised by their experiences. Some had left dead relatives behind; others found it difficult to adjust to a completely new culture. All honourable members would acknowledge that Cabramatta has had more than its fair share of ethnic tension and lawlessness. This had been a concern of John Newman as the local member, and he often raised the issue during debate in this House. I assure honourable members that it has been a concern of the Government also. John made many representations about police presence, police backup and the need to ensure that law and order was very much a part of his electorate, as with many other electorates. His representations resulted in police resources in Cabramatta trebling over the past six years from 32 officers to the current complement of 90 officers, plus seven backup staff.

Page 2889

Police inquiries into the shooting of John Newman are continuing. I am sure the whole community would like to see this matter resolved as soon as possible, and I urge all members of the community to assist the police in their investigations, where possible. Sadly, the murder of John Newman is not the first time tragedy has struck this family. In mid-December 1979 John Newman's pregnant wife, Mary, and five-year-old son, David, were killed in a tragic accident at Bossley Park. That tragedy, of course, had a profound impact on John Newman's life. He threw himself into his work and into his electorate as a means of easing his personal pain. John Newman's friends and colleagues were recently delighted to hear that he had found new happiness and that after 14 years he was to marry again. John revealed how he had fallen in love with Lucy Wang while she was translating long speeches into Mandarin for him. John spoke of having more children and of his joy at the prospect of starting a new life with Lucy. John's death in these shocking circumstances is a tragedy for his family, for his electorate and for all people in Australia.

We all hope that this horrific incident will never be repeated, just as we hope that the police will soon be able to bring to justice the person or persons responsible for this tragedy. I note that there is a member of this Parliament who should have been with us today. I note as a mark of respect that there is a vacant seat on the bench directly opposite me. None of us could have imagined a little over a week ago that one of the members of this Fiftieth Parliament might be absent today in these unfortunate circumstances. From time to time we have to speak on such matters. From time to time we have to express our sympathy and our thoughts about one of our own, irrespective of politics. But none of us could ever have imagined the circumstances that bring us together in the Parliament this afternoon to pay tribute to one who has served with every member now present in this Chamber. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I express the condolence of the House as well as my personal sympathy to John Newman's family and to his fiancée, Lucy Wang.

Mr CARR (Maroubra - Leader of the Opposition) [2.54]: Today in this Parliament we have paid tribute to the memories of two veterans of the Parliament who lived and enjoyed very long, successful, and personally rich lives. What a contrast this motion is, extending, as it does, condolences to the family and to the fiancée on the death in horrific circumstances of a man 47 years old, who was looking ahead of him at years of personal happiness and professional contribution, his life cut short by an act of immense wickedness. None of us who witnessed the scenes last Friday in the streets of Cabramatta could doubt the sincerity that moved members of John's electorate to stand along the pavements and pay tribute to

him as the procession passed. There was sincerity there, and there was sincerity in all the interviews conducted by the media in the streets of Cabramatta.

People understood that in John Newman they had someone who was fighting for them and for the community. He was arguing all the time - as can be seen in *Questions and Answers* and in the report in *Hansard* of his recent speeches - for more effective policies on crime prevention for his community. People were moved because he was a fighter for his electorate who paid the ultimate price for his crusade, so it seems. The *Australian* described him as a flawed hero. That is not a bad honour, and I suspect that John would be happy that was said about him. Someone said that John was headstrong. Of course he was; he was headstrong in defence of his people. He was described as stubborn. He would not be unhappy with that. He was stubborn in his opposition to organised crime, and we honour his memory for it.

On the Saturday night before his murder, Helena and I were at a typical John Newman function in his electorate. He passed to me a statistical table showing the homicide rate in western Sydney, and said he was going to pursue those figures in the House when Parliament resumed. I discussed my ideas on home invasion, and he said they were closely allied to his concerns. He was interested in a policy that countered home invasion. That function was a typical John Newman affair - it was at a Serbian hall, and he had many of the Serbian community there - to commemorate the goal of peace in the Balkans. There was, of course, a table of Macedonians, as well as the leaders of the Australian-Chinese community. They were proud and honoured to be there, although the function was about the Balkans. Gough Whitlam was there and delivered an enormously erudite history of the two branches of the royal house of Serbia. That speech was enormously flattering to the Serbians there, and was very educational to the rest of us. Margaret grimaced as it went on into its second 20 minutes, but it was a typical happy John Newman occasion.

I said to John, "There is only one person who could organise a function like this. There is an improbability about this function tonight, but it is a very happy affair." Lucy was there with a clipboard, busily organising. It was a big, happy John Newman function. It could only have been held in Cabramatta, and only John Newman could have conceived it; but it could not have been as good as it was without the assistance of his new companion as organiser. I am happy amid all this grief that Helena and I had the opportunity of being with them on that occasion. It gives us a very splendid memory of John Newman, as champion of Cabramatta, as a crime fighter, and as the solid representative of his community.

Nothing would be more repellent to John than the racist-tinged remarks that have emerged on talk-back radio in the period since he was murdered. He knew he was living in a multicultural society. He knew in his bones that this was the nature of Australia, not just in Cabramatta but across the length and breadth of this land. It is a happy multicultural society. At his own expense he went to refugee camps along the Thai border on I do not know how many occasions. He did not have to do that; he opted

Page 2890

to do so to deeply involve himself in the fate and wellbeing of his people, to equip himself to fight for their interests. There was not a fibre of racial prejudice in him. How could there be, given his background? He wanted improved Australian relations with Vietnam, as a previous speaker noted, to be linked to progress on human rights in Vietnam.

He said that human rights in Vietnam should be progressed to provide liberties for its people, and that ought to be linked to improved trade and diplomatic relations between Australia and that war-devastated country. He argued the case for freedom, real democracy and political pluralism within Vietnam. They are just some of the memories - out of all those I could draw on, having known him for over 20 years - that come to mind, and that jostle with the memories of others who will speak to this motion today. I take this opportunity to express the appreciation of members on this side of the House for the decision of the Premier to give our late colleague the honour of a state funeral. The Premier's

response properly reflected the feelings of the people of this State and, indeed, this nation. I believe it is through the feelings expressed by the people John represented in Cabramatta that we can place both the tragedy of his death and what he tried to achieve in his public life in the truest perspective.

It is important to emphasise that the community's support for the goals that our late colleague had set for himself was by no means a reaction to the shock of his death. His objectives, and in particular his long campaign against rising crime, had been shared fully by the community. In that campaign he was always encouraged by the knowledge that his local community itself was his strongest support. It is precisely in diverse communities like Cabramatta that there is the clearest recognition that the values of multicultural Australia of freedom, equality and tolerance are utterly incompatible with victimisation, intimidation and violence. Those were the evils that John Newman campaigned fearlessly against. In so doing, he waged a long-term campaign to establish the conditions under which the ideal of a multicultural society can succeed. The most fundamental of those conditions is freedom from fear. We extend our condolences to Helen, his mother; Peter, his brother; and Lucy, his fiancée. He will be remembered as few members of this Parliament will be remembered: for his courage, yes, and for his model dedication to his electorate. He will be remembered for the cause he embraced, and for the action that flowed from his so signal sacrifice.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan - Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Ports) [3.03]: On behalf of the National Party I support this motion, a momentous and history-making motion for this House and this Parliament. It touches the very fabric of our society: the quality of life, democracy, freedom of speech and the right to speak out. The murder of John Newman sent shock waves through the community, through politics, and I suspect through every workplace and home in this State and throughout most of this nation. His murder made national and international headlines. It was the first time that an elected community representative such as John Newman had had his life taken in such a manner. The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have paid eloquent tribute to John Newman the person, and I endorse those sentiments. By any criteria, John Newman's campaign against local crime was courageous and noble.

As has already been said by the Premier, John Newman learned about the value of life in tragic circumstances, having lost his wife, his child and his unborn child. People have said to me that they understand the tragedy of such a happening. I do not think any of us would have any understanding at all of such a tragedy, unless we had experienced it. It obviously changed John Newman's life. It obviously changed the man's thinking into the future. It was a tragedy from which, I suspect, he would never have recovered. Now a murderer or murderers, with no value for life, have snuffed out his life the same way as one would snuff out a candle. A callous shot fired in the night took away that man's life - in one instant. It was a tragic end for a man who had experienced enormous tragedy himself. There was widespread outrage, shock and resentment from the public.

Today I shall take a slightly different approach from that which, I suspect, will be taken by other speakers. I believe it is a time to reflect on public attitudes towards law and order, street crime, bashings, muggings, gangs and house invasions. It is a time to assess whether we are losing our values as individuals and as a community. Over the last three weeks as I convalesced I had the opportunity to spend many hours listening to radio and watching television - sometimes in the middle of the night, sometimes in the middle of the day. It has been an educative period, because hour after hour, and program after program, I saw and heard the outpourings of members of a society which is making a feast of people's sorrow and people's hardship; outpourings which state, "Somebody else should do it for me. It is somebody else's problem. Somebody should be there to help me".

Are we apathetic about television violence, cinema violence, video violence, school violence, pornography, and magazines that contain instructions to make bombs and references to rapes and murders? Have we looked to see what our children will be watching tonight on the home video? Have we had a look to see what programs are on the new home computer? Do we care enough about violence in the community? Do we care how much our children are exposed to corruption, violence, drug

peddling, drug abuse and the glorification of gangs? Have we paused to think what the John Newman murder means to the Australian family? Should we, tonight, look into our mirrors and ask ourselves whether we are doing our bit to maintain the values and attitudes of common decency and law and order that we expect from our children and others? Has the commercialisation of violence and law abuse gone too far? Has the media become too involved in the drama and theatre of violence, without exercising a responsible balance?

Page 2891

Are we to accept the murder of John Newman, and not ask ourselves why? No government can legislate to control how people should think. It is the responsibility of us all to determine our community standards. The murder of John Newman should remind us all of our responsibilities to our children, our communities and our families. To do other would be to betray all that John Newman risked his life for, and for which he finally paid the ultimate sacrifice. Let us not waste the message, the signal, that the death of John Newman has given the people of New South Wales. Let us not, after we have our minute's silence here today, just say, "Well, John Newman was a good bloke". Let us think of the message that John Newman was trying to give us whilst he was alive, and let us ensure that we take that message to the community. Tonight we should look in a mirror to see what we, as individuals, can do to stop events that might lead to such murders in the future. We should look at what has happened to our families and society, because it is not pretty. It is not somebody else's problem. It is our problem as individuals. On behalf of the National Party and my colleagues, I extend deepest sympathy to the family of John Newman, and to his fiancée, on this tragic death.

Dr REFSHAUGE (Marrickville - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.09]: I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party in offering our condolences to John Newman's family, particularly his immediate family of Helen, Peter, and Lucy, on his tragic death. I first met John when he came into our caucus. He was a very determined and fit looking man, and I understand a very skilled karate exponent. I remember thinking that he was a person that I ought to come to terms with. At almost that same time I learnt of the tragedy of 1979, when his wife - who was pregnant at the time - and his son were killed in a car accident. And I thought, probably like everyone here, I will forgive him everything. Anybody who suffers such a tragedy should be forgiven everything.

He did not need forgiveness or sympathy; he shunned them, he was not interested in them. He was interested in fighting for Cabramatta; he was interested in being a strong advocate for his people; he was interested in making sure that the problems that faced Cabramatta were solved. He was interested in ensuring that the people who made up the diverse mixture of cultures in Cabramatta got a decent go. He was not unifocal, except in regard to Cabramatta. Though his attitude to crime has been well documented and was extremely important - and I hope it has nothing to do with his murder - there was a lot more to him. He had a lighter side; he was not always serious. He had plenty of jokes.

