

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 21 September 1994

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the United Kingdom led by the Rt Hon. Sir Peter Emery MP.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Order of Business

Mr Whelan: The business paper shows that the Government intends that this House deal with the Appropriation Bill and cognate bills. The program issued to members at the commencement of this week, following a phone call from the office of the Leader of the Government, indicated that the House would be dealing with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (Commissioner) Bill. Could the Leader of the Government advise what is the program for today?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Ashfield will be well aware of Standing Order 125, which states:

The right is reserved to Ministers to arrange Government Business, whether Orders of the Day or Notices of Motions, in such order as they may think fit.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

LEGAL AID MEANS TEST

Mr CARR: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Is the Legal Aid Commission's means test based on the Henderson poverty line? Are persons with disposable incomes of more than \$190 per week ineligible for legal aid? Why is the honourable member for Georges River receiving legal aid in matters concerning his personal, not political, behaviour?

Mr FAHEY: The rules of the Legal Aid Commission are well published and are very clear to most who take the trouble to find out what they say about eligibility. The commission also is a body which is representative of the Commonwealth as well as the State. From memory, only two people are nominated by New South Wales to that particular commission. It determines the eligibility of the rules.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I call the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing to order.

Mr FAHEY: An appropriation has been included in the budget for that particular matter and from time to time is the subject of review by the commission.

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

Mr FAHEY: I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the rules that the commission publishes, if he wishes to get details. I have been provided with advice on the matter that the Leader of the Opposition raises in respect of the honourable member for Georges River. While the Niland inquiry was established as a non-adversarial inquiry, legal assistance was granted to members of the former Minister's staff to ensure their interests and rights were properly protected. Ms Niland also proposed that Mr Griffiths be provided with legal assistance to allow him to fully respond to issues of concern to the inquiry.

HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR ST MARYS

Mr COCHRAN: Is the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services aware of claims made by the Leader of the Opposition regarding serious allegations implying fraud and misrepresentation by the honourable member for St Marys? As the honourable member appears to have misrepresented his role as a public official, has the Minister referred the matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption?

Mr WEST: I assure honourable members that I was certainly shocked to hear the claims by the Leader of the Opposition about the honourable member for St Marys. Of course, one would have to say that the Australian Labor Party plays some very interesting games, and politics. First the honourable member for Liverpool; now the honourable member for St Marys; and, of course, other members on the ALP backbenches must be wondering who is next.

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

Mr WEST: The press conference this morning held by the Leader of the Opposition - the first in something like 10 days or so - followed the publishing of an article in today's *Australian*.

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

Mr WEST: There is obviously a campaign to soften up the honourable member for St Marys, because there has been a concerted effort by the ALP to get him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation from the Opposition benches.

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Mr WEST: Some months ago allegations were made that the honourable member for St Marys set out to defraud the Henry Lawson Club Limited. I report to the House that that incident was fully investigated and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has informed police that there is no case to answer. In fact, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions told the Fraud Enforcement Agency:

Careful consideration has been given to the material provided by Det Sgt E. Grimmond of your agency.

It is advised that on the material furnished there is insufficient evidence to warrant the institution of criminal proceedings against Mr A Aquilina and other members of the board of the Henry Lawson Club Limited.

Today the Leader of the Opposition has again set out to target one of his colleagues, the honourable member for St Marys. What the Leader of the Opposition alleged at his press conference is so serious that I have no option but to refer this matter to the Commissioner of Police.

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

Mr WEST: I have asked the commissioner to advise me if there is already a police investigation into this matter and, if not, could the Police Service make its own investigations into the allegations made by the Leader of the Opposition. The allegation that a member of Parliament took money from a migrant and then failed to pass it on to the Department of Immigration is a serious matter. Depending on the advice I receive from the Commissioner of Police, I will then decide whether the matter should be referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR GEORGES RIVER SEXUAL ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS

Mr WHELAN: My question without notice is directed to the Premier, and Minister for Economic Development. Has the Minister for Police told the Premier that several sexual assault charges are to be brought against the member for Georges River arising out of his conduct while a Minister? What are those charges? When will they be laid?

Mr FAHEY: It fascinates me when members of the Opposition continually ask me questions that are relevant to the portfolios of other Ministers. It does not concern me greatly -

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

Mr FAHEY: I can answer the question very simply.

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

Mr FAHEY: The very simple answer is that the Minister for Police has not given me any indication of the matters referred to by the honourable member for Ashfield. I should say also -

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

Mr FAHEY: - that all honourable members are aware that this matter is the subject of an inquiry. One purpose of that inquiry is to separate fact from fiction and to ensure that we have an environment that respects the rights of the individuals concerned. Bearing that in mind, it would be quite wrong for me to comment further.

CASINO CONTROL AUTHORITY LICENSING INQUIRY

Mr RICHARDSON: My question without notice is addressed to the Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services. Has the Leader of the Opposition continually refused to respond to the Minister's requests that he explain where so-called publicly available Louisiana police documents came from? Does this underline that Labour's game plan is nothing more than political interference in the casino project?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask members on the Government benches to refrain from interjecting in the manner that has just occurred. I ask Opposition members to reduce the level of interjection. If question time is to proceed in an orderly fashion, it must do so within the rules of debate, which accord the right to be heard only to the member who has the call. In this instance that is the Chief Secretary. I call the honourable member for Drummoyne to order. I call the honourable member for Londonderry to order.

Mrs COHEN: I thank the honourable member for The Hills for his question, and particularly -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If members have any regard for the decorum of Parliament, they will take seriously the advice I have just given them. Members who offend against the rules of the House by interjecting immediately after I have given them such advice - an offence which has become more common in recent times - will be placed immediately on three calls to order.

Mrs COHEN: It is now six days since I challenged the Leader of the Opposition to explain from which publicly available sources his staff obtained a confidential Louisiana police report - six days! This is the man who wants to present himself as the leader of an alternative government. I ask the Leader of the Opposition: does he think it is acceptable that the person holding the office of Leader of the Opposition should be a premeditated liar? This is the same man who said on John Laws' 2UE program on 17 August that the information was easily available.

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

Mrs COHEN: If it was all so easy, why is the explanation so difficult? I would not like honourable members to assume that that is the only lie the Leader of the Opposition has told on casino issues. There has in fact been a litany of lies.

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

Mrs COHEN: Only yesterday in this House the Leader of the Opposition interjected with another lie. The interjection was that Murray Tobias gave him the police report. That is another outrageous lie. These days he lies so easily that he is having trouble telling the truth.

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

Mrs COHEN: What is so important and significant about the lie regarding the publicly available sources is the way in which it was used to try to deliberately undermine the Casino Control Authority.

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

Mrs COHEN: Let us remember that even though the assertions of the Leader of the Opposition are now documented and provably wrong, there was a time when they were calculated to cause a great deal of damage. In essence the Leader of the Opposition claimed he had significant publicly available material on casino probity matters, which he implied the Casino Control Authority did not have. We now know that both these claims are lies. However, on 10 August they came on top of what Bryan Frith in the *Australian* described as, "an extraordinary and destabilising spate of adverse rumours - so much so that it almost has the appearance of a campaign". What was the effect of that?

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

Mrs COHEN: Let me quote to the House a *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial of 12 August. It states:

But Mr Carr's insistence that he has material which casts doubt on the probity of the preferred applicant for the casino, and -

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

Mrs COHEN: The article continues:

his continued refusal to make that material available to the Casino Control Authority, is unquestionably an attempt to politically interfere with the awarding of the casino licence. We can only guess at the motives for Mr Carr's reckless behaviour . . . The more Mr Carr can muddy the waters, the more he can help to confuse voters and give the impression that something is rotten somewhere.

That editorial is right to the point, but here the lies of the Leader of the Opposition are really rotten. In fact, the odour is overwhelming. Let us remember that the Opposition's agenda to get rid of the independent Casino Control Authority is only one arm of its strategy. It seems that an independent watchdog would just get in the way of the Opposition's plans. Let me remind the House that Labor's agenda, if it were to win the next election, is to still have a casino.

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

Mrs COHEN: It would be run by the Labor Party, which would be a damn sight worse. Labor would still have the casino in Sydney - somewhat closer, I suspect, to Sussex Street - and it would sell the casino licence on its conditions and run the casino according to its whims.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time. I call the honourable member for Waratah to order for the second time.

Mrs COHEN: When a \$1 billion project is at stake it is simply not good enough for the Leader of the Opposition to lie, refuse to explain himself, but expect everyone to forget all about it.

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

Mrs COHEN: I am certainly not going to forget about it and I now invite the Leader of the Opposition to make a personal explanation to this House at the end of question time. I urge him to detail his public sources and explain why he should not be considered a liar.

HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR GEORGES RIVER SEXUAL ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS

Mr NAGLE: I direct my question to the Premier, and Minister for Economic Development. Does the Premier stand by his statement that the first time he became aware of the conduct of the honourable member for Georges River was on 24 June, when the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* raised the matter with his office?

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

Mr FAHEY: I have indicated on a number of occasions, and it is a matter of public record, the knowledge that I had of this particular matter, but I would urge all honourable members to take note of what I have also said publicly - and which I have discussed with a number of honourable members who

are not on the Government benches: that the results of the inquiry that is being conducted will be made public and will be tabled in this House. There will be ample opportunity at that time for honourable members to see the nature of my role, because I have been interviewed in a very formal way by the commissioner, and what I have said will no doubt be documented. I certainly stand by what I said.

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BALANCED BUDGETS

Mr TINK: My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for the Arts. Is the Treasurer aware of statements made by the Leader of the Opposition that he would balance the State's budget by the financial year 1995-96? How does this compare with the Government's commitment on a balanced budget?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Industrial Relations and Employment to order.

Mr COLLINS: The Leader of the Opposition made it clear yesterday, when he said that he would allow balanced budget legislation to pass through Parliament, that he intends to make financial management an issue in the next election. Let me say to the people of New South Wales that the Government will stake its financial record against that of Labor's any day. The Government is about financial accountability; Labor is about waffle.

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

Mr COLLINS: The Leader of the Opposition talks about balancing the budget, but that is just talk. He says he can do it in 1995-96, but when he gave his vacuous response to the budget yesterday, he did not give one costing. His budget response was utterly devoid of commitment or detail. He did not identify a single item of spending that would enable Labor to wipe out the deficit. He put no figures on payroll tax cuts. He did not say where the money will come from. There is not one detail as to where the Leader of the Opposition will find anything like the \$266 million needed to balance the budget. But he will need to find considerably more than that. Bearing in mind the lead time required for new initiatives, he would need to target annual savings of close to \$500 million to balance the budget next financial year - if, of course, that ever became his responsibility. On top of that, he has made additional funding commitments, such as a publicly funded eastern distributor and the scrapping of tolls on the M4 and M5.

And, do not forget the Leader of the Opposition's airy promises of tax cuts for business. He freely admits he has no idea how much they will cost. That is just scraping the surface, but on those matters alone we are looking at spending cuts in excess of \$1 billion which the Leader of the Opposition would have to target if, indeed, the budget were ever his to balance. He repeats his mantra about savings on consultants and about waste and mismanagement, as if by repeating that often enough it will come true. But there are no figures or details on those matters either.

At the same time the Leader of the Opposition has the gall to point the finger at this side of the Chamber and say that the Government would contemplate a goods and services tax. What a laughable attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to disguise his own economic shortcomings. As he well knows, section 90 of the Australian Constitution Act prohibits any State from introducing a goods and services tax. The Leader of the Opposition knows that, but Labor of course is out to peddle the big Labor lie. We on this side of the Chamber do not need to find more than \$1 billion in additional revenue.

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

Mr COLLINS: Bob Carr does. He is the man who will need the new taxes, not us. Bob Carr is the Christopher Skase of budgeting: his balanced budget is nothing more than a mirage. When this Opposition leader talks about Keynesian economics he is not talking about John Maynard Keynes; he is

talking about the man responsible for the hole out of which Victoria is still crawling, namely John Cain. Think about it, and because we know you will need a while, we will give you an extension of time. That is why he is running scared on balanced budget legislation: he does not want to be tied down, he does not want to be accountable, he does not want to be deprived of Labor's reckless spending ways. Remember, it was Labor that used to fiddle the budget by counting borrowings as revenue. It was Labor that left this State with unfunded liabilities, which this Government has brought under control. It was Labor that decided that it did not need to set aside funds for future superannuation payments - leaving the State with a liability that, without our efforts, would have ballooned to more than \$35 billion in the next 10 years.

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

Mr COLLINS: Remember, it was Labor that allowed Government departments and government trading enterprises to wallow in waste and mismanagement, to set new low standards in waste and mismanagement. We are the ones who turned that around. That is the great hypocrisy of Carr. Two years ago he was urging the Government to double the deficit; now he is telling us he could balance the budget next year. The balanced budget legislation we will introduce will provide a firm parliamentary endorsement and ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility. Under it, no future government of any political persuasion will be able to rack up huge debts to be paid off indefinitely by future generations.

HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR GEORGES RIVER SEXUAL ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS

Mr THOMPSON: In view of the Premier's answer to the honourable member for Auburn, will he guarantee that the Niland report and transcripts, with deletions to protect the identity of victims, will be tabled this session?

Mr FAHEY: I have already answered that question. I think it is fairly clear to all honourable members, other than those who want to play silly little games, like the honourable member for Rockdale, that

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that report will be made public and will be tendered in this House. The indications are that I will have that report and do just that in the next few weeks.

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE

Mr W. T. J. MURRAY: Is the Minister for Land and Water Conservation aware of the large blue-green algae outbreak on the Namoi River near Narrabri? If so, can he advise the House what action is being taken to address this serious threat to the State's rivers?

Mr SOURIS: Given the current weather conditions in New South Wales, there is no doubt that our rivers, particularly those in the north-west and west of the State, are again facing a major threat from blue-green algae. In the past week a potentially toxic blue-green algal bloom was detected along a 50-kilometre stretch of the Namoi River between Myall Vale and the Gunidgera Weir near Narrabri. The Department of Water Resources has warned farmers to keep their stock clear of areas where the algae is obvious and has a strong odour. The department is currently waiting for results on water quality tests from that section of the Namoi. I am pleased, however, to report that the recent windy weather has dispersed some of that bloom.

It is a well-known fact that the rivers on the Barwon-Darling system are barely flowing at best, and it is clear that blue-green algae will be back to its worst levels by midsummer unless a dramatic change in weather conditions occurs. This will be a summer of drought, possibly bushfires, and blue-green algal blooms. Contingency plans are in operation to deal with blue-green algal blooms. With 83 per cent of the

State drought declared, most of the rivers are at low flows and some, like the Darling, have stopped flowing in places. Long periods of zero flow are not unusual for the Darling. During the first half of this century it stopped flowing on many occasions. These calm water conditions and the warm, mild winter we have experienced facilitate ideal conditions for the triggering and growth of blue-green algal blooms, which we expect to see increase in a number of rivers and storages during the coming year unless conditions change.

New South Wales is well prepared to deal with blooms in accordance with the State algal management strategy. Regional algal committees are ensuring that our waterways are regularly monitored and that water samples are quickly analysed, with quick communication to communities and land-holders directly affected by the blooms. Local response plans have been developed in many areas to source safe, alternative domestic water supplies, such as treating water to remove the algal toxins, using bore water, or carting water. Because of the drought, flushing our rivers to disperse algal blooms is not an option, particularly in the north-west of the State where storages are very low. The Government has a multimillion dollar blue-green algae strategy in place, and it is opportune to remind land-holders of the subsidy available for them to sink bores on their properties to provide a safe, alternative source of water.

Up to 160 bores are expected to be sunk between Mungindi and Wentworth this year. Ground water is a safe, alternative source of stock and household water for land-holders where the water supply is affected by blue-green algae. To provide an incentive for land-holders to obtain water free of algae, the State Government will pay half the cost of putting down an approved bore. Costs in general range from \$10,000 for shallow bores to \$50,000 for an artesian bore. In addition, the Government is continuing to cooperate with catchment management committees, local government and communities on measures to improve river flows and to reduce the level of nutrients entering waterways - measures that should result in a reduced incidence of blooms in future years.

I take the opportunity to remind the community at large that individuals can undertake a number of measures to reduce nutrients getting into our waterways. For example, buying washing powders with the P or NP insignia, which indicate a low or zero level of phosphorous in the product; and land-holders can use more judicious land management techniques; and the ever-increasing participation by communities in nutrient sensitive regions of New South Wales in phosphorous reduction campaigns. This will be, undoubtedly, a summer of blue-green algal blooms. It is very timely for us to consider ways in which this problem can be alleviated and, again, to encourage land-holders to consider alternative ways of providing water.

LEGAL AID FOR MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS

Dr REFSHAUGE: My question is directed to the Premier. Is it still Government policy that legal aid is only available to Ministers and public officials when "their involvement in the hearing . . . arises out of their official functions"? Since when is sexual misconduct defined as an official function?

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

Mr FAHEY: Are you finished?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did the Premier hear the question?

Mr FAHEY: Yes, Mr Speaker, I did hear it, but one can never be sure when the honourable member is finished.

Dr Refshaug: Mr Speaker, to clarify -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Premier said that he heard the question.