John Newman was a decent person; he always made sure that people with whom he came into contact were made to feel special. He had a human side that was often overlooked in his stubborn pursuit of the many issues he raised in the Parliament. On many occasions when I was with John and Lucy, Lucy would translate for me. Occasionally she would get me to speak Mandarin, which John encouraged. Most people did not understand, but we had a good laugh. John had a great commitment to refugees and others who had recently arrived in the country. At one stage he attempted to pay an official visit to the Villawood detention centre. The Federal Government, however, did not want a media circus - and understandably so - and would not allow him to do so. However, John would always go further. He paid a private visit to friends in Villawood to find out about living conditions so he could fight for his constituents and their families. John never did the minimum, he always went further. He was always prepared to take things one step further, even at enormous cost.

As honourable members contemplate the violence of his murder they should celebrate what he did in life and realise that it is worth while doing more than the minimum. Let us go that one step further and

make sure that we fully represent the people of our electorates as he represented the people of his electorate. This is a tragic day. Many tributes have been written, some wonderful words spoken - even some in praise of politicians. Today my thoughts are with Lucy, whom I have come to know and respect. I hope the tragic and difficult times ahead are made a little easier by what is said today.

Mr WEST (Orange - Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services [3.13]: I take this opportunity to join with all honourable members on both sides of the House to acknowledge the tragic and sudden loss of John Newman - a loss to his family, a loss to his fiancée, Lucy, a loss to this Parliament and a loss to his electorate. This is a sad and emotional day. It is only the second time in the history of this country that people have mourned the death of a parliamentarian killed in such brutal, callous and unnecessary circumstances. Indeed, most citizens of this State, regardless of their political affiliations, are still in deep shock from the news of John Newman's death. I can speak of the shock, disbelief and outrage that I and my Cabinet colleagues felt in Armidale last Monday evening when we heard the news. When the message came through from my staff on my pager I felt disbelief and then outrage. John's death is all too bitter a reminder of the fragility of life and the very real risks that accompany positions of public office.

I cannot say I knew John as well as other members in this Chamber did, but I well recall a visit to his electorate when I was Minister for Tourism. As the Premier said, John Newman recognised the potential for tourism in Cabramatta. I shared a wonderful night with him and with many people from various ethnic groups who put great faith in what they knew was the potential for tourism in the Cabramatta area. John stood in this Parliament and strongly argued his point of view in debates in this Chamber. He was proud of his electorate and was a vigorous representative of his constituents. He was hardworking and made a valuable contribution to the community that he proudly represented for eight years. His commitment to multicultural issues and his unrelenting crusade against crime in Cabramatta are well known.

Page 2892

As Minister for Police, a position I have held briefly, I have already given the assurance and the undertaking that all necessary police resources will be employed to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice. Some of the finest police officers in the State are working around the clock. I also mention the valuable contribution that has been provided by the residents of John's local community. Let us hope this cooperation will help police bring the killers of John Newman to justice. That community response was in evidence in Cabramatta last Friday. The community acknowledged its support for John Newman. I extend condolences to all those who were near and dear to John. An effective parliamentarian for the people of Cabramatta has been lost and we pay tribute to him today.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [3.16]: Monday, 5 September 1994, will go down in history as the blackest day of this Parliament: the day when the late member for Cabramatta, John Newman, was murdered in cold blood. In this cowardly and brutal attack he was shot dead on his front doorstep. It was an outrageous assault on both this institution and the supposedly peaceful suburban street on which he lived, a street not dissimilar to streets on which we all live with our families. Hopefully the foul perpetrators will be speedily caught and dealt with. John's death was a sad event because, unfortunately, it was also the first murder of a member of Parliament in Australia's 200 years as a nation, which, until last week, had been spared the type of political violence that in other countries is commonplace. John Newman's untimely death has changed that, but hopefully not irrevocably. It should be and will be regretted by the vast majority of the Australian community.

Much has been said about John's work in his electorate. He never stopped working for his constituents, whether in his electorate or in this Chamber. He was a fearless fighter for the people of his electorate of Cabramatta. His death cannot be rationalised, and I, one of his colleagues, cannot understand why it happened. To some extent I am at a loss for words about this tragic passing of one of my colleagues. I join the Premier and other speakers and extend my deepest sympathy to John's fiancée, Lucy, to his mother and to his brother. I take this opportunity also to extend my sympathy to

many of his colleagues in this Chamber, on both sides of the House, who are still grieving because of his tragic death.

Mr PHOTIOS (Ermington - Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice) [3.20]: John Paul Newman was a champion of the migrant underdog. He was a champion of his multicultural community in Cabramatta and fought for those who were less privileged than most in the community - those who, in most instances, given their newly arrived status in this country, were in the greatest need of support from government structures. John Newman was in every sense of the word a fearless fighter who, without fear or favour, was determined to put his local community above all other priorities.

In my capacity as Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs I came to know John Newman quite well. Over the last 18 months I was in Cabramatta and Fairfield, the local area, or with him at functions elsewhere in Sydney on dozens of occasions. Over that period it was clear to me that there was much more depth and humour to this serious man. There was a much more compassionate man behind the serious persona than one might at first glance, or even second glance, have realised. I remember a couple of occasions which left an indelible imprint on me, demonstrating to me, as it did to others, his sincerity, his integrity and the fundamental core beliefs he had for those whom he thought he should protect, often from themselves.

Honourable members well know that John Newman and I shared a mutual respect and concern for the plight of Cambodian and Laotian boat people, particularly those at Villawood in his electorate. It was a cause which both he and I shared and fought for, for at least 18 months - a cause for which he had fought years previously. He spoke to me about an 81-year-old great-grandmother, Nop Sy, who was on crutches after suffering a beating at the hands of the Pol Pot regime. She was nearly blind. She had lost her husband, her son and three grandchildren who had been murdered by the Pol Pot regime. For four years Nop Sy had been at the Villawood Detention Centre, where she had seen the birth of three great-grandchildren. This woman was to be sent back to Cambodia temporarily before being allowed to return as a permanent resident.

John Newman wanted to raise this matter in the Parliament. He asked me whether I would support him in that cause. I agreed. Both he and I spoke at length on that issue. We subsequently took the issue to the public airwaves. Later that evening he came to me in the Speaker's Square and said that he had just received a telephone call - what I have to say demonstrates the integrity of this man and how he was without fear or favour - from the Federal Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, who was concerned that John was pursuing the issue. John deliberately sought me out to tell me that he had put the phone down on the Minister because he believed that this 81-year-old great-grandmother deserved to stay. Twenty-four hours later, thanks to John Newman's campaign, the Federal Government relented. Of course, she now lives in Cabramatta as a permanent resident. That demonstrated to me the priority this man gave to human life.

John Newman's assassination is one of the most tragic chapters in the history of this State and nation. I hope all honourable members will appreciate more than anything that he fought for social cohesion and harmony in our multicultural society, not just at its epicentre in the migrant capital of Australia, Cabramatta, but throughout the whole nation. The Leader of the Opposition made some reference to the disturbing discussion of this issue which has led to the breakdown of the spirit and strength of multiculturalism. I hope we will always remember what John Newman fought for most.

Page 2893

I pay particular tribute to his fiancée, Xiao Jing Wang, who is with us today. I came to know her well over the last 18 months. Many months before John announced his engagement he introduced me to Xiao Jing. They spoke to me of their intentions to make a public announcement and to get married some months later. One thing that was obvious to me was the enormous respect and honour in which John

Newman held Xiao Jing. She had become his life. I visited her last week at her home. I know that John will continue to live in her heart, in the hearts of the members of his family and in our hearts. His death, which was tragic, will not go in vain. His cause is now bigger and stronger as a result of his passing. I, like all honourable members, remain committed both to the memory of John Paul Newman and to the cause and strength of his belief that preceded his passing.

Mr FACE (Charlestown) [3.26]: I extend condolences to John's mother, Helen, to his brother, Peter, and to Lucy. I am sure we will all regain our composure when the dust has settled. It is said that time heals a lot of wounds. We will never forget the enormity of this occurrence. Twenty-two years ago, when I became a member of Parliament, I did not believe we would reach this stage. It is a symptom of our changing society. Because of what has occurred we have a responsibility to ensure it does not happen again.

Before the 1976 election, in the period when there was uncertainty as to which party would win government, the late John Maddison was standing in the front of Parliament House when Eric Willis, the then Premier, was walking back towards Parliament House from the Black Stump. John Maddison said, "What Eric is doing will not be able to be done by members of Parliament for very much longer". I asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "I have been overseas for the last 12 months. We have been lucky to date. Political entities will not be able to walk around without check forever". It was as though he knew something because only a short 10 weeks later, give or take a week, Neville Wran, the then Premier, was threatened in his home. From that time onwards a person from Special Branch has been allocated to successive Premiers.

Looking back at that incident - which came to mind after what has happened to John Newman - it is not surprising that we have reached this stage. Unfortunately, we have. On the night John was slain he was to have represented me at an AAMI medal presentation. He said to me, "I cannot represent you as I am going to my branch meeting at Cabramatta". He said, "I will see you tomorrow night. We will walk to the Rothman's medal presentation together", as we have done from time to time over the years. I was as shocked as anyone when my telephone rang and a police friend of mine described to me what had happened. It is ironic that John's first speech in this House was made in the International Year of Peace. In that speech he said that we need programs aimed at reducing racism. He said that that was particularly important in the International Year of Peace. It was as though he had some premonition of what needed to be done in that area.

I knew John particularly as the chairman of my sport, recreation, racing and Chief Secretary's committee since 1991, and got closer to him as a consequence of that association. John's contribution to sport was made over a much longer period. I first became associated with him in 1975 through his chairmanship of the party's sport, recreation and leisure committee, of which he was chairman for 10 years. He compiled the policy that saw us elected to government in 1976. At that time the previous Government's Minister for Sport was Minister in name only; he did not even have a department. That is no reflection on George Paciullo, the chairman of the committee and spokesman for the Labor Party on sporting matters at that time. As history shows, he did not become the minister. John Newman presided over formulation of much of the policy which to this day is retained by that department.

His vast knowledge of sport through his appointment to the Australian Confederation of Sport and the National Academy of Sport was unbelievable. I know of no persons, other than those employed in the sporting area, who have such vast knowledge. It was of immense value to me personally and to the Opposition. He was a member of the national Committee for Sport and Recreation for the Disabled from 1985 and 1986. When we were away together it was not unusual for John to make certain that the disabled, especially children, were catered for. On one such occasion, at a sport and recreation camp, he set about making certain that there were skiing programs for the disabled, an activity he had a lot to do with in that early period.

My other contact with John came through the police-citizens youth club movement. Not many know

that he presided over and was a major contributor to fundraising for the Fairfield Club, as it is known today. He had a similar history with the Returned Services League youth clubs. It has been said that John developed a consuming interest with youth only after the tragic event of 1979. That is not so, although I would be the first to admit that after that tragedy he came to regard young people and his constituents as part of his family. His history in regard to the service of youth began long before 1979. When elected to Parliament, in early 1986, he presided over the successful staging in New South Wales of the world karate championships. That was a world first. The manner in which he conducted himself is a great tribute to the man and his interest in that sport. His efforts attracted enthusiasts to karate, and it became a world sport.

John was the second member for Cabramatta, Eric Bedford having held that seat from 1981 until his retirement. One would have thought that those who carved out that electorate from the Fairfield and Liverpool electorates did so to enable John to use his contacts and commitment for the betterment of the Cabramatta people. John had served on the council and established a unique understanding of the people who live there, as did Eric Bedford before him. John had the advantage of being younger and of having strong liaisons with the Asian community. The

Page 2894

disparaging words printed in one weekend newspaper reflect poorly on the image of a man who had done so much and were a deflection from his real achievements.

His maiden speech expressed his concerns. I return to his involvement with youth. The issues he raised in that speech are as pertinent today as the concerns we all should have about events surrounding his death. Certainly, John did have an air of authority. As he moved about, taking matters on board, he exuded authority. That characteristic probably is the reason that the Leader of the Opposition referred to John as being somewhat difficult, even overbearing. But that was John, and we knew that. On a trip away together we discussed his safety and mine, because I too found myself in similar circumstances; I still do today. Safety was not foremost in his thoughts but it certainly played on his mind that sometimes he may be in danger. Anyone who raises issues in this House from time to time thinks about that, but dismisses it because, as he so often said, "It does not happen that way in this country".

There was a soft side to John, as I have discovered since 1991. He often said things to you, then came back and ran it past you again because he thought what he had said might have been offensive or that he had gone too far. He was a very deep thinker. That steel-like exterior, or, as I said, that air of authority, betrayed the soft side to him. He often thought about what he had done and later discussed matters with people. There is no doubt that Lucy did have an effect on the softening process of John. It is one of the great tragedies of what has occurred that he did not get to enjoy more of that relationship.

About 18 months ago he and I were away together. At that time I do not believe John thought I knew about his relationship with Lucy; many of us had observed that Lucy was frequently in Parliament House. John wanted to use my phone. He made what was not the usual sort of phone call that one makes to one's office, and he was not the usual authoritative John but a much softer and quieter person. After a day or two I mimicked an Asian voice. He looked across at me and laughed. He knew I had been aware for some time of their relationship. It was great for him. John had been discussing the prospect of having children. We were really happy for him in that respect. I express again my condolences to Helen, his mother; Peter, his brother; and Lucy. He was a great man. Unfortunately he has been taken from us at a time when he had so much to give, which makes it all the more sad. May he rest in peace.

Mrs COHEN (Badgerys Creek - Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services) [3.37]: I join today with my parliamentary colleagues and extend my sympathy, and also my husband's sympathy, to John's mother, John's brother and John's fiancée. I first came to know John Newman through the parliamentary committee on road safety, another subject to which he was extremely dedicated. A little later I learned the reason for his dedication to that committee, to which he has contributed greatly over all the years he was in Parliament. John should be well remembered for his work in that area.

I also knew John Newman because he represented an electorate of south-western Sydney. Frequently he and I attended many functions held in that region. I did not find John stubborn or arrogant; rather, he was, as he has been described by the honourable member for Charlestown, soft and certainly always extremely courteous to me. It is with deep sadness that I stand here today and extend my sympathies to his family.

Mr J. J. AQUILINA (Riverstone) [3.38]: I join the Premier, my leader and my parliamentary colleagues in extending sympathy to John's mother, brother and fiancée. In paying tribute to John Newman - a person whom I have known for over 20 years, as we represented our respective areas in Sydney's west and south-west - I say, as everyone else has, that I still find it difficult to believe that this event is happening today. It is hard to comprehend the tragic events of last week that have affected our community and taken one of our esteemed colleagues. It is more incredible to think that during this term of the New South Wales Parliament members have paid tribute to two former colleagues and dear friends, one of whom I had known for only a short period.

I had known John Newman for almost two decades. In the early days John was a happy man, a different character from the one we came to know later in this House. Those who knew him in those early times remember him as a jovial character with a great sense of humour, a man with a tremendous capacity to make other people laugh. The tragic events that befell his family changed his personality in such a way that he became estranged from many who had been his friends in those earlier times. He lost contact with many of us; he continued to pursue the things in which he believed, but cut off many of his former friends.

As honourable members have been told already, John Newman was elected to Fairfield Council in 1977, the year in which I was elected to the neighbouring Blacktown Council as Mayor. John and I had the opportunity to meet on many occasions to discuss matters of mutual interest affecting the local government areas in Sydney's west and south-west. I knew him then to be an avid and determined fighter for his area, a characteristic that continued in the days when he was Deputy Mayor and, for a time, Acting Mayor of Fairfield.

In February 1986 John and I had an extremely pleasant experience. He and our colleague Kevin Moss, the honourable member for Canterbury, were elected to fill the vacancies left respectively by the former member for Cabramatta, Eric Bedford, and the former member for Canterbury, Kevin Stewart. A few days after John was elected as a member of this House I was pleased to be elected to the Cabinet vacancy left by one of those two Ministers. I remember that John and I celebrated in that first week

Page 2895

in characteristic style. We rediscovered our friendship and forged a union that was to last throughout the period of John's parliamentary term.

Many tributes have already been paid, and many more will be paid, for the way in which John Newman represented his electorate and constituents with a single purpose of mind. It seems to me that many of the tributes that have been printed in the media have been made by people who did not have a thorough knowledge of John or his character. They have painted him as a vehement crusader who had no fear. I assure all honourable members that he was of flesh and blood like the rest of us: he did have fear. He may not have expressed his fear publicly but certainly he expressed it privately.

On many an occasion late in the evening after a torrid sitting of the House he would come to my room, as do other members from time to time, and express his fears in no uncertain terms. He would relate how he felt about what was happening in his electorate, what he was trying to achieve for it, his worries about his constituents and the many diverse communities he represented in the electorate of Cabramatta about which he felt so strongly, and for whom he had so much regard.

Often John used to say that there were those who would put obstacles in his path, or attempt to

defame his character and his name, and those who had issued him with personal threats. Yes, he was afraid of all of that, and he was afraid of the consequences for honourable members and for his future. Nevertheless, he was determined to continue, because at that stage he had only one purpose in life: to represent his electorate in the only way he knew. At times his blunt terminology would reflect his single-mindedness about what he wanted to do. He had specific things to say about how he felt in regard to those who would stand in his path.

As others have said already, in recent months John Newman came to relive the happiness of some 15 or 16 years before. It is a great tribute to Lucy that she brought about such a profound change in his character. We began to see a lot of the humour return to John. Once again he had a glint in his eye because the future held much more for him than solely his representation of the Cabramatta electorate - vital though that was to him. It held also the promise of married life and family. He expressed his great excitement about all that was happening. Unfortunately that is not to be.

Many of us still like to sting ourselves, pretending that this is a nightmare that will go away. Unfortunately it will not go away - not for the people of Cabramatta, not for John's mother and brother, and certainly not for Lucy. It will not go away for us either - each and every one of us as members of Parliament, and collectively as representatives of the people. Many of my colleagues and I have expressed concern about our welfare as members of this place. I do not express concern on my own behalf, but am concerned about the capacity of many of my colleagues, especially those who were elected as members subsequent to my election to this House, to be able to continue to do their work with forthrightness. I wonder how vehemently they can continue to speak out on behalf of constituents without fear or favour, secure in the knowledge that we live in a community where our word as members of Parliament will be respected and our reward will not be the assassin's bullet.

These are major and real concerns for me, for my colleagues and, I am sure, for all members of Parliament and the community that we all love and serve. Apart from my immediate family I have an extended family, and that extended family is present today in this Chamber: the colleagues whom I love and respect, and this Chamber and what it stands for. John Newman's life was a great tribute to parliamentary representation and what we stand for as members of Parliament. I am sure he would want his death to be a mark of honour for the right of all members to be able to speak out with forthrightness, as he did, without fear or favour and with the full knowledge that by doing so they continue to represent their constituents, in a way that will not bring harm to them as individuals and will not detract from the community or the Parliament.

Once again I extend to John's mother, his brother, his family and Lucy, on behalf of myself and my wife Anne, sincere sympathy for what they have experienced and will continue to experience for some time to come. On behalf of all honourable members I hope that in the long term the sad passing of John Newman will be seen to be an aberration of what occurs in our community and that members will be able to represent their constituents without fear, without favour and in the full knowledge that they have the protection, support and esteem of the community in what they do.

Mr ZAMMIT (Strathfield) [3.49]: I join with the Premier, Deputy Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other colleagues in expressing condolences to the Naumenko family and to John Newman's fiancée, who is sitting in the gallery. I came to know John Newman reasonably well - or at least I thought I did - during my time as Chairman of the Staysafe committee, of which he was a long-time member. I was always impressed by John's dedication and commitment to the tasks of the committee; he was certainly a valued member of that committee. On one occasion the committee was dealing with an important issue and I felt, as do chairmen of other committees from time to time, that some members were not putting in sufficient effort. That is understandable because of the pressures under which honourable members work, and because the demands of the electorate must take priority. One day I felt in a cheeky mood and I sent out a draft report to all members of the committee. On page 12 I attached a yellow stick-on note that stated, "Would you please phone me when you have arrived at this page?". John Newman was one of the first to phone me and say, "What do you want to

talk about?" I said, "I am very pleased you rang". He said, "Did you think I was not
Page 2896

going to read the report?" I said, "No, I knew you were going to read the report but I am pleased you rang anyway". We talked about the report and I recall saying to a colleague shortly after that I was impressed by John's commitment and dedication to the task. That person said to me, "Of course you realise the tragic events that resulted in his wife and child being killed in a car accident". John had never mentioned that to me and I think that sums up John Newman - he never spoke about himself or his problems.

On another occasion John asked me about my experiences as a migrant to Australia with my mother and father. I was impressed that John showed an interest because I thought he was from an Anglo-Saxon background. On numerous occasions he asked about my experiences, and the heartache and suffering felt by migrants, especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds. In our lengthy discussions I outlined my views on what had occurred then and what is occurring now. On one occasion I said, "Look, John, you guys will never understand what it is really like". It was not until the day after John died that I found out he was also a migrant from a non-English speaking background. Yet he never once said to me, "I know the suffering and the pain because my family and I have been through it".

I have a further recollection of John Newman from my visits to Cabramatta for the Vietnamese New Year, an annual event that I have attended for seven or eight years. The first time I heard John speak in public was when he addressed the community in Vietnamese. I consider myself a linguist - I speak several languages fluently - but I have had great difficulty learning Vietnamese, Mandarin or Cantonese because the accent is difficult for me to absorb; I just cannot get my tongue around it. Yet John Newman was able to master much of the Vietnamese language. He did not just rattle off a few words; he actually spoke at length in Vietnamese. I was sitting next to a person who must have been one of the members of the committee, perhaps President Cuong Vo. I said, "What is John's Vietnamese like?" And he uttered just one word: "Good".

I do not want to let this opportunity go by without saying something explicitly and implicitly to the media. I implore the media to stop using terms such as Italian mafia, Chinese triads, or Asian gangs. I am familiar with ethnic communities and I understand their pain and suffering on hearing these terms. I share the sadness felt by everyone in this Chamber. Last week Cabramatta lost a very valued member of Parliament; last week Mrs Naumenko lost a son she must have been very proud of; last week multicultural Australia lost a son; last week Australia lost a champion of the small people. Once again I offer my condolences to the Naumenko family and to John's fiancée, Lucy.