Mr FAHEY: It is interesting to hear comments about legal aid coming from the Opposition. Legal aid is dealt with by the Legal Aid Commission. Sometimes ex gratia payments for costs are made. We all know that about \$52,000 was paid to the Leader of the Opposition and his staff by way of ex gratia payment for costs when the Leader of the Opposition made a wild and futile accusation about
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activities at Walsh Bay involving the former Deputy Premier. In that case \$52,000 of taxpayers' money was paid out because of the wanton disregard for public moneys by the man who calls himself the Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr FAHEY: The project was derailed as a result of their wild accusation, which is typical of the wild accusations that come from the Leader of the Opposition and generally from the Opposition. The most recent was the endeavour to destroy the Casino Control Authority. The real impact was the damage done to investment in this country, particularly New South Wales. There were reports from some of the leading finance people in the world asking, "What in God's name is going on in New South Wales? What is wrong with the Opposition there? Does it not want investment?"

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

Mr FAHEY: Every time somebody is considering investing in a project in this State we can rest assured -

Dr Refshauge: On a point of order: the question very clearly asked, "Since when is sexual misconduct defined as an official function?" The Minister's answer has nothing to do with that question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sure the Premier is about to come to the crux of the question.

Mr FAHEY: The Opposition is about destroying the credibility and structures of New South Wales. It is attempting to destabilise the institutions of this State. The O'Keefe effort in recent days shows that the Opposition is also about destroying individuals who have integrity. Let me give one other example of Labor's beliefs on legal assistance. Back in about 1985 the coalition Opposition raised in this House the fact that a former corrective services Minister was given legal support in respect of the charges that were laid against him.

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

Mr FAHEY: Those charges had nothing to do with his responsibility in giving early release to prisoners. Of course, he ended up spending time in gaol as a result. If the matter had not been raised in this House assistance would not have been given. There are questions of natural justice. The House will have ample opportunity to debate the matter when there is fact to deal with, when the report is presented.

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

Mr FAHEY: The campaign we have seen coming from the Opposition today is typical of its approach. It is not interested in the real issues affecting the people of New South Wales; it is interested only in throwing mud and getting down in the gutter. There will be natural justice and, in due course, there will be ample opportunity to deal with these matters.

FLY BUYS PROMOTIONS

Mr SMITH: My question is addressed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport. Has the Department of Consumer Affairs assessed the recently launched Fly Buys scheme? Is the Minister concerned with any aspect of the Fly Buys promotion?

Ms MACHIN: I thank the honourable member for Bega for his continued interest in matters dear to the hearts of consumers throughout the State. Honourable members have probably seen on television the colourful advertisements of somebody pushing a shopping trolley down a ski slope - very creative skiing - promoting the new Fly Buys package. The Fly Buys concept allows consumers to accumulate points while purchasing everyday items such as groceries, petrol or takeaway food from participating retailers. Points are allocated on the basis of amounts paid for specified goods or services purchased from participating traders. When consumers have accumulated a certain number of points they can be redeemed for free air travel. It struck me that this would be a really good deal for the honourable member for Liverpool, who is back in the Chamber. I am surprised that he was game to leave his seat vacant for even a few minutes.

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

Ms MACHIN: He will obviously have a fair bit of time to go travelling. Maybe he and his friend from St Marys will be able to take a little holiday by racking up Fly Buys points.

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

Ms MACHIN: The honourable member for Liverpool will be more relaxed after a holiday.

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

Ms MACHIN: Fly Buys points can be achieved by shopping at 12 major retailers with their combined 4,500 stores across the country. Unfortunately the Henry Lawson Club does not qualify yet but perhaps the honourable member for St Marys could get the club into the scheme as well. Shoppers need to spend between \$10 and \$25 to gain one Fly Buys point.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection.

Ms MACHIN: This means spending about \$17,000 before earning the required 850 points for a free return Melbourne-Sydney flight - hardly great
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value. The Department of Consumer Affairs has closely examined the detail surrounding the product and its promotion. The company behind the promotion, Loyalty Pacific Proprietary Limited, did approach the department before the Fly Buys scheme was launched, detailing its proposal.

After careful consideration of all aspects of Fly Buys, the Department of Consumer Affairs stated that the product does not contravene any New South Wales legislation. The basis of the Fly Buys scheme is essentially customer loyalty. Customers should be careful, however, that their loyalty is not misplaced and that they are getting sufficient return on their money. Consumer groups have expressed concern that loyalty programs can cost the customer quite a lot in the end. It is up to the individual to ascertain whether the scheme is good value for money. People should weigh up carefully the pros and cons of schemes such as this. Consumers may save considerably more than the cost of an air fare by shopping around for the best prices with different retailers.

On the positive side, if a family joins the scheme it can be given up to four cards for individuals to

use. Therefore, if all members of the household are financially independent they can pool their buying power, increasing the number of points that they can accumulate. The promoters of the scheme hope to have a million people join the Fly Buys program by the end of the year. Since the program began, three weeks ago, about 500,000 consumers have joined the scheme. Clearly it has hit the mark of consumers. I emphasise, though, that it is something that consumers will have to make up their own minds about, weighing up the advantages to them before giving blind loyalty to certain retailers.

Mr Gibson: You would criticise green stamps in the Depression.

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

Ms MACHIN: The time frame may well suit Opposition members, because they will certainly have plenty of time to shop around and take holidays after 25 March 1995.

STATE BANK LOSSES

Mr AMERY: My question is addressed to the Premier, and Minister for Economic Development. Has the Bankers Trust report confirmed that under your Government, between June 1989 and March 1993, the State Bank lost at least \$1.1 billion, not including lost interest and fees on non-performing loans? What steps did your Government take to protect the taxpayers of this State from such massive financial losses?

Mr FAHEY: I am surprised that any Labor Party Opposition members would have the hide to talk about the State Bank of New South Wales when their counterparts in Victoria and South Australia and their administration of the State banks in those States shows clearly that the Labor Party has absolutely no idea of what banking or proper administration is about. I shall give the House one example. The State Bank of South Australia had \$3 billion losses written off. Dubious loans, at risk loans and loans unlikely to be recovered are estimated at \$10 billion. The poor people of South Australia, as a result of a dose of Labor Party culture, now find themselves faced with the prospect of trying to pay off, with their very small economic base, \$13 billion worth of debt incurred by the Labor Party administration in South Australia.

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

Mr FAHEY: I assure the House -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much interjection coming from both sides of the House.

Mr FAHEY: I assure the House that the Government of New South Wales has taken a particularly rigid approach to the management of the State Bank of New South Wales, both in my time as Premier and in the time of my predecessor. The books of the State Bank have been quite transparent. Anyone who might think about asking the same sort of question as that put forward by the honourable member for Mount Druitt would probably go to the reports released each year to find out about provision for loans that fell away in the period of recession, contributed to significantly by Labor Party Opposition members' counterparts in Canberra. That is a matter of record. The matter of the State Bank will come before the House again and will be the subject of debate when the Government makes its decision.

The Government has met to examine the details of the proposal in respect of the possible sale of the State Bank. Those details have not yet been finalised. When they are finalised the Government will announce its intentions for the future of the State Bank. This is a major decision that must be given most detailed scrutiny in the interests of all the people of New South Wales. I am somewhat fascinated that financial questions should come from Opposition members. It is obvious that Opposition members decided that as they would get the opportunity to ask five questions they would go into the murky world

today because the Leader of the Opposition is in big trouble. Honourable members know why the Leader of the Opposition is in trouble. He has now knifed a second Opposition member in the back. The honourable member for St Marys has been knifed in the back -

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

Mr FAHEY: - just as nastily as the honourable member for Liverpool was knifed in the back.

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

Mr FAHEY: There is an enormous amount of unrest on Opposition benches today. Opposition members are squirming. The reason they are squirming is that they know their leader has ratted on another of their mates. It will not take too long - I suspect that before this night is out -

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

Mr FAHEY: It will not take too long before the unrest and the attitude that has been evident on the Opposition benches -

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

Mr FAHEY: - surfaces in a way that will result in those knives being turned on the Leader of the Opposition. Is it any wonder that he has left the Chamber? He is probably going out to make known that he has another beautiful little Labor Party candidate for the seat of Cabramatta. While we are having question time that seeks to destroy by innuendo and by inference the character of the honourable member for Georges River, it is probably worth spending just a little time on the Australian Labor Party candidate for the seat of Cabramatta, the lady who is going to be thrust forward from the lower north shore of Sydney. It is all documented in the Labor Party publication I have here, *Abuse of Power*. Reba Meagher has done it all in the name of the Australian Labor Party. She has helped to stack the branches, rort the meetings and cook the books. That is stated in a Labor Party publication. The allegations have been made in this document, which was produced by the ALP.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We now have an extensive list of honourable members who have been called to order between one and three times. I now deem all honourable members who have been called to order to be on three calls to order now, and if any of them draw my attention between now and the end of question time they will leave the Chamber.