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt) [3.55]: I join with other members in offering condolences to John's mum, his brother, Lucy, his family and his many friends. In particular, I want to pass on my deepest sympathy to a very dear friend of John Newman's, Nick Gotovac. At any function I attended in the electorates of Cabramatta and Mount Druitt, John was supported by Nick, who represented many of John Newman's followers. I warmed to John when he was elected to the House, because he represented the electorate where I was brought up, Canley Heights. As a matter of fact his electorate office is opposite the Canley Heights Primary School, where I went to school, and is in the only recreational facility that Canley Heights had in the 1950s and 1960s, a squash court-cum-pool room. I played pool. When campaigning in the by-election, I walked down the streets of Canley Heights and renewed many old acquaintances. I say to John's family and to Lucy: we will all miss him!

I wish to pick up on a couple of comments, in particular one made by the honourable member for Strathfield, about media reporting of the murder. I am angry at the way these matters are sometimes reported. I am sure that John would not want any particular ethnic organisation vilified, criticised or condemned for his death. Irrespective of whether his death was caused by an Asian street gang - which was the current flavour of the month early last week - John would not want the Vietnamese or Asian communities criticised. If it transpires that organised crime was involved in this brutal murder and that the people identified were of a particular nationality, John Newman would be the last person to have that ethnic background condemned. The same could be said for the speculation that has arisen in the media.

In the beginning, reports in the media were responsible, they portrayed the community's outrage at John's death. However, I am sickened by comments made over the past weekend. In any investigation, unrelated matters come to light; and when police were not able to find a culprit within a few days, speculation ran riot. Whether or not Vietnamese groups or an Asian street gang are involved, the Minister for Police has an obligation to honour John Newman's wishes in trying to clean up his community. This Government should work with the Federal Government to ensure that the problem is eradicated, both in the Cabramatta electorate and in the community at large.

On behalf of everyone in New South Wales I apologise to Lucy for the speculation about her marital status. That was the most sickening piece of reporting I have ever read. Such issues should be raised only after thorough investigation; they should not be subject to speculation by the media. There has been concern that John's death was politically motivated, that it may have had something to do with party politics. I cannot believe the comments made by political leaders in the Cabramatta-Fairfield area who have taken cheap shots about John Newman not being an angel. It is deplorable that when the media has run out of hard news, cheap political shots are made.

I ask this question as a member of the Labor Party because I know many members of the Labor Party have been asking it of me, and John Newman probably would want to know because he asked it of

me on many occasions: how can his political enemies in past elections become his political enemies within his own party? That is something about which I believe our party has a little bit of soul-searching to do when this matter is finally resolved. We would want to be very angry about some of the things that have been said about John Newman. But I hope that as a party we have learnt that our political enemies are on the other side of the House, and if they cannot beat us from over there they certainly should not be given an opportunity to come inside and beat us from within. I know that John Newman would very much believe in that point of view.

Lucy, to you and to all the Newman family, I want to say that it is a tragic situation. We may not think we know who the crime was carried out by, but we do know. It was carried out by a crim, whose ethnic background, religion or profession in life does not matter. It was carried out by a crim, rather than by a member of an ethnic group or class in our community. I only hope that this low-life is brought to justice. I hope that in some way will ease the pain that the Newman family and Lucy are suffering at the moment. I am more than pleased to be able to support the motion.

Mr HAZZARD (Wakehurst) [4.02]: It is with inestimable despair that I rise to support other speakers today in relation to John Paul Newman's condolence motion. The views that I am going to express are those of a fellow parliamentarian and a close colleague of John on the parliamentary committee on road safety, the Staysafe committee. When I first came into this place three and a half years ago I remember saying in my maiden speech that it was the best of times and the worst of times. I cannot imagine worse times than the present. The honourable member for Liverpool and a number of other of our colleagues were at the AAMI awards last Monday night. It was a very happy night. I did not know John Newman was supposed to be there that night. I wish he had been. At about a quarter to 10 we were told of what had occurred. I remember getting a feeling through my whole being that this just cannot be right, that someone has got it wrong. Yet as time went on over the next 15 or 20 minutes - it seemed like an eternity - it became obvious that it was right, it was all true: someone had taken John Newman's life.

I am sure that for all of us the tragedy has built up during the past week. For us that sense of tragedy could not be at the same level that Lucy, his brother, his mum and his family are feeling, but we are feeling it. I have listened to previous condolence debates and have wondered whether members on one side could feel passion about what they were saying about a member from the opposite side. I want everyone to know that I do feel a great sense of loss that almost defies words. John and I had become friends over the past three years. I have not had the pleasure of sharing with John the number of years that, say, the honourable member for Riverstone and the Leader of the Opposition have shared with him,

but I had three years. As Chairman of the Staysafe committee in the past two-and-a-half years, each time we had a meeting or a hearing, whether with senior government officials or with people from overseas jurisdictions, I always knew that with John sitting at my right hand I had someone who was passionate about road safety and about caring for other people. For that reason our political differences just faded into oblivion.

In the time I shared that friendship with John we had some really good times. We had some pretty awful times - I am sure that would be common to any parliamentary committee - but we had some very good times. As a friend John Newman talked to me on occasions about matters that I do not intend to illuminate this House about. They are matters that perhaps some people opposite and some on my side might find surprising to be chatted about between political foes. But on each occasion the discussions we had were sincere, they were helpful, and they were concerned. John always was a very, very good friend. There were occasions when he would take me aside and we would talk about the pressures that this place can put on people, about the strained relationships that we can have both with people on our own side and with those from the other side.

There were other more light-hearted times I remember when, for example, having decided I was a bit innocent and naive, John taught me how to play blackjack - and that was a game he really knew how to play. He taught me the ins and outs of that game. I remember our very first night playing blackjack together, when we won \$200 between the two of us for a \$20 investment. That was not bad. I should add that it was not in New South Wales. There were other times when he would come in and say, "Mr Chairman, I am worried about you. Your stomach muscles need fixing". I remember one occasion we were away together when he rang me up at about 11 o'clock at night and said, "Tomorrow morning, Mr Chairman, 6 o'clock down in the gym". I foolishly went down. For about three weeks after that my stomach muscles did not forget what John Newman taught them.

When I first came into this place one of the things I did was to venture into the library to have a look at the background history of colleagues on both sides of the Chamber. I remember reading in John's that in 1979 he had lost his wife and his young son, David. That struck a chord with me: because my youngest son is called David and because someone could rise above the tragedy that John had apparently risen above. It was some years before he was preselected by the Labor Party, it was some years before he stood before the people of Cabramatta, and it was some years before he came into this House. On coming here I remember thinking to myself that when I got to know this person I would have to take some notice of him, because he must be special.

In the ensuing six to 12 months I did not have the best of times in this place. But I remember thinking to myself that John Newman had risen above tragedies far beyond anything that I was going through at the time, and that one should have that sort of

Page 2898

strength. Privately he gave me some advice that certainly helped me through that time. When I was appointed Chairman of the Staysafe committee I was suddenly there, with John Newman. If I arrived late John would be sitting there tapping the desk and he would say, very quickly, "Mr Chairman, you are late". I always knew it was better not to respond when John said that. But, beyond that, I found in John a very, very determined human being. His perspective on so many issues was born of his background, of his Austrian-Serbian parents, and of the circumstances of his young life here. I remember him telling me how hard it was in his young school days when he spoke with an accent. I suppose that was character-forming.

Then he was married and later suffered the tragic loss of his wife and child. All of those things gave him a passion for supporting, if you like, the underdog, the down-and-out, the needy, perhaps the lonely, and the downtrodden. Those were the sorts of people that John felt very, very passionate about. On the Staysafe committee he made his points time and time again with vigour, dedication and enthusiasm. Sometimes I did not agree with him. Sometimes we would have an argument. Sometimes I would leave the meeting feeling really quite despondent. Perhaps an hour or so later - as a member said

earlier - John would ring and say, "Look, we are aiming at the same thing. Let us work it out". I have to say that the two reports that Staysafe produced in the past couple of years - on alcohol and other drugs on New South Wales roads, and on culpable driving - are testimonies to John's efforts to ensure that the right thing is done for everybody.

In the report on alcohol and other drugs John was as keen as mustard to see drink-drivers lose their licences instantly. That is something he hoped would become a reality. The report on culpable driving was something that he also felt passionate about, in so far as he believed that the penalties for culpable driving were really hopeless: five years for causing somebody's death. In the introduction to that report - which was tabled last session - I think I said that the report was very much driven by some of the early energy and enthusiasm of John Newman. It was not just the penalties that he was really focused on. I remember he used to ring me regularly and say that one of the things that we, as a committee on road safety, needed to do was to come to grips with the fact that the many people who are left behind in tragic circumstances do not get the support services that they need.

Other members know that John was quite passionate - and passionate is a word that I suppose is mentioned frequently when talking about John Newman. He was quite passionate about making sure that there was victim support; making sure that the people who were left behind knew how the police investigations were proceeding, what was happening when court proceedings started, and what counselling services were available. John would want to know that the people who were close to him - particularly Lucy, his mum and his brother - are getting that sort of support. I trust that those in the relevant areas are making sure that they are. As others have said, John also cared passionately about Cabramatta. We were on a plane together a few weeks ago, and I was nodding off. It was about a four-hour flight, among other flights totalling about 50 or 60 hours, and I suddenly got this belt in the ribs. I had forgotten that John was still awake next to me. He said, "Hey, Brad, wake up". I woke up, and he was pointing out a chart in a large volume that he had. He said, "Mate, could you ever get that mix of races in Wakehurst?" I looked and I said, "No, John, you are right".

What he actually had in his hand was a book dealing with the future vision of Cabramatta, and he was really excited about it. In fact when I woke up again an hour and a half later he was still reading it. He started talking to me, when I was more awake, and he said, "This is the future of Cabramatta. I want to see Cabramatta as a tourist destination. We have got it all there. It can be the competitor for Chinatown". I hope that what has happened in the past week does not destroy that vision. I am sure it has put it back, but I am sure that John would have wanted it to go forward. John was also very passionate about his family. About October or November last year John and I were in a taxi heading in towards a conference in Perth. He tapped me on the shoulder and handed me a photograph. He said, "Brad, this is Lucy". He had a big smile on his face, and he spent the next 20 minutes or so talking about Lucy and what he felt for her. From time to time during the past 12 months he spoke to me further about Lucy; his feelings for her certainly seemed to have been growing in strength from day to day.

It was only about a month ago we were walking down the street together and he said something about Lucy, but he referred to her as Xiao Jing. I said, "John, you are doing well to be able to pronounce her name so well". He said, "To me Xiao Jing is so special, and to use her Mandarin or Chinese name befits how I feel about her". I just want Lucy to know that John was even expressing those feelings to someone on this side of the political spectrum. About 12 months ago we were having a long chat about his family history. He told me he had been back to Europe to look into his family history. He told me lots of things, but he particularly said that he felt very strongly about his mother. My recollection is that it might have been leading up to her birthday, and he was keen to make sure that he was back home for her birthday. He said to me that he wanted to make sure that for whatever time he had in his life - at that stage he was not expecting it to be cut short - he would be able to share as much time as he could with his mum. I think she probably knows that. I remember one of my National Party colleagues finding out one day just how John felt about his mum. I will not name him; he might tell the story against himself. He looked across this Chamber, I think it was, and stirred John about the fact that he was wearing black Reeboks.

Mr Jeffery: It was overseas.