Mr FAHEY: The allegations were that Meagher had inserted her name and signature in the branch register and attendance books for meetings that she had not attended in order to meet the requirement for the branch's annual general meeting and that Ms Meagher and another Labor hopeful, somebody called Joe Tripodi, had acted in a disruptive manner. I think the honourable member for Fairfield knows all about one Joe Tripodi; that is Ms Meagher's fiance, the same Joe Tripodi who has been endorsed as the Labor candidate for Fairfield. The Labor Party has ratted also on Mr Irwin. The document goes on to give great detail about what happened when the Labor Party was looking for numbers to try to shore up its position in Port Macquarie, when the Right was in trouble in Port Macquarie. How do they get members along to a meeting? They go down to the local McDonald's hamburger place. It is all in this document. They open the wallet, pull out the money and get the numbers. In they came, three hours late for the meeting, and got the meeting stacked.

Several of the McDonald's devotees that got roped in on that occasion received \$20 to attend the meeting. Reba Meagher is the lady who is going to Cabramatta - the lady who will replace the honourable member for Liverpool, who was stabbed in the back by the Leader of the Opposition. Then we see the

situation in Marrickville. These days we hear a lot about gangs from the Opposition. The local Right in Marrickville recruited members from a local gang and many of the gang members thrived on intimidating non right wingers at meetings. People were physically threatened and women were chased from the hall. Again Ms Meagher and Mr Tripodi were constantly harassing -

Mr Langton: On a point of order: I would be fascinated to know how the Premier will suggest that his answer has anything to do with the question, which related specifically to the State Bank.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It appears that the Premier may have strayed somewhat in the latter part of his answer. I ask him to return to the leave of the question.

Mr FAHEY: I am referring to the fact that the books of the State Bank have been looked after meticulously in terms of supervision and the role of the Government - unlike the books operated by Ms Meagher, which have been cooked to get members of the Right through. Here is democracy at work in the right wing of the Labor Party. It has no idea of the fundamental principles of democracy. It is taking someone from the lower north shore and has no regard whatsoever for the community of Cabramatta and its special circumstances. All of us would appreciate that as a result of events in recent times. The Labor Party is simply going to install someone from outside the electorate in an endeavour to get elected in that area someone who is a true disciple, a true believer, a true warrior; someone who has gone through all of the initiation ceremonies that are required to be able to say, "I am a member of the Right. I am one of the mates". The honourable member for Liverpool -

Mr Whelan: On a point of order: the Premier's response is hardly relevant to the question. Question time has expired. The Premier has been contemptuous of you, Mr Speaker, and treated your rulings with utter disrespect and disregard. It is disgraceful.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the Premier to conclude his answer.

Mr FAHEY: As I said, this particular lady may be one of the mates, but so was the honourable member for Liverpool. Not any more.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume his seat. The time for questions has expired.

Mr Humpherson: On a point of order: early in question time the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was called to order for the third time. A few minutes ago he was again called to order. Therefore he has been called to order for a fourth time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order involved.

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[Notices of Motions]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members wishing to leave the Chamber should do so quickly and quietly. The business of the House is proceeding, and members who wish to hear should be able to do so.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! A short time ago I warned all members about the consequences of flouting a direction of the Chair immediately after the direction is given. A moment ago I chose not to accept as a point of order a matter raised by the honourable member for Davidson. If I read the mood of the Chamber accurately, most members agreed with my decision in that particular case. The Chamber must

continue in an orderly fashion and members must obey the instructions of the Chair. I particularly warn the member for Drummoyne, who is a longstanding member of this House, that his breach of the rules was flagrant. The Chair does not take too kindly to his action. I ask all members to cooperate.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notice of Motion

Mr HUMPHERSON (Davidson) [3.13]: I give notice that tomorrow I shall move:

That this House condemns the New South Wales branch of the ALP for planning to bypass the normal rank and file preselection processes in Cabramatta and St Marys.

Mr Whelan: On a point of order: the motion is not one that the Parliament should consider. Never has a matter concerning the administration of political parties in this nation, let alone in this State, been the subject of a notice of motion in this Chamber. If the notice of motion is not ruled out of order, this Parliament will become nothing more than a mouthpiece for every -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Ashfield has taken his point of order and should not debate the matter. He well knows that it is the practice of the Chair to consider the elements of a notice of motion which it is suggested may be out of order. The member for Ashfield can rest assured that if the notice is not within the forms of the House it will be struck out.

PETITIONS

Newcastle Rail Services

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

Marshall Street, Rankin Park, Bushland Corridor

Petition praying that the Marshall Street reserve at Rankin Park be retained as a bushland corridor for local environmental and recreational purposes, received from **Mr Mills**.

Warilla Police Station

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

Cardiff South Public School Crossing Supervisor

Petition praying that a school crossing supervisor be provided for the Lake Avenue crossing outside Cardiff South primary school, received from **Mr Mills**.

Shellharbour Public Hospital Children's Ward

Petitions praying that the children's ward of Shellharbour public hospital be reopened, received from **Mr Harrison** and **Mr Rumble**.

Bulli, Coledale and Port Kembla District Hospitals

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

Pit Bull Terriers

Petition praying that because of the increasing number of attacks on citizens by pit bull terriers, they be banned, received from **Mr Cruickshank**.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Report: Appointment of Commissioner

Mr KERR (Cronulla) [3.16]: On behalf of the parliamentary joint Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, I bring up and lay upon the table of the House a report in response to the motion passed by the Legislative Assembly on 15 September and by the Legislative Council on 20 September.

Ordered to be printed.

Mr Whelan: I seek leave to move that so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would permit debate on the report tabled by the honourable member for Cronulla.

Leave not granted.

HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR GEORGES RIVER LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Consideration of Urgent Motion

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [3.18]: I move:

That this House condemns the Government for granting legal assistance to the member for Georges River and calls upon the Government to rescind its decision.

Why should the member for Georges River receive legal assistance when it is denied to the everyday New South Wales citizen? In a letter dated 7 August 1989 the then head of the Cabinet Office, Gary Sturgess, when writing to the then Attorney General, John Dowd, said that Ministers would be granted legal assistance only if their involvement in the hearing

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concerned, or arose out of, their official functions. What has the personal attitude of the member for Georges River to his staff got to do with his official functions? This is not an official function test. This is about sexual misconduct by a member of Parliament, and he has been granted legal assistance by the Government.

The Government is hiding behind a veneer because the article in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* this morning claimed that Carmel Niland said that legal assistance should be granted because of the gravity of the matters. Let us hope that the Minister produces the letter from Carmel Niland to this Parliament so that honourable members can see for themselves that Carmel Niland has indeed said that. What form will the legal assistance take, and for how long will it last? If criminal offences are involved, will the legal assistance apply to forthcoming appeals and the like? This is not a judicial inquiry; it is a closed inquiry.

[Interruption]

You cannot, unless the person conducting the inquiry is able to exercise the judicial prerogative. This is not a judicial inquiry; this is a closed shop.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for the Environment will have an opportunity to speak later in the debate. I ask him to reserve his comments until then.

Mr WHELAN: This inquiry is not about official conduct. The granting of legal assistance is outside the guidelines the Government has itself suggested and by which it is bound. The inquiry is about allegations by the staff of a Minister of the Crown of sexual misconduct. Do honourable members recall the circumstances and history of the matter? Do I have to remind them how the Government was dragged screaming to set up the inquiry? Then it established the Niland inquiry and it closed the doors, made it a closed inquiry. Now we hear that the Government has granted legal assistance to some of the people who were involved. This House has been given no assurance by the Premier that the matter will be resolved and the results tabled during this session. The Premier says they will be tabled, but honourable members could bet a dollar to nothing that the results of the inquiry will not be tabled until after the next scheduled election - because members of the Government, like the former Minister, are cowards.

Why is the Government prepared to breach the guidelines that apply to the granting of legal aid to people in New South Wales? The only criminal matters for which legal aid can be awarded are first bail application appearances. A means test and guidelines are applied to applicants and their partners. Applicants must be receiving only \$190 or less in weekly disposable income to be eligible for legal aid. In fact, the Legal Aid Commission means test is based on the Henderson poverty line. Many applicants - ordinary, good living people - have been refused the assistance of legal aid by this Government following the tightening of the guidelines. Take, for instance, the case of the Newcastle woman who is fighting a medical negligence case. Five years ago, despite obvious medical negligence in the taking of an X-ray, she approached the Legal Aid Commission. She has lung cancer and a lawyer estimated that she would incur costs of \$30,000 to \$40,000.

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

Mr WHELAN: The Legal Aid Commission rejected her application because legal aid was restricted to cases -

Mr Hartcher: On a point of order: this urgency motion moved by the honourable member for Ashfield relates to the granting of legal assistance to the honourable member for Georges River. It does not relate to a grant by the Legal Aid Commission. The honourable member for Ashfield knows that, and has said so in his contribution.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I cannot uphold the point of order. Although the grant of legal aid referred to in the motion is, in fact, not a Legal Aid Commission grant, it is appropriate for the honourable member to discuss the relativity of grants of legal aid from various sources. If he wishes to do so, the Minister for the Environment in his contribution to the debate may draw attention to those matters that he raised on the point of order.

Mr WHELAN: It is all very well for the Minister for the Environment to say that no-one should be getting legal aid. He knows that the Government denied legal aid to environmental groups - first cut - and he presided over that decision. Not only did the Minister preside over it, but at the Cabinet meeting the other day he gave his former colleague - the Minister whom he threw out on the street with great reluctance and who became merely the honourable member for Georges River - the best golden handshake ever. The Government gave him an indemnity for legal aid, for legal assistance, right throughout the whole of this sordid process.

Why would honourable members not worry about this Minister? He has dirty hands, as have all of

his Cabinet colleagues. And he knows it. He does not give a hoot about people who are injured and cannot get legal aid assistance. What about the people involved in the Newcastle earthquake? A man who was crushed in that earthquake was denied legal aid. How can the Minister compare that man's claim for his family with the claim by the former Minister for assistance? I have a list of claims by people who have been disadvantaged by the parsimonious attitude of the Government and the actions of the Minister for the Environment. But it is all right if one is a Minister; it is all right if one is a Liberal, except if one's name is Brad Hazzard. He could not get legal aid!

The litany of people who have received legal assistance includes all the Ministers who applied. Every Minister got it - Greiner got it, Moore got it, Murray got it, Causley got it. The list is endless. No
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one group has received as much legal aid as those opposite, and that is because they are all members of the Liberal Party. If the poor man in Newcastle who was crushed happened to be a member of the Newcastle branch of the Liberal Party, he would have got legal aid. The tragedy is that he did not get it.

The Government has spent a considerable amount of time denying this sordid affair. Honourable members will remember that the Government was dragged screaming by the Parliament, by the Opposition, before it agreed to have the inquiry. Only when the Independents came into the breach, very late, was the Government forced to institute an inquiry into the matter. The Opposition has no dispute about there being an inquiry. Carmel Niland will conduct the inquiry and, as I said, it is being heard in private. But she also said, if her press release is to be believed, that the matters are very, very serious. She is going to make some recommendations about the matter but it is still being held in camera; it is a private inquiry.

The Government is going to give the honourable member for Georges River legal assistance in regard to his personal conduct, not his ministerial conduct. This is not a breach of his ministerial code. This may be a breach of morals; it may be a breach of the criminal law; but it is not a question of whether he breached his ministerial code of conduct. This goes to the very personal habits of the man now known as the honourable member for Georges River and the Government has granted him unlimited legal assistance, a blank cheque, to try to defend himself. The Opposition knows what the Government is doing. It is muddying the waters.

The report will not come down and be acted upon. If it does come down, the honourable members' advisers, paid for by the taxpayer, will appeal. They will take out an injunction to restrain the publication of the report. It will be tied up in the courts for six months. I will tell honourable members how long the report will be tied up; it will be tied up until 26 March. That is what the Government is about. The Government is about denying to people their rightful entitlement to legal aid, it is denying legal aid to those who have legitimately earned it. It has provided preferential treatment to former ministers to defend their personal bad habits; their breaches of morality; their breaches of the guidelines; their breaches of the criminal code. I love it when the Ministers stand in this House and talk about -

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

Mr WHELAN: Why would I go outside and even talk to you? Go back into your kennel, where you belong.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Burrinjuck to order for the second time. I ask members not to get so excited. As I stated ad nauseam during question time, the rules of debate provide that only one member may speak at a time. The business of the House will proceed much more satisfactorily if that rule is followed.

Mr WHELAN: The essence of the matter is simply this: why does the Government give this man legal aid for his personal misbehaviour when everyone else in this State has been denied it? The Government tightened the guidelines, reduced the acceptable level and put up many hurdles for people

seeking to obtain legal aid. But at the stroke of a pen that has changed. It is ironic that the honourable member for Wakehurst is sitting in the Chamber. The Government denied him legal aid but gave it to the Treasurer, and Minister for the Arts. I shall tell members opposite how bad its Government is: it denied legal assistance to a man dying of Parkinson's disease, Michael - [Time expired.]

Mr HARTCHER (Gosford - Minister for the Environment) [3.28]: What a display of hysterical histrionics! But that is typical of the honourable member for Ashfield. When he has a weak argument he shouts loudest. When the honourable member for Ashfield is in full flight one always knows that if he has no point to make he will simply stand and scream. That is exactly what the House has heard here this afternoon: a classic case of the honourable member having no point to make; simply a lot of yelling. The honourable member for Ashfield should be on the stage. In fact, I am sure that in a few years time he will be.

This is a simple matter of an inquiry that is being conducted, at the request of the Premier, into certain incidents that occurred while the honourable member for Georges River was the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. They happened, allegedly, in his relationship with staff employed in that ministry. In other words, it was a direct relationship to his position as Minister; it was not his personal conduct, in the sense of being out in the general community. The allegations that have been made about the honourable member for Georges River relate only to his conduct while he was a Minister of the Crown, his relationship with people employed by him in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown. It is not like the Alan Griffiths' sandwich shop affair in which people were employed by Alan Griffiths in a private capacity when he was involved in the unfortunate incidents down in Melbourne. In this instance the people were employed by the former Minister in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown.

Allegations were made. The former Minister tendered his resignation and subsequently an inquiry was instituted by the Premier. The inquiry is being conducted by Carmel Niland, a woman who is extremely well regarded for her integrity and her ability. The members of the former Minister's staff who are appearing before the inquiry have been granted legal assistance. I make the point that it is legal assistance, not legal aid. There is no taking of funds from the Legal Aid Commission; the people involved have been granted legal assistance. Carmel Niland, the person conducting the inquiry, has said that in the interests of equity and fairness the former Minister against whom potentially - and it is only potentially - allegations could be made is entitled to that same courtesy and that same legal protection. She has recommended that he, too, be granted legal assistance.

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The fundamental point is that the allegations against the former Minister relate to a time when he was a Minister, and they relate to people with whom he had a relationship as Minister in the conduct of the ministry. The recommendation supposedly - and that is the key word - made, not by the Government but by the person conducting the inquiry, is that the former Minister be granted the same legal assistance as is being extended to other people who appear before the inquiry. If legal assistance were to be denied to the former Minister while his potential accusers were granted assistance, he could allege that he had been denied natural justice. It is fundamental to every concept of the common law that people should be placed, as far as possible, in the same position, especially people against whom potential allegations can be made.

This Government has no qualms at all about its offer of legal assistance to the former Minister. He is an excellent person, he was an excellent Minister and he, like everybody else, is entitled to the complete presumption of innocence until proven guilty. No charges have been laid against him. He has not been found guilty of anything. Motions like this and the disgraceful exhibition in question time are simply attempts by the Labor Party to label him as guilty long before any allegations are even made. It is like the allegations that have been made by the Opposition against the honourable member for Blue Mountains. It is like the allegations the Opposition would make against any honourable member of this House if it had the chance, based upon hysteria, based upon the fact that the honourable member for

Ashfield boasts the loudest voice and can shout louder and scream more vigorously than anyone else.

I mention the name Bruce Hawker. Bruce Hawker worked for the Leader of the Opposition in this place. Bruce Hawker is not a Minister and is not a member of Parliament. Bruce Hawker was involved in all sorts of secret little meetings with some disaffected member of the staff of the Maritime Services Board in an effort to make allegations against the former Deputy Premier, and Minister for Public Works in this House. Bruce Hawker and Bob Carr were required to attend the Walsh Bay inquiry to try to justify their specious allegations. They were unable to justify their specious allegations, unable to justify anything, just like Bob Carr cannot justify his allegations about the Casino Control Authority. But that is not the point. The point I am making is that both Bruce Hawker and Bob Carr received legal assistance. While Bob Carr is clearly a member of this House and is clearly, as Leader of the Opposition, entitled to certain indulgence - which was extended to him - Bruce Hawker is not and was not a member of this House.

No complaint was made by the Australian Labor Party, Bob Carr, or the honourable member for Ashfield. The honourable member for Ashfield did not stand up and shout and scream on that occasion, demanding that legal aid be withdrawn. No. The honourable member for Ashfield was quite silent because he was only too happy for legal assistance to be granted to Bruce Hawker. In respect of the Niland inquiry, the Premier's Department has granted counselling assistance to people who have expressed a concern about their position. It has granted assistance to them in seeking to deploy them. It has granted legal assistance to them. Not one aspect of that assistance was objected to by the Australian Labor Party. The Australian Labor Party thinks that assistance is great.

Mr Whelan: They are the victims.