Page 2899

Mr HAZZARD: Was it overseas? I can remember the conversation, if not the place, and I can remember that John looked him in the eye and said, "My mother gave me those shoes; don't you ever stir me again". And he did not. John Newman was passionate about his family. He was passionate about Cabramatta, and he was passionate about the Staysafe committee. As I said earlier, in his role on Staysafe John contributed in many ways. He always kept me in line. It sounds a bit like Staysafe is always away, and I would not like honourable members to think that, but recently we were staying in a particular hotel in London during a heatwave. John came downstairs after the first night. We were heading off to a very early meeting with the police commissioner in London. He came down looking very tired, and John looked me in the eyes and I thought I was in trouble, because I had noticed during the night that his room was very small. There was no airconditioning and there was no room for us to even put our bags down. I recognised the look, and I said, "How are you John? Did you sleep well?" He said, "Mr Chairman, my room is so small the flies are all hunchbacks". I thought it wise not to pursue that conversation.

One of my colleagues said earlier that John was passionate about the Villawood Detention Centre. He was. He cared about those people, and he cared about the fact that they were locked away. One of his desires was to see a bail system implemented, where families, old ladies and young children would not be locked away for years while legal processes went on. That is something that I, and hopefully others in this place, will continue to pursue. Through John's life he overcame many adversities. He had tremendous difficulties. I remember once reading some words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He said, "Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties". John Newman had tremendous difficulties and out of them John Newman was born as a man of great grandeur. This Parliament is a better place for having had John Newman as part of it. I express my very sincere condolences to Xiang Jing, John's mother and his brother.

Mr GIBSON (Londonderry) [4.20]: On behalf of my family and my wife I pay last respects to John Newman and join other speakers in offering condolences to Lucy, Helen, Peter and all his family. John was a good mate of mine, as he was of many people in this Chamber. I have known John for probably 24 or 25 years. Like everybody else, I was devastated on Monday night last week to hear the news that John had been murdered. Like most people who heard that news, on Monday night I could not sleep. On Tuesday morning I got up very early and went over to John's house to see if I could be of any comfort to Lucy, Helen and Peter. While I was there I was asked to say a few words on behalf of John's family and his friends, and I did. It was probably the hardest thing I have ever had to do, but I was pleased that I was asked to say a few words because it gave me the opportunity to honour a promise that I made to John on many occasions. John knew the seriousness of the work that he had to do and that he was doing. He knew the risk that he was taking.

As Lucy knows, John said to me many times, with that big smiley sort of misty grin that he used to get, "If anything ever happens to me, make sure amongst other things that you tell everybody that I was a good bloke". I do not have to tell people that he was a good bloke because that has been said, but every time John mentioned it, I knew that he really meant it. It was no joke. The last time that he said it to me was the Thursday before he was shot. He said, "Don't ever forget", and I said, "I won't forget". John Newman was a different type of member of Parliament. We are all different. We all have our pluses and we all have our minuses. John was not a politician to make fancy speeches and believe in nothing. John Newman was a real believer: he believed in people; he believed in the rights of people; he believed in Cabramatta; more than anything he believed in Lucy, Helen, Peter and his family; and he believed in his Catholic religion.

In many ways the assassination of John was similar to what happened to John F. Kennedy. People

have said many times in the past week that when they heard the news of John Newman being shot, they felt the same as they felt when Kennedy was shot. I can understand that. An old man from South Australia rang me and said that although he did not know John Newman, when he heard the news he went outside, bent down on his knees, cried and said a prayer. People all over the place felt the same way. The people who knew John Newman cried not only for him but for the fabric of society that was gone forever as we knew it in this country. Some of the things that were said about Kennedy could be said about John Newman: John Newman also saw wrong and tried to right it; he saw pain and tried to fix it; he saw Cabramatta being overcome by this criminal element and tried to weed it out. As they say, this was a man.

Most members today have told little ditties and stories about John. Let me share one that most members in this Chamber probably did not know. Often at night John and I would sit up, as he did with other members of Parliament, and we would discuss certain things. Sometimes we would sit all night and speak about things. One particular night I asked John about the time he changed his name and the reason for doing so. John said that he saw a goal he thought he had to achieve and this had been the reason for his change of name. I said to him, "How did you settle on a name? It must be terribly hard". When one thinks about it, it must be awfully hard. John said that he thought it was a new beginning; he was going to be a new person. However, he thought it would be very hard to call himself John Newperson. He said, "I was a new man". That was the reason for John Newman being called John Newman - he was a new man. That illustrates the simplicity of the fellow.

Another story that is worth telling, and one that I am certain Helen will relate to, is that during question time John and I would sit in this Chamber and often have a fairly good time, if it is possible to have a good time in this place during question time. We used to manage to have a giggle from time to

time. One day John said to me, "Mum's up there". We gave Helen a bit of a nod. After question time we went out to see Helen and she paid out on us. She paid out on John in particular. She said, "John, you and Paul were laughing during question time. You must always pay respect". If Helen told John to pay respect, I can assure you that John took heed of it. A few months went by and John said, "Mum is in the gallery again. We have to be on our best behaviour today".

Often John had a quip. He used to interject if he thought a speech coming from somebody on the other side was a bit boring. He would often say, "Excuse me, would you like an interjection?" This day John said nothing. He sat through question time and he did not even smile. Sitting next to him, I was too scared to smile either. After question time John bolted out the door and raced straight up to see Helen. He thought he would get the accolades because he had been on his best behaviour, but poor old John blew it again. His mum, Helen, said to him, "John, you must always pay respect". John said, "Mum, I didn't even laugh. I didn't even smile through question time". She said, "I know that, but you left the Chamber so quickly you forgot to pay your respects to the Speaker". Poor old John was in trouble again.

I hope that the strength of John has been passed on to Lucy, Helen and Peter. I hope they have strength from John to overcome this terrible time in their lives. The honourable member for Mount Druitt mentioned two good friends of John's, Nick Gotovac and Father Mac, the parish priest of Cabramatta whom John used to call "the old man" and whom John treated like a father. Father Mac helped John tremendously, as has Kenny Chapman who has worked with John for a long time. I hope that they also derive the strength from John to help whoever replaces him in the seat of Cabramatta. Many things have been said and many things have been written about John during the past week. One thing that keeps coming up is that members of Parliament might now think twice about being outspoken. If that is the case, John Newman has died for nothing.

I hope that the legacy John Newman leaves us is that all members of Parliament will be prepared to speak out on issues, particularly crime. It is time - John and everybody here would agree - for members of Parliament to stand up and be counted. We are at the crossroads. We all know where this lucky country has been, but we have to realise where we are going. We have to assess what type of Australia

we really want for our kids and their kids. John was on the crest of a new life. As one member said today, John had started to smile again. He was looking forward to tomorrow. All his sadness had gone. It has been said before that John loved his mum. He loved his brother. More than anything he loved Lucy. This was really the meeting of the east and the west. Lucy was preparing something very special to give to John when they got married. I hope she completes it. This was a man and a friend.

Mr JEFFERY (Oxley) [4.30]: I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the National Party and other members in paying great respect to a person with whom I served on the Staysafe committee for seven years. I am the longest serving member in this Chamber on the Staysafe committee and I came to know John Newman extremely well, probably better than some of his own colleagues did and probably better than I knew some of my own colleagues. We dealt with many reports and were often away together overseas and interstate and met at many committee meetings in Parliament House on a regular basis. I, like the honourable member for Londonderry, remember Monday 5 September. I returned from an evening function at about 11 p.m. and one of my sons rang me from Sydney. My son, Norman, had had a meal with John and me in the carvery late last year, and he remembered him well. He had had a good yarn to him and had spoken to him about many things. He said to me, "Did you hear the shocking news?" I said, "No, what is the news?" He told me about the murder, the assassination of John.

I could not sleep that night. My mind turned over, questioning who could do such a thing and why. Many of us have repeatedly asked that question of ourselves. I could not come to grips with it because I could not understand. As the Deputy Premier and Leader of the National Party said, perhaps we need to look at the underlying things to see what is happening in our society. I have some strong views, particularly relating to young people. John was a champion with young people. He was very proud of the young people in his area and set very high standards for them. They had to abide by them. I congratulate the Attorney General for banning X-rated videos and video games in this State. I cannot understand why these kids play video games where someone must be killed in order to win the game. Violence in society is with us. The death and brutality that is shown in films and videos demeans life. Young people are being desensitised, and people who are not so young. Members of Parliament need to deal with this matter and try to turn back the clock.

The Staysafe 25 report and the Staysafe 21 report have been mentioned today. The Staysafe 25 report was an examination of the provisions of the Crimes Act 1900 regarding dangerous driving. That report is a tribute to John's tenacity and determination. It came about following the tragic murder by vehicle of Benjamin Cox, when the matter was referred by the Attorney General to the Staysafe committee. Benjamin Cox was the son of two of John Newman's constituents. He tackled the Staysafe report with the fervour of a man possessed, as was mentioned by the Chairman of the Staysafe committee today. The Chairman of the Staysafe committee referred to black sneakers. John was wearing a light grey suit. I was wearing a colourful tie. John said, "That is a terrible tie, Bruce". I said, "It is nothing like your shoes - black sneakers with a grey suit". He said, "Don't you talk about my shoes because they were given to me by my mother and no-one speaks

Page 2901

about my mother". Knowing that John was a black belt karate expert, fifth degree, I immediately said to him, "I love your shoes". The next day he was wearing a blue reefer jacket.

At another meeting with police commissioners in another country he again wore the black sneakers. I had another go at him and he grinned. He realised it was all in fun. He spoke about his mother often. I wrote to his mother recently expressing my sorrow and passing on my condolences on John's tragic death. I said to his mother, "Although I have never met you I feel as if I know you". That was because John was a devoted son. He spoke of his mother on many occasions. We should all speak of our parents as John did. He spoke of his mother with great fondness and of Lucy with great love. He said to me recently, "Bruce, I have found happiness again". That is displayed today by members saying it was obvious in his mannerisms. Though he was difficult at times and had a short fuse, later he would apologise and say, "I am sorry if I upset you or said something I should not have said". That illustrates

John's concern for people.

John was a compassionate man. Sometimes he was lonely. He had his own brand of humour. I do not know whether his mother saw him sitting opposite with the honourable member for Canterbury chewing make-believe gum, trying to put the Government off. We will miss that in future. He would give us a wink and try to put off a Minister when he was answering questions on a serious matter. Returning to the Staysafe committee: a free moving exchange between John, as a member of the committee, and Mr Cox, the father of Benjamin, illustrated his compassion for people and how strongly he felt about culpable driving and related issues.

John dealt with things with zeal and vigour. Sometimes he was single-minded. The Benjamin Cox case was one of his greatest triumphs. He was proud of the report, of which 1,500 copies were printed, followed by a reprint. The report has been distributed around the world. John was the driving force behind that report. That report was his legacy. The Parliament has lost a dedicated member. He has left a legacy of steadfastness and compassion. He will be sadly missed. The State funeral last Friday was a moving farewell to John. I express to John's mother, to his brother, Peter, and to his fiancée, Lucy, my deepest condolences and those of my wife and family. Our prayers and thoughts are with you in this sad and difficult time.