Mr HARTCHER: They are not victims because no allegations have been made; none whatever. The inquiry will simply establish whether they are victims. But the point is that these people have been granted assistance; we are happy to grant it to them because they are good people; and it is appropriate that they be given counselling assistance, job assistance and legal assistance. The honourable member for Ashfield and his cronies would seek to deny legal assistance to the honourable member for Georges River for conduct alleged against him by his staff while he was a Minister of the Crown. It is not alleged against him that he wandered around the streets of Georges River; it is alleged against him that these people were employed by him - as a Minister - as part of his ministerial staff. The inquiry relates very much to his being a Minister and it is important that that principle be established and adhered to.

All people involved in these inquiries should be placed on the same footing, otherwise they have the right to argue, as I am sure that the honourable member for Georges River would argue if it were denied him, that they have been denied legal assistance and that they have therefore been denied natural justice. Ms Niland, the person conducting the inquiry, has emphasised that people appearing before the inquiry need to be confident that they can discuss matters relevant to the former Minister's office in an environment in which they can be sure that they have the necessary legal support. Ms Niland further said that she believes the provision of legal assistance is necessary to allow her to achieve the objectives of the terms of reference of her inquiry. It is simply fundamental to the underpinning of justice -

Mr Whelan: On a point of order: the Minister has quoted at length from a letter that he has described as coming from Carmel Niland. I ask him to table that letter.

Mr HARTCHER: I have not quoted at length from a letter at all. I have not mentioned the word "letter".

Mr Whelan: You referred to Carmel Niland and what she said.

Mr HARTCHER: She has stated. You should listen to what is said. You do not even listen.

Mr Whelan: I ask that the document be tabled.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister may answer this question in an endeavour to resolve the matter. Does he have -

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Mr HARTCHER: I do not have a letter with me, in my possession.

Mr SPEAKER: - any letter from which he has been quoting? Has he in fact referred -

Mr HARTCHER: I have referred to a statement.

Mr SPEAKER: - to a letter?

Mr HARTCHER: I have referred to a statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will wait until I have asked the question and not answer in anticipation. Has the Minister in fact quoted from a letter, in the sense of saying "a letter from so and so, dated so and so" or made any actual quotation from the text of a letter?

Mr HARTCHER: No. No quotation from a letter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Under those circumstances there is no requirement that the document be tabled, because no document has been referred to specifically.

Mr HARTCHER: I have no letter and I have not quoted from any letter. [*Time expired.*]

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [3.38]: This matter troubles me for a number of reasons. When I first read this motion I thought that I would not support it, because I believe that a person is entitled to legal aid. The Minister has given no sound reason for the House to support the idea of legal aid. The Government has presented no documents; it has presented no statement from the person who chairs the inquiry; it has produced nothing from the person who is to receive the public money that would justify the application being acceded to. The inquiry is not a court or a committal hearing. It is a closed inquiry. We do not even know the nature of the allegations. We do not know whether they are criminal, we do not know whether they are serious, we do not know whether they are civil. Therefore, we do not know why this legal aid is absolutely necessary, and at what level.

The Minister argues that it is necessary anyway because if it is not provided the person will be denied natural justice. If that is so, the people in TV land who do not get legal aid are denied natural justice because they have to fund it themselves. As an Independent member I am getting a bit fed up with public money funding Minister after Minister after Minister without due justification. I would not deny any person in this House legal aid if there were proper justification. No proper justification has been given; all we have is a motion by the Opposition condemning the Government for offering legal aid and calling on the Government to rescind its decision. Then a Government Minister offers no defence. He does not give me anything on which to base my decision, giving sound reasons as to why this man must have legal aid. I checked with the Clerk to establish whether I could defer my decision on the question until we could get documentation. I have been informed that I cannot and I have to make up my mind. If Government members are so poor in their presentation of their defence against the motion, if they give me nothing to fly on, I am going to support the motion.

What are the guidelines to get legal aid? Where do we draw the line? We are dealing with a person who was on ministerial salary. How far do we stretch the bow as to what is directly related to ministerial responsibility, and whether it is personal behaviour? If it is something that the person is obligated to do under the statutes - if he thought he was abiding by the statute and what is laid down as

his ministerial responsibility and he is sued because of it and ends up in some inquiry because of it - that is a justification for legal aid. The point here is that we are not told in defence of the motion by the Government that this in any way by its nature -

[Interruption]

Mr Speaker, I ask that you direct Government members to desist from continual interjection.

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

Mr HATTON: Very firm guidelines are needed. Other Government members are still to speak on this matter. I want to know what the guidelines are. How far can we stretch ministerial responsibility? Where does personal behaviour and personal responsibility end and ministerial responsibility start? Is this matter related to the statutory obligations of the Minister in the performance of the Minister's duty? If it is not, why should we grant legal aid?

Mr KERR (Cronulla) [3.43]: Before dealing with the remarks of the honourable member for South Coast I shall comment on the remarks of the honourable member for Ashfield. He asked why legal aid should be granted in this case. That question could well have been asked, as has been pointed out by members on this side of the House, in relation to the Leader of the Opposition when he was granted legal aid in relation to the inquiry into Walsh Bay. Public money was spent on that inquiry without any foundation. I invite members of the Opposition and the honourable member for South Coast to read the report of Mr Justice Helsham. That inquiry was a pure political gimmick that cost this State dearly. The cost of the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry would have provided a great deal of legal assistance to constituents of the honourable member for Ashfield and other members from both sides of the House.

The Leader of the Opposition wasted public money and sought maliciously to damage the reputation of the then Deputy Premier, the honourable member for Barwon. The honourable member for Ashfield laughs, but I invite him to look at the report to see the motivation for and background of the inquiry. If the honourable member for Ashfield is so confident about what he said in the House, why does he not go outside the Chamber to say those very same things at a press conference? Reporters from the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* and the
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Australian would be very happy to have a statement outside the precincts of this House from the honourable member for Ashfield.

I turn to the remarks of the honourable member for South Coast on this matter and why the Government thought it desirable to provide legal assistance at the request of the commissioner. It must be understood by honourable members that this kind of legal assistance serves the purpose of the inquiry and therefore the public interest, not simply the interest of an individual. Why is this so? First, because it ensures that evidence to the inquiry is presented in an orderly fashion, which means that the inquiry can be conducted expeditiously.

Mr Knight: It is a cost saving measure, is it?

Mr KERR: If the inquiry were confronted with a person with no legal assistance and no guidance as to what is relevant it could involve a great deal of cost. The honourable member for Auburn has appeared for many people. He knows what sort of fate in terms of cost awaits people if the issues are not defined. Yes, there is a public interest in dealing with this: it provides a fundamental underpinning for the inquiry to be conducted with a view to protection of natural justice for witnesses, for all people concerned. Natural justice is not just a hackneyed phrase. When we are dealing with this sort of matter it has a great deal of meaning.

Natural justice must be afforded not only to the honourable member for Georges River but to the other parties to the matter. If the Government had simply provided legal assistance to the honourable member for Georges River and to nobody else, and no counselling, the honourable member for South Coast might be justified in his concern. But there has been a great deal of even-handedness. It is absolutely fundamental to the inquiry that it be successfully concluded and not subjected to challenges in superior courts for having breached a person's rights. The best way to ensure that is to inform the person of his rights. That is to say, if the inquiry's findings are to be conclusive and beyond dispute, it is in the interests of the inquiry to protect the natural justice of the witnesses.

This is not an issue of giving undue assistance to one person; it is an issue of ensuring that the inquiry is conducted quickly, fairly and cheaply, and above all that its findings are conclusive and beyond challenge on the basis of having breached witnesses' rights to natural justice. That is the real public interest in this matter. That is why this case is very different from the granting of aid in a case in which one cause is being advanced. We are providing legal assistance so that the people involved know their rights and obligations and to ensure that there is a definitive answer to the very real public concerns in this matter. [*Time expired.*]

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [3.48]: I move:

That the question be amended by adding the words:

"and calls upon the Premier to table Ms Niland's letter recommending that the member for Georges River be granted legal assistance."

We could encapsulate what the Minister for the Environment said to the House by saying: if the honourable member for Georges River robs a bank he can fight his case on his own but if the honourable member for Georges River robs a bank and uses a ministerial car in his capacity as a Minister he is entitled to legal aid. That is the absurdity of what he put to the House. Today's *Daily Telegraph Mirror* reported that Ms Niland had said she had recommended that Mr Griffiths, who was her last witness, be legally represented and her request had been granted by the Government. There was nothing about legal aid or legal assistance, just that he be legally represented. Do we draw the longbow by saying that that statement entitles him to legal aid? Though we have heard that it would be a denial of natural justice if he were not granted legal assistance, unlike a lot of other people he is in a position to defend himself. Where is the honourable member for Georges River in this important debate? He should be able to tell the House of matters that may change the course of events, at least for the Independents. He should tell the House exactly what he put in his application and what he said to the Government in regard to his application for legal aid.