Mr MILLS (Wallsend) [4.37]: I join with my colleagues on the Staysafe committee - in particular, my Labor colleagues on the Staysafe committee, Doug Shedden, the honourable member for Bankstown, who was very close to John; and the Hon. Judith Walker MLC - in supporting the condolence motion moved by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I want to say to John's loved ones - in particular to Lucy, his fiancée, and to Helen, his mother, and to his immediate family circle - something positive. I would like them to take from here the knowledge that members of Parliament spoke positively about John and particularly his work on the Staysafe committee and as a parliamentarian. His work on the Staysafe committee was that of a very good parliamentarian. I want his family to know that and it is important that it be on the record.

John's contribution to the Staysafe committee will be sadly missed. His political approach was based on protection of his constituents. That approach extended to his philosophy on road safety. It is important to read into the record a few of John Newman's own words so that when people read the debate on the condolence motion today they will see the intensity and validity of his position. I quote first from the *Hansard* of 7 April 1992 and from John's private member's statement following the death of Benjamin Cox. He said:

In raising this matter I express extreme concern on behalf of Benjamin Cox's family, myself and residents of the Cabramatta electorate about the culprit who committed this crime eventually being charged and dealt with by our legal system.

He continued:

There is a loophole in the Crimes Act. The police may charge someone with murder or manslaughter but inevitably, at the District Court, the charge is changed to culpable driving because manslaughter is too difficult to prove. Subsequently there is a fall-back position by the Director of Public Prosecutions . . . A fall-back offence other than culpable driving is needed; there should be something in between. It is totally unfair that a charge which can result in a life sentence can be watered down to a charge that can result in the person receiving up to three years in prison.

As we know, a couple of days later the then Attorney General, Mr Collins, referred the issue to the Staysafe committee for inquiry and report. John Newman effectively led that inquiry - I mean that as no insult to the two chairmen of the Staysafe committee during that inquiry. The result was the report "Staysafe 25: Death and Serious Injury on New South Wales Roads". A couple of important recommendations in that report were close to John's heart. Staysafe recommended that the new

offences be named dangerous driving causing death and dangerous driving causing grievous bodily harm. Staysafe recommended that the maximum penalty for offences under the Crimes Act be effectively doubled. The committee further proposed that explicit legislative provision be made where aggravating circumstances occurred. We also had a section dealing with the personal and social trauma arising from involvement in road crashes. I quote again from John Newman's words to this House on 10 March 1994 after the tabling of what I have called his report. He said:

I believe this report will have a significant impact not only on future charges and convictions with respect to dangerous driving, but - once the Attorney General has implemented amendments to the Crimes Act and we see them as law - also the many drivers on our roads who virtually use vehicles as tools of destruction and death.

Staysafe 25 is a tribute and testimonial to John Newman's parliamentary work. I put it to the Premier, to the Deputy Premier, and to everyone in
Page 2902

the Legislative Assembly and in the Legislative Council that if we want to have a legislative memorial to him, as I do, we should enact the essential recommendations of Staysafe 25 this session. I support the motion. I express to his family the condolences of Staysafe members.

Mr SMALL (Murray) [4.42]: I offer my very sincere sympathy to John Newman's mother, brother and to Lucy on behalf of my wife Judy, myself and all of my constituents. Over the last week I have had so many people speak to me about John, even though the electorate of Cabramatta is so far away from the electorate of Murray. People have said that they have shaken their heads in shame to think that such an event has occurred here in Australia. John Newman's life was taken through assassination. It does not matter who a person is, nobody deserves to die under such circumstances. The police, the people of Cabramatta and the members of this Parliament will work together to find the people responsible, who will be duly dealt with.

John was a very lonely person at times. During the evening meal time we would often go to the gym together. I always felt in my heart that he was lonely. However, over the last 12 months there was a huge improvement in his quality of life, with Lucy as a loved one, and no doubt from his respect for his mother and family. John went to Guangdong Province with about seven members of Parliament, including me. We visited China for 10 days on a goodwill tour. Lucy went with John; our wives came with us. Our wives created a terrific impression on our Chinese counterparts, particularly in Guangdong Province. Our wives were perhaps greater ambassadors than we were. The Chinese people said how much they respected Australians, as indeed we respect them. John was happy that Lucy was able to be with us in China.

It is sad to be gathered here eight days after this tragic event - something that has never happened in Australia before. I remember when I met John for the first time. He was elected approximately a year after I was elected in 1985. I do not suppose we ever grew to know each other to a great extent, except through membership of the Staysafe committee. The honourable member for Wakehurst and the honourable member for Oxley have already referred to the Staysafe committee. John was a very strong member of the Staysafe committee, which is seen as one of the most prominent committees of the House. It is a bipartisan committee, not just a committee of the Government. It is good to see Ian Faulks, the director of that committee, here to pay his respects to John. The Staysafe committee was brought into being some 12 years ago. Of its recommendations, 85 per cent to 90 per cent have been approved by the Parliament. The recommendations have related to safety standards, safety measures and the saving of lives. The community may not have liked all of the recommendations, but they respect them because they save lives. John Newman will be remembered for being a member of that committee.

In the International Year of the Family John was starting to rebuild his family - after the tragic loss of his first wife and son - with Lucy. John has been taken away. The electorate of Cabramatta became a

family for John; the people of Cabramatta have shown concern and support for John. I know that they, God willing, will make sure that the culprit is caught and is made to receive his just rewards. I say to John's mother and brother and to Lucy: thank you for what you have done and what you have achieved in a man who was a son, a brother and a future husband.

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [4.48]: I join with my colleagues in expressing deep sadness and sympathy to all those who loved and respected John Newman. The first I knew of John's death was when I opened the *Sydney Morning Herald*. It hit me very hard. I felt extreme sorrow, disbelief, anger and revenge, and I wanted to attack some of my colleagues for what was said, what was not said, what had been done and what had not been done. I put my arms around my wife, we stood together and we tried to take it in. Although I did not know the man well, there was a bond in that tragedy.

I thought of James Mackay and an image that had stayed in my mind for many years. Some time after the death of Donald Mackay I stayed overnight at the Mackay household. I took James to school one morning and I watched him cross the road. He was a little boy, with a little school bag, going to kindergarten, and I thought, "Some bastard has killed his father". That is what puts steel in my spine when there are things I do not want to say, things I do not want to do and things I feel I have to do.

Last Tuesday I walked along the beach and collected my thoughts. On the occasion of a tragic event, everything - whether it is the sunshine, the water or the gulls - imprints itself on one's mind. Back home the telephone rang incessantly. There were calls from people all over Australia seeking comment. I shared some thoughts with some reporters but I made no public comment because I was too upset and too angry. I was like a caged lion. I am sure that many of my colleagues felt the same way. We wanted to do something. I worked through my negative thoughts, my aggression and my mixed emotions and I listened with despair to the comments, the speculation and the racist remarks which, to me, reinforced this terrible tragedy. But, as with us all, I had to come to terms with myself. I had to come to terms with some feelings of guilt because I, as much as anyone in this Chamber, should have known and understood. I should have given that man more support and I did not.

I did not know John Newman well. He was proud of his community. He invited me to Cabramatta on several occasions, not from the crime viewpoint, but to see what was happening there. I and my father knew that area very well, but that was many years ago. John Newman wanted to show me how it had changed, but I was too busy. Last week I tried to make up for it - perhaps to assuage the guilt. I met with some community representatives, with

Page 2903

some people who worked with street kids and with other people in whom I have confidence. They expressed to me the hurt and the anger that they felt because John Newman had fought racism and was a crusader for multiculturalism. The people he tried to protect were now being blamed, by innuendo, for the crime. Youth workers told me that gangs had come to them, groups of young people, some of whom were confused and frightened by events. They were suddenly being labelled as criminals, they were being accosted, and they were being accused by some sections of the media. Across all multicultural groups the street kids, poor, isolated and uncoordinated, were being subjected to harassment.

We must talk of criminals and not of race. We must separate criminals from society by their actions, not by their race and culture. We must recognise that crime is all of us; it is structural; it is unemployment; it is inequality; it is corruption; it is injustice; and it is fuelled by greed, fear, power and ignorance. At this stage there is no evidence whatsoever that organised crime is involved. We do not know who may be involved. But if it is organised crime, it is us: it is the parliamentarian who does not speak out; it is politics which compromises too much; it is the public servant who keeps quiet; it is the lack of protection by the law for the whistleblower, whether he be in the public service or the police force; it is the misuse of power and authority; it is those who turn a blind eye; it is those structures that do not support honest police; it is the editor in the media and the proprietor who will not put resources into investigative journalism, which has largely become a thing of the past; and it is the intimidation of very restrictive defamation laws.

I am disturbed, as is the honourable member for Londonderry. I am proud to speak after the honourable member for Londonderry and many others in this Parliament who have spoken with such feeling about the hype, about our safety and about the safety of our wives and families. I do not feel any less safe this month than I did last month. Do we want, as members of Parliament and as representatives, to give comfort to criminals who believe that, with impunity, they can kill a member of Parliament? Because that is the impression we will give them! If we give them the impression that we are running scared, where will our children and our grandchildren hide? There is much that we all want to do. We can do a lot about the structures. Vera and I thought we would like to walk down the streets of Cabramatta and make our own statement. We thought we would ask other people to join us and say, "You are not alone in this". There are 98 other members of Parliament. If criminals believe that, with impunity, they can get at a member of Parliament, other members of Parliament will stand up and speak.

We should have realised that the community would take things into its own hands. As a result of this murder a peace vigil will be held at the Cabramatta Community Centre between 2.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. this Saturday to celebrate the multicultural achievement of all Australians living together in peace and rejecting violence. I hope many members of Parliament will join the vigil for two reasons: to express our unity at this outrage; and to make it clear that we will stand up and show solidarity against violence. We will show support for a multicultural Australia and support for the communities of Cabramatta, Fairfield, Bankstown, Canterbury and all those areas where there are a large number of Australians of different racial and cultural origins. We will share with them the outrage and sorrow that we all feel.

Is my father less of an Australian because in 1925 he was an illegal immigrant of British origin? Is my daughter-in-law less of an Australian because she is a Chinese-Indonesian? I despair when I see editorials in various newspapers - one would think editors would know better - which talk about the deportation of Australians; Australians who feel Australian; Australians who are Australians; and Australians who are proud to be Australian. We are talking about Australians who have fled violence, who understand much more about violence than we do. I hope the matters referred to by John Newman on many occasions in his speeches in this House will rise out of the ashes and be a blow for a multicultural, anti-violent Australia. We will do our best to see that that is brought about.

Mr MOSS (Canterbury) [4.57]: I, like the honourable member for Londonderry, knew John Newman for over 20 years. In fact, I, together with the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Rockdale, worked with John Newman in the Labor Council building for a number of years. Although all four of us worked in different sections of that building, we got to know each other very well, as did everybody in that place. We were all members of the one family. John Newman was a highly respected member of that family. My association with John grew through his chairmanship for many years of the Australian Labor Party sport, tourism and recreation committee. For a good deal of time my role was to coordinate policy committees. I had a lot to do with John throughout that time. John, as chairman of that committee, always referred to it as his committee. He would say, "My committee is about to do this", or "My committee has done that". That used to annoy me quite a bit. On a couple of occasions I can remember saying to him, "Look, Newman, it is not your committee; it is an ALP committee". John was always quick to remind me that just about everything initiated by that committee had been initiated by him and, as he ran the committee, he was entitled to call it his committee.