I cannot believe that the Minister for the Environment would say that the women involved are not victims. They are victims; they are victims in the allegations that they have made against the former Minister for Police, the honourable member for Georges River. It is gracious of the Government to grant those women counselling - one of the most gracious things I have heard of this Government doing. What a wonderful Government it is! One would have thought that of all the people who should be granted legal assistance those women should be. Of course, there is also the honourable member for Blue Mountains. He is defending himself, he has no legal aid. Knowing him, I would imagine that he has not applied for legal aid. Allegations were once raised about the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Bruce Hawker. They were granted legal aid by virtue of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act.

If anyone was crying out for legal aid and should have received it when everyone else did, it was the honourable member for Wakehurst. To this day I think he was treated unjustly. He should have received legal aid. I always supported his request for legal aid. The Treasurer was granted legal aid in a defamation action. I wish to tell the House about Alister Theo. One night he was at the Parramatta Businessmen's Club when there was a brawl between detectives and other people. Along with others, Mr Theo left the club to get away from the brawl. The police went out and said to him, "You were

involved", and arrested him and charged him. After three years of committals and long trials he was without hesitation acquitted by a jury. His legal expenses amounted to \$230,000 but he was unable to get legal aid because his father owned a business and he had a half share in a very expensive house. He had to sell his share in the house so that he could defend himself. What a paradox! He was not entitled to legal aid, but the jury had no hesitation in acquitting him.

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Mr Theo applied to the court for reimbursement of legal costs. The court determined that because there was a scintilla of evidence and because he looked like someone else there was evidence enough for the matter to go before a jury and he would not be reimbursed legal costs. Mr Theo did not get anything for legal aid. Today he is out of pocket in the sum of \$230,000. Another gentleman, aged 68 years, was charged with an offence 10 years ago. He brought a case. I represented him pro bono. Eventually the charge was stayed. He was not granted legal aid because he had one relative still working, who had a small asset. For 10 years that man was taken through the courts and had to defend himself. A terrible example was the matter of the Venture Industries arbitrations. Mr Harry Kioussis, the Liberal Party endorsed candidate for Strathfield, and his son, Constantine, who was to be the Liberal Party endorsed candidate for Parramatta but missed out by four votes, ripped off 10 hardworking families in building their homes.

In the House last week the Minister for Consumer Affairs condemned Mr Kioussis for what he did to those people. Mr Kioussis is dragging those 10 families through the courts. They are not able to get legal aid in the arbitrations. Mr Kioussis is a multimillionaire. He is paying many Queen's Counsel to represent him, but those who were involved with his Venture Industries are being ruined financially. Denise Ferris and all the others in the "misadventure club" cannot get legal aid. Assistance is coming to them by the good grace of a member of the Liberal Party, a barrister, Ian George, who is assisting those people for a very small fee - if anything. The women referred to in the motion should have been granted legal assistance. They are entitled to it. We have asked the Minister to table the letter of denial. I ask the House to support the motion. [*Time expired.*]

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [3.53], in reply: I have heard many outrageous and distasteful things in my time in this Parliament but to suggest that the women who were the subject of alleged sexual harassment by the former Minister for Police were not victims, as has been suggested by the Minister at the table, the Minister for the Environment, is an absolute disgrace.

Mr Hartcher: There is no allegation; it is an inquiry.

Mr WHELAN: Of course they are victims. They have been traumatised. Why has the Government offered them counselling?

Mr Hartcher: Nothing has been proved.

Mr WHELAN: The women are victims, there is no doubt about that. The Government has no understanding of what is happening in this State, what is happening in the legal system or what happened in the office of the former Minister for Police. The Government has raised a red herring about Bruce Hawker and the Leader of the Opposition. Mr Hawker was granted legal assistance because that allegation related to his official duties - a speech. The guidelines set down by Sturgess in 1989 provide the criteria for what constitutes official duties. There is no such thing as official sexual misconduct. Those guidelines stand in stark contrast to the matters for which the honourable member for Georges River now stands accused.

Mr Hartcher: He is not accused of anything.

Mr WHELAN: Mr Hawker wrote a speech, the upshot of which was the Independent Commission

Against Corruption inquiry, which led to serious embarrassment for the former director of the Department of State Development, Ian Kortlang, and the former lord mayor, Jeremy Bingham. The difference between those two cases could not be more stark. I refer to the man in Newcastle crushed in the earthquake. What about policy considerations? The guidelines state that Ministers get legal aid for matters relating to their official functions. In relation to the allegations that have been made about the honourable member for Georges River, the former Minister for Police, how can it be said that he was involved in official ministerial duties? On 26 August 1994 the Legal Aid Commissioner stated in a letter:

It is true that subsequent to policy changes as to the availability of legal aid in civil law matters made in January 1993 and November 1993 Mr T's case is one for which legal aid is no longer available.

The honourable member for South Coast asked about the guidelines for legal aid. The case of these women is an illustration of people genuinely in need of legal aid. The Legal Aid Commission changed the guidelines to assist the honourable member for Georges River because he did not meet the criteria relating to official conduct. On another note, the House heard a great deal about HomeFund. HomeFund wrote to the Legal Aid Commission asking for assistance. The managing director of the commission replied that the commission did not have sufficient resources to consider applications from all dissatisfied borrowers. Yet the Government can afford to throw away thousands of dollars on legal aid for one of its own.

I have another tragic case to relate. A lady whose daughter was killed in a motor vehicle accident wanted to attend the coronial inquiry. She was a single parent and had little money. The Attorney General, a Cabinet Minister who made the decision to grant legal aid to the honourable member for Georges River, wrote to that woman stating that the financial constraints within which the Legal Aid Commission operates preclude wide discretion to assist those attending inquests and that the commission's guidelines were employed to ensure that access to legal assistance be provided to those in the greatest need. Was the honourable member for Georges River financially strapped? The woman who wanted to be represented at the coronial inquiry, but could not afford it, was knocked back for legal aid by the Government because, the Government said, legal aid is provided only to those in the greatest need! The Government is providing thousands upon thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money for legal aid for the honourable member for Georges River.

Another tragic case was that of a woman who was thrown out of her house by her son. She is a single elderly pensioner, living in a caravan, and she applied for legal aid which she did not get. All these

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illustrations show that there is one rule for the general public and another for the Government's mates. How can a former Minister of the Crown, a member of Parliament, be provided with legal assistance at taxpayers' expense when there are literally thousands of poor people crying out for legal assistance? The crux of this matter is that the subject of the complaint and the subject of legal aid do not relate to official duties.

Amendment agreed to.

Question - That the motion as amended be agreed to - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 43

Mr Amery	Mr Markham
Mr Anderson	Mr Martin
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr Mills

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

Noes, 47

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

Pairs

Ms Allan	Mr Armstrong
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Mr Fahey
Mr Iemma	Mr Zammit

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

APPROPRIATION BILL

PARLIAMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL

BUSINESS FRANCHISE LICENCES (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) AMENDMENT BILL

**MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION (AMENDMENT) BILL ROAD IMPROVEMENT (SPECIAL FUNDING)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 September.

Mr MORRIS (Blue Mountains) [4.08]: It is with pleasure, and on a lighter note, that I shall speak about my beautiful electorate of Blue Mountains. Today my wife is attending a luncheon to launch this year's Leura Gardens Festival. This wonderful festival, which has been running for many years, has always given its proceeds to the local Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital. This year I believe the total of all proceeds that have been given to the local hospital will pass the \$1 million mark. That is a tremendous commendation. I had the pleasure of visiting the hospital when patrons of the festival donated a large sum of money so that a young lady could receive a cochlear implant, the cost of which was about \$68,000.

This wonderful band of organising people, all of whom have retired, throw their gardens open to the public, giving pleasure to flower and garden lovers from Australia and all over the world. This year the festival will be launched on 8 October. The Blue Mountains electorate also has "Greystanes" which is the other home in the garden festival. It is a very busy time in the Blue Mountains. It has been the honour of this Government to support the local hospital. Yesterday in this Chamber we heard a litany of lies about a man who is running against me - yesterday's man, as he is referred to in the mountains. He had a go in Parliament for seven years and could not make a go of it. The people of the Blue Mountains rejected him and will reject him again because his technique is the big lie.

I should like to refer to some of the improvements at the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital. When the coalition came to office the maternity ward at the hospital, at which 45 women were having babies each year, was an absolute disgrace. Under the auspices of the Hon. Peter Collins, the Minister for Health at that time, \$700,000 was spent on completely refurbishing that ward. The

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refurbished unit was opened by the Premier, the Hon. Nick Greiner, and was named after Marie Jensen, the wife of the man who used to run the Leura Gardens festival, the late Bill Jensen. Marie has done a tremendous amount of work for the united hospitals auxiliary. In the first year after the maternity unit reopened 500 women had their babies there. This year the figure is 580. That is one beautiful facility the Government was able to provide. A new community health centre was then constructed at Katoomba at a cost of \$1.4 million, and \$680,000 was spent on the establishment of a high dependency unit. As I have said, \$130,000 was provided by the Leura Gardens committee for equipment for that unit.