I have to admit that, for a number of years, John Newman ran that committee successfully. One week the committee members would meet with a sports Minister or a senior adviser to the Minister, and they would argue the point with him. The next week the committee would be inspecting a site somewhere, looking at some new sporting venture. The week after, John and other committee members would be back around the committee table talking, perhaps, with members of the Australian Soccer Federation or

Page 2904

the greyhound board. John never stopped working for that committee. He was tireless. It must be realised that I am talking about almost 20 years ago. It has been for only a little over 20 years that

governments - State and Federal - have taken sport seriously. We owe much to John these days for sports funding and policies at both Federal and State level. He should be remembered for that.

John and I, together with the honourable member for Kiama, were elected to this Parliament on the same day. He was pleased to be elected as a member of Parliament but he was also disappointed because in the Canterbury and Cabramatta by-elections there had been a swing against Labor, and he took this personally. I explained to him that swings are usually recorded against governments in government-held seats at by-elections, but he was not convinced by that. I also reminded him that it was little wonder that the seat of Cabramatta had gone to preferences because there were six other candidates. But John still took the swing personally. Two years later, in the 1988 general election when the Labor Party in this State suffered a crushing defeat, there was a swing to Labor in Cabramatta, and John Newman was returned with an absolute majority. I mention that because a lot has been said in the press over the last week about John Newman's determination to succeed. I have just given an example of the man's tenacity, which was one of his great qualities.

I hope that, rather than grieve for John, his mother and Lucy will be able to console themselves with the fact that their presence in John's life gave him great joy. We know that of Lucy because we saw John and Lucy in here often together and we know it of John's mother because he spoke of her often, always very fondly. One night before the Parliament rose earlier this year I had a serious conversation with John. I will not go into the detail of it except to say that the thrust of John's remarks was that there is life after politics. On Monday, 5 September, when I received the sad news of what had happened earlier I was almost immediately reminded of John's remarks. I realised that there would be no life for John after politics. The tragic events in John Newman's life 14 years earlier suggest that John really did not have much of a life before politics either. Nonetheless, I am convinced that because of the sorrow that John Newman experienced in his life and because of his tragic and sudden death he will be rewarded in the afterlife. John Newman will always be remembered by me as a very good friend. He has left this world a better place in which to live because he was part of it.

Mr HARRISON (Kiama) [5.03]: I join with honourable members from both sides of the House in expressing extreme grief at the loss of a colleague and friend, the late John Newman. I endorse the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in thanking the Premier and the Government for agreeing to give John Newman a state funeral - a totally appropriate decision. It seems that public life and politics in this country may have entered a new era. We shudder when we see and hear on television that an 84-year-old man has been kicked to death for his wristwatch by two young hoods; but we must now be aware that perhaps from this point on even people who are elected to public life will not be safe. That is an indictment of our society. John Newman's murder went to the very basis of what society is about.

I express my sincere sympathy to John's mother, his brother and his fiancée. When I think about John Newman the immortal words spoken by Martin Luther come to mind: "Here I stand. I can do no other". Those words encapsulated his whole approach to his job as a member of Parliament, his approach to his electorate, his love for the electorate of Cabramatta, and the things that he believed in. John had many interests. From the speeches today I have learnt a lot about John that I did not know. I did not know that he was so heavily involved in sport, although I was well aware of his involvement with his favourite sport, karate.

After he was granted the fifth Dan of the black belt in karate he came into my office and said that he had been contacted by some members of the media who wanted to take a picture of him in the Domain opposite Parliament House. He asked me to pose while he pretended to hit me with a karate kick. I suppose the lessons I have learnt all through my life about tucking my shoulder around in front of my jaw were just too deeply seated: the pictures being taken were not coming out in the way the photographer wanted and they were not published. John said, "I would like you to hold your head higher". I said, "I am trying to but my reflexes will not let me". He said, "I will not kick you, you know". I said, "I certainly hope not".

With Kevin Moss I was elected to Parliament on the same day as John was elected. I felt a close friendship with him from that point on. John visited my electorate and was given the hospitality of my home. My wife and I liked him. We thought that he was a really fine fellow. On a number of occasions he invited us to visit the Cabramatta electorate. I regret that I never had the opportunity to do that. I still have very fond memories of him. He was an incredibly intense person. He had an ingrained hatred of organised crime. On occasions he spoke to me about the threats and intimidation he had had to put up with from time to time - such things as his car being paint bombed, death threats and intimidation of one sort or another. If he was in any way afraid, he certainly did not show it.

The saying that a brave man dies only once and a coward dies a thousand times is particularly applicable to him. John Newman deserved a better end than he received: gunned down by a cowardly low-life out of the darkness. On behalf of every law-abiding citizen of this State I demand that the murderous, cowardly human dregs responsible for taking his life be brought to justice. I demand that all law enforcement authorities in this State and in this country leave no stone unturned to bring the people responsible for his murder to justice.

Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, wrote, "The man who fights for his ideals is the man who is alive". Perhaps John Newman had too many ideals in a less than perfect world, but I express the wish that there were more people like him

Page 2905

in the world. The world needs more John Newmans. Politics and political organisations and parliaments all over the world need more people like John Newman. I join in a prayer with all honourable members who believe in the resurrection of the body, the life everlasting, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and God our Father that his eternal soul will find eternal peace.

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [5.10]: It is with heavy heart this afternoon that I join all the speakers on this condolence motion. I never wanted to make such a speech in the Parliament about any member of the House. John died in a tragic way. My wife Karen and I extend our sympathy to Lucy, John's mother Helen, his brother Peter and his entire family, who are in the Chamber. When I wrote my speech I spoke to the honourable member for Smithfield. He said, "Tell the House how you feel and how you felt about John". I felt that John was a very good man. He was an honest, dedicated, faithful and truthful man. Above all, he was a very loyal man. If one had John as a friend, one had a friend for life. On the other hand, if one got on his bad side, one knew it. Nevertheless, he was a loyal man to those he respected. I trusted him and he trusted me. That is how I felt about him.

I feel angry and frustrated about his death. Like the honourable member for South Coast I am bitter and revengeful about those who did this to John. I am very distressed about it, but, more important, I am sad for his family and for this wonderful nation, Australia. John was a hardworking member of Parliament for Cabramatta. He cared for his community until the day of infamy, 5 September, the Monday night that everything changed. My wife and I received the news in a similar way to several other members - by way of my pager, which rang continually until I eventually had to get up and find out what it was about. The message was, "Phone me urgently re John Newman". There were only two things it could have been: I cannot tell the House about the first one; the second was his death. Unfortunately, it was the second of the two.

John lives on in this Parliament; he lives on in his speeches and in the people who knew him and in the community who knew him. He journeyed through life touching upon every one of us. He touched our souls, our spirits and our minds, and we are all a little better today for having known him. And so is this nation: because when he died the nation learnt about John Paul Newman. His life was touched with tragedy, but one could not say he was a tragic man. He stood tall knowing what was right and having the courage of his convictions. When injustices were being perpetrated against those who could not defend themselves, he stood up for and spoke out for them. He understood the community in which he lived, its needs, its wants and its complexities.

His parents instilled in him the need to stop injustice and for right to be done to all people. This afternoon I have heard a lot of things said about John and his life. Many people do not know that for the first four years of his life when he came to this country he was in and out of migrant hostels. That wakened his desire to help people in hostels both in this country and in other countries. When he went overseas he would visit refugee hostels. Each man serves his generation and does his part to render the next generation more capable and more efficient. John achieved that, and his death is a testimony to it. As the honourable member for South Coast said, if we do not believe that John was a testimony to his generation and that he was there to make the next generation more efficient and more capable, the next generation will be a sadder one for this nation.

John fought against the odds to beat the unsavoury criminal element in his electorate. I believe he paid the price for it. Ultimately, I hope and pray that John's death will result in the criminal element being weeded out of the community and that good and honest people will be safe from thuggery and intimidation and able to go about their business in safety. The day will come when the fight has been won. When that day comes I am sure John will look down upon us and know that right has been done for the people of his community and all other communities. John had a great future before him with his fiancée, Lucy. His life took on a new meaning and he was happy, even to the extent of cracking jokes, as has been mentioned previously. I know from my conversation with him that before that he was a lonely man. I know what it is to be lonely. I sympathised with John. Lucy changed all that, and changed it for the better. I wish that change had continued.

During the funeral mass when the storm broke above the church and the rain came down my wife remarked to me, "It seems that the heavens are weeping for John". When I went into the church on that Friday it was dark, windy, wet and miserable. When the service was over the sun was shining and it was much lighter. I am told by a Serbian friend of John's that in their faith when it rains at a person's funeral the deceased is now resting at peace. Today we look at the empty place where John once sat and we know that John has been taken to a better place. But let this House be reminded of what John said on 30 March 1993:

I have placed myself at risk for the sake of the community. I do not mind having done so; I was elected to public office to serve my electorate. However, if I still had my family, I would have second thoughts about taking such a risk.

A good man has been taken from those who loved him. A caring man has been stolen from those who cared for him. An heroic man has been snatched from those who respected him. A dark day has fallen over Australia as a result of his assassination. Members of Parliament are now worrying about their families and about freedom of speech - I have heard it all said here this afternoon - and the courage to fight for their constituents. But a light will shine if we do not forget what John Newman stood for, believed in and fought for. Everything I have said today is what I feel and have felt about him. John, rest in peace, and well done.

Mr RUMBLE (Illawarra) [5.17]: I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members in offering my condolences to the family of John Newman. The first time I met

Page 2906
John was in 1986 when he enthusiastically told me about his plans once he entered this House. He was subsequently elected in a by-election on 1 February 1986. Ironically, the last time I spoke with John he was, once again, enthusiastically telling me about his forthcoming campaign for the 1995 State election. That is one example of John's dedication to public office.

As honourable members know he stood foremost for law and order in Cabramatta. He knew the crimes that were being committed in his electorate, and he spoke up publicly. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a prominent anti-Nazi during the second world war, once said that many people of his time were dumb witnesses to evil deeds. John Newman was the antithesis of a dumb witness to evil deeds: he spoke up for law and order at great personal cost. On law and order John Newman reflected our parliamentary

leaders, vehemently advocating that occupants should be able to reside in their homes without hoodlums and thieves of the night breaking in and terrorising them; citizens should be able to walk the street without being subjected to harassment and violence from antisocial individuals and gangs. From time to time honourable members hear a lot about civil liberties. John Newman stood for the basics of civil liberties. He wanted an atmosphere where ordinary citizens could go about their business free from the criminal element. I offer John's family my sincere sympathies.

Mr McBRIDE (The Entrance) [5.19]: I express my sincere condolences and those of my whole family to John's family, particularly his mother, Helen Naumenko; his brother, Peter; his fiancée, Lucy; his extended family, and the people of Cabramatta. I shared the shock and horror no doubt felt by everyone in the House upon hearing of John's death. I did not believe such a thing could ever happen, because the concept is foreign to Australia. It changed public life in Australia. No one deserves such a fate, and it should never have happened to a fearless campaigner for justice for all members of our society. I knew John personally from 1976, when I went to live at Cabramatta. I knew him as a fellow branch member, as a fellow alderman on Fairfield Council, as a political opponent and, more lately, as a colleague in State Parliament. During that time we had our ups and downs like members of any family, but all through those 18 years he held my respect as a determined, gutsy individual who knew no fear and who was totally committed as an elected representative of the Australian Labor Party. Sadly, I believe these strengths in John's character ultimately resulted in his tragic death.

I lived in Cabramatta for 10 years. My children went to local schools and my family and I attended the same church as John. The parish priest, Father McAuliffe, is still there. I continue my relationships with the area to this day and I regularly visit friends there and dine in the local restaurants. I always enjoy Cabramatta. There is something vital and exciting about the place. Its cultural diversity is its beauty. Living in harmony and good spirit in the street in Cabramatta where my family and I lived were 60 families from all areas of the globe. Among those 60 families were three ABAs - Australian born Australian families.

The people living in the street represented successive waves of new immigrants since World War II - from White Russians kicked out of Harbin in northern Manchuria in the 1950s to the South Americans of the 1970s, the Polish intellectuals of the 1980s and the Asian Australians of the 1980s and 1990s. At times there were ethnic-based clashes, but the harmony and the successful emergence of a flourishing multicultural society continued. However, John's death is a tragic mile post in Cabramatta's history that gives this Parliament and this Government the opportunity to re-establish that peace and social cohesion.

John's goal in Cabramatta for Asian Australians was to remove the yoke of criminal tyranny. He wanted Asian Australians to enjoy the free and peaceful environment he enjoyed as an immigrant to Australia. He wanted them to have the rights and freedoms that are the heart and soul of democratic Australia. I believe he died because he too actively pursued those goals on behalf of Asian Australians. Criminal activity in Cabramatta is now totally out of control and reaches into every aspect of the community. Tragically, the reports John made to this Parliament in seeking help are too true. In commerce, video shops are renting Hollywood blockbusters such as *Jurassic Park* within weeks of their release in the United States of America. In schools, our schoolchildren are the victims of bashings and intimidation. A young boy last week asked for a transfer because he had been marked for future assault for intervening in an assault on another student. He told the teacher, "Look what happened to John Newman". These are only symptoms of the bigger picture.

Cabramatta is home to the highest grade drugs in Australia. Last week a friend was offered a score while watching the filming of *Real Life* from Freedom Plaza. There is also the problem of extortion. Recently John told a colleague that 70 per cent to 80 per cent of shops in Cabramatta were making extortion payments from \$300 to \$1,000 a week. Restaurants typically pay something like \$700 a week. Extortion is no longer in-house. European Australians are being targeted. Extortion has reached out to the shopping districts of Canley Vale and Canley Heights. Illegal gambling goes unchecked and will not be checked. If this level of crime and criminality existed in Goulburn, Turrumurra or Gordon, there would

have been a royal commission by now.

Local police do not have the resources to deal with the situation. It is not their fault, but they do not have the expertise, the training or the know-how to deal with this type of crime and these criminals. John raised many of these issues in this House. On 15 March he detailed gang violence. He raised the issue of home invasions and talked about the need for ethnic police, for a special task force and the need to face this issue boldly. John's death represents the chilling fact that Asian crime is no longer in-house.

Page 2907

It is a cancer that threatens to spread throughout the whole community. John started the campaign to give true freedom to Asian Australians. It is now up to this Parliament to ensure that the criminal tyranny of our fellow citizens is lifted and that John's death was not in vain but that it marks the beginning of the end of the reign of criminal tyranny of Asian Australians. For me, John's spirit ever lives.

Mr SCULLY (Smithfield) [5.25]: This has not sunk in for me. I still cannot believe it has happened. I expect at any moment for our colleague John Newman to just walk through the door or to be on the other end of the line when I telephone. The finality of his absence and the manner of its occurrence are hard to accept and I find them extremely distressing. The circumstances of his death leave a vacancy in this House felt bitterly, I believe, by all honourable members. To his mother, Mrs Naumenko, to his fiancée, Lucy, and to his brother, Peter: we cannot begin to imagine the suffering you have endured and will always endure. I am sure all of us have had you in our thoughts for the past eight days and I assure you that you will always be in my thoughts for having to endure a tragedy of such appalling intensity.

I do not propose to canonise John Newman as, like us all, he was not perfect. His life and work have, however, earned him a fitting tribute from his colleagues. Today we give such tribute and we express our personal and collective grief at his passing. I cannot say that John Newman and I were friends; we were not. We were not close and we were not confidants. But I believe I knew John Newman well. I admired his work and respected him and his achievements. We were political neighbours. I first came into contact with John Newman in the early 1980s when he was placing the final survey pegs on the political landscape of Cabramatta whilst I was placing the first pegs of my own into Smithfield. We occasionally looked across the border at one another as two soldiers from opposing armies might glance at one another across a frontier river, suspicious of what the other was up to but at the same time hoping the other would not cross over.

What began as mutual distrust and suspicion grew gradually over more than 10 years to become a very effective professional rapport that, I believe, was to the mutual benefit of our electorates. We often spoke on factional and party matters and, of course, on local electoral issues that overlapped our boundaries. More often than not, our discussions concerned police resources. John Newman was hyperactive. He just could not stay still while there was an opportunity to fight for his electorate. I am sure that he will be remembered as the member of Parliament who as a representative of his electorate had no equal. That is the ultimate accolade for any member of this Assembly.

Not a week would go by when there were not three or four stories in the two local newspapers covering issues he was fighting on behalf of his constituents. In fact, it was often hard for a member from an adjoining electorate to get a look-in. The *Advance* newspaper issued on the morning of Tuesday, 6 September, just after his death, was no different. It contained three articles - one on health, one on electricity charges and, with the saddest irony, one on the murder rate in the Fairfield area and the need for more police resources.

Diplomacy was not a word in the John Newman vocabulary. If a Minister's nose was out of joint following a classic John Newman approach, John could not care less so long as his constituents got what they needed. He never tired in his campaign for better police resources and more effective laws against crime. He worried as he witnessed the decline and fall of Cabramatta, as it became the drug capital of Sydney, the haunt of criminal gangs and the repository of some who would not think twice about invading a home, binding and gagging its occupants and then robbing them. The victims of these gang-induced

home invasions could not and did not speak out. Cowering and shivering, they sought refuge in John Newman and he took up their cause. John did not just write a letter or two and he did not just give words of support and a warm handshake. At great risk to himself, he went loud, he went public - again and again. It is to these people that John Newman is a hero.

Recently John was described in a newspaper article as a Wyatt Earp figure. The only unfortunate thing about that description is that John Newman did not live to hear it, because I think he would have loved it. Unlike Wyatt Earp, who had support at the OK Corral, John Newman did not have support. He was substantially alone, out on a limb and fighting a fight that should have been primarily a corporate battle, not a lone crusade. John received threats. His car was paint bombed three times and a bullet was fired through his office window. I was aware of this. He talked about it with some concern. A lesser man would have taken steps back, but not John Newman. He was a soldier in modern Australian politics.

Nearly 60 years ago two other soldiers of a different kind who were also members of this Parliament gave up their lives in the service of this country on the Dardanelles during World War I. They were members of the Australian Imperial Force, soldiers in a war a long time ago. The passing of Lieutenant-Colonel George Frederick Braund, member for Armidale, and Sergeant Edward Rennix Larkin, member for Willoughby, left their colleagues shocked and distressed, the Assembly subdued. Today we empathise with the grief that was felt all those years ago. Those two heroes whose lives were cut short by the bullets of battle were rightly honoured by their colleagues with a plaque in this Chamber that bears their names. At the foot of that plaque are the following words:

In time of Peace
They worthily asserted the rights of citizenship.
In time of war fearlessly protected them.

Those words fittingly apply to John Newman. Let us not forget that there is peace in Cabramatta. But there is also war. John Newman had to face both at the same time, as the elected member of Parliament. It is important that the work of John Newman not be forgotten, not only by the general community but especially by those actively interested in citizenship

Page 2908

and government. If I had to nominate three issues that mattered most to John Newman, I would say they were: crime prevention, road safety and karate amongst young Australians. I believe that a vehicle should be found by which the Legislature, on a bipartisan basis, could honour John Newman and continue in some small way the three main facets of his professional life. Any number of vehicles would be appropriate by which to remember his name and his work and to provide us with a great legacy.

The Labor movement in this State has lost two of its sons just a few months apart. Andrew Ziolkowski passed away in circumstances that were tragic, unfair and too soon, but in some way circumstances that in time each of us could come to terms with in his or her own way. What has happened to John Newman is altogether different: horrifying, an outrage - words almost escape me to describe the shattering way in which his life was struck down. We do not know who were the assassins or the reason for their crime. What is politically unsettling for all of us is the possibility that this vile act may have been related to John Newman's work as a member of Parliament.

Yes, I do feel less safe in doing my duty as a member of Parliament. However, the motivations for the crime and the source of its culprits are not, in my view, pivotal to interpreting the implications that flow from this murder for all of us. Whether or not John Newman was murdered by local organised crime figures does not alter the fact that he was killed without any regard whatsoever for the position he held as a member of Parliament. This was an attack on our democratic society, as we thought we knew it on Monday, 5 September. The death of John Newman is more than the death of a political colleague: it is also the loss of a part of our political innocence. It is the end for all of us of that great feeling in Australia that no matter what one's political views, one would never come to harm from expressing them or in living

them out. That is what died with John Newman and that, with his murder, is the great tragedy for public life in this State.

The last time I spoke to John Newman was by telephone just three days before his death. We spoke for about half an hour on a number of matters, including his campaign for police resources in Cabramatta. I will always remember his elated comments about the Parramatta by-election, what a Labor government would mean for all of us next March, and the possibility that it would present an opportunity for him to express his talent. He said he was considering putting his name forward for a junior ministry, but if caucus was not ready for that, he wanted to be Chairman of the Staysafe committee.

John Newman did not have an easy life. He was met by much tragedy to which a number of my colleagues have alluded. Lucy, as members from

both sides of the House witnessed, brought great joy to his life and a sparkle to his eye that, for all the almost 11 years I had known him, had been absent. She brought him happiness. I found him often a serious person, but not without humour and with a softness that was often not recognised. A few months ago I unwittingly put a bit of a spanner in the works of a Cabramatta function; that was not intended and was subsequently rectified. I telephoned John. I was a bit concerned, because John had a way with words when he was a bit cross with you. I said, "John, how do I make amends?" He said, "Don't worry. It will only cost you two long walks around Mrs Macquarie's Chair with me when Parliament sits". We got one walk down last session, but the second will not occur.

No matter the reason for John's murder, the question remains: what is to be done about the problem in Cabramatta? There is much to be done to fulfil John Newman's ambition that the people of Cabramatta live peaceably and in harmony without having a crime rate that is higher than that in the rest of the community. If that can be done, he will not have died in vain. Cabramatta gangs, their home robberies and drug trade must be eliminated, even if it takes special aggressive legislation specifically directed to that area. If members complain from time to time of unwanted attacks or criticism, the following phrase is often used, as it has been used to me and I am sure to many of my colleagues: if you stick your head up above the crowd you get shot at. John Newman stuck his head up well above the crowd. He demanded to be heard and sometimes his message upset people.

It is impossible not to make enemies if wrong is to be righted, if a just cause is to be pursued and the weak are to be defended against the strong. These are the things John Newman pursued every day for the 8½ years he was the member for Cabramatta. I believe that a poem published by Charles Mackay last century aptly sums up my feelings about what John Newman would have thought about anyone who dared to suggest to him there was another way of doing things. It is entitled "No Enemies":

He has no enemy, you say;
Alas! my friend, the boast is poor,
He who has mingled in the fray
Of duty that the brave endure
Must have made foes. If he has none
Small is the work that he has done.
He has hit no traitor on the hip;
Has cast no cup from perjured lip;
Has never turned the wrong to right;
Has been a coward in the fight.

John Newman, I salute you!

Members and officers of the House standing in their places,

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 5.38 p.m.