The Government spent \$250,000 to replace the old boilers with gas fired boilers, \$400,000 was spent on upgrading bathrooms and wards at the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital and \$30,000 was spent on the acquisition of a community nurse clinic. The school dental service was relocated to Springwood hospital, and a day care centre for the aged was established at Springwood. The list goes on. The mental health living skills centre was relocated from Wentworth Falls to Narrow Neck Road, Katoomba, at a cost of \$275,000. Internal and external painting of the Blue Mountains District Anzac

Memorial Hospital and the Lawson Community Health Centre cost \$260,000. New services provided at the hospital include an early discharge program for obstetric services, a diabetic education service, an HIV clinic, the high dependency unit to which I have already referred, and the establishment of the mental health crisis team with an increased annual budget of \$450,000.

Since 1989-90 a total of \$2.2 million per annum has been added to the annual operating budgets of health services in the mountains to meet the cost of the increased range of health services provided. Health services in the mountains have been required to meet the same productivity saving level as other health services within the Wentworth Area Health Service. The additional specialised medical service staff appointed to the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital since 1988 include three anaesthetists; one obstetrician and gynaecologist; two paediatricians, one of whom was brought out from England; one orthopaedic surgeon; and one ophthalmologist. Clearly, this expanded array of specialist medical staff has brought a significantly increased range of services to the mountains. A 30-bed psychiatric unit has been constructed at Nepean hospital at a cost of \$4.5 million. The Minister, who referred to many other matters yesterday, will visit that hospital on Saturday, 8 October, to open the \$1 million paediatric ward that has just been completed. Plans are well in hand for another \$1 million to be spent on the accident and emergency unit and X-ray department. The Government has a great track record in the mountains on health.

I turn now to transport, which is important in the mountains. My electorate is on a long narrow ridge with roads running off from 26 mountain towns from Springwood in the east to Katoomba in the north-west. Under the auspices of the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads, the electorate has done well with roads. The Woodford Bends roadworks, which cost \$38 million, have just been completed - about eight years ahead of schedule - and have taken out three kilometres of very narrow road. I congratulate the Roads and Traffic Authority for the work it has done. The people of Woodford were absolutely wonderful while the project was under way. The cooperation between the community and the Roads and Traffic Authority is a model for other areas. The RTA also went to a great deal of trouble to stop erosion and to care for the environment.

One of the fills that motorists drive over is higher than the wall of the Burrinjuck Dam. I am led to believe by engineers that it is the highest fill in the southern hemisphere, so that is a first. The five-year local council program, which involves a \$10 million allocation by the Government, is winding up this year. About 170 roads have been bituminised in the electorate. About 130 were listed to be completed. An engineer at the Blue Mountains City Council, Wayne Young, has been in charge of allocating that money. He has done a wonderful job. When the tenders were first let for that work, because of the downturn of the free enterprise system of tendering, in excess of \$3 million worth of work done was done for the council. I understand that some 32 companies tendered for the last section of the work. An amount of only about \$2,800 separated those tenders for an expenditure of \$1.98 million. The pens were really sharpened at that time.

The Government has also announced a new bus-rail interchange for Katoomba. The first stage, which will cost \$500,000, is being financed by the central business district parking levy program. Another \$500,000 will be spent on car parking facilities there. The Government has worked towards that end because, as I have said, people leave their cars at stations on the way to their jobs in Sydney, and there are not many parking places around Katoomba railway station. About 3,000 people are transported each day from the mountains to jobs in the western area of Sydney. This year \$6.9 million has been allocated for the rail upgrading program. The railway station and railway bridge at Blackheath will be upgraded. To assist the many older people who live in the mountains two lifts are to be installed at that station. One lift will take people up on to the bridge from the western side and one will take them on to the platform. That is a welcome breakthrough for the people in Blackheath in the months that lie ahead.

The new Tangara came to the Blue Mountains on the day of the official opening of the Woodford Bends reconstruction. Up to 1,000 people were at the railway station to meet the train that had travelled from Central railway station with 200 passengers, including the Minister for Transport. That was an

historic occasion. The outer suburban Tangara train will take up service on the Sydney to Springwood line. Three services will operate each day from Springwood to Central and through to Hornsby. The two old, single-decker trains that have served us so

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well in the mountains for many years will be taken out of service. An announcement has been made that work will commence on the first section of the highway between Warrimoo and Valley Heights. That is a section of road; it is a bottleneck on Sundays and also in the morning with people travelling to Penrith and beyond. For the three or four hours during the peak period in the morning there is a huge bank-up of traffic.

The first part of that work will be ongoing, at a cost of \$4.9 million, and the total commitment to that work over four years is \$38 million. As I have said, transport plays an important role in the mountains, and the Government has gone a long way towards making that a world-class rail service by 1995, with the laying of concrete sleepers, the introduction of a new signalling system, the upgrading of railway stations and car parks, the installation of lights, and the creation of beautiful gardens, usually tended by the station masters. Telephones have been installed on the stations, the introduction of a long line public address system is not far off, and the new ticketing system is working well and is generating extra revenue.

I turn now to the portfolio administered by the Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Regional Development, the Hon. Ray Chappell. He has visited the electorate of Blue Mountains and we have had working breakfasts with local people. I believe we have had a very good response to the program of LEADA - the Lithgow Enterprise and Development Association. That organisation has been highly successful. We have been able to persuade it to open a branch office in Wentworth Falls where it administers the main street program, which is working very well in some mountain towns. The schemes implemented through NIES - the National Industry Extension Service - and many other schemes initiated by the Minister have gone a long way to assist small business.

I now turn to education and the portfolio administered by the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Minister for Tourism, and Minister Assisting the Premier, in another place. We have a great record in the mountains for providing facilities for teachers and students. On 27 October the Minister will visit the area and officially turn the first sod for the new TAFE college at Wentworth Falls, the first stage of which will cost \$6.9 million. The project has been running a little behind schedule, but now bricks and mortar will begin to be laid. The TAFE college in Katoomba serves some 2,800 TAFE students from all over the mountains. They are accommodated in high school buildings that were constructed many years ago. The college is badly in need of new facilities.

There will be a number of education programs for young people. It is proposed that there be 300 teaching staff, and the construction of the college will create approximately 120 jobs. As soon as stage one is under way, the people of the electorate are very keen to get stage two. The total cost of the facility for the people of the Blue Mountains - which is long overdue and something I have worked very hard for - is \$35 million. We have secured the land, and the Minister will turn the first sod on that project. This is quite an historic occasion for those in the mountains.

As honourable members know, it gets very cold in the upper mountains, and consequently it is necessary to have special facilities for the schools. Many new school halls have been built at a cost of \$500,000 to \$600,000. There are three under construction - one at Blackheath and one at North Katoomba, which have been opened by the Minister. It is proposed that during her forthcoming visit the Minister will open the third hall, at Leura. Those beautiful halls are being well used by the community. In North Katoomba, a vastly expanded area of my electorate, the hall has been well received by the local community.

The mountains this year has a huge capital budget in other areas, totalling \$8.2 million. The works included in that amount are school maintenance programs at Blaxland, Katoomba North, Katoomba high,

Lawson public and Springwood high, together with a bus turning bay, at a cost of \$390,000. Students are bused in and out of Winmalee, which has been a bad traffic area for many years. I have been very concerned about that area and am pleased that the Minister has seen fit to advance the money for that very worthy program. Youth has been the big winner in the State. An amount of \$250,000 was awarded on a once only, dollar for dollar basis, to the local council to build a new youth centre, which the Minister recently opened. I know that \$8 million has been set aside by the Office of Youth Affairs to provide programs for young people and to continue to act as an umbrella organisation, and to coordinate policy and initiatives for young people. That is certainly very welcome in the area. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Being a businessman, something very dear to my heart is tourism. The Blue Mountains is one of the loveliest areas in the world for people to visit. We have the Three Sisters, the scenic railway, the valleys, the walks and many towns with many wonderful attractions. The Seven Wonders of New South Wales program has been magic for the mountains, as has Yulefest, which was extended this year by three months. It usually runs for one month but it has been very well received and I understand from the tourism centre at Echo Point that more than three million tourists were attracted to the area last year. My constituents are very pleased with the Minister for Tourism, the Hon. Virginia Chadwick, who gives a lot of her time to visiting the Blue Mountains electorate. The local tourism authority is very good. I was saddened not long ago to farewell Ulrich Leinas, who used to be the manager of the Fairmont resort. He has done a lot for tourism in the mountains and we owe Ulrich a lot. He has gone to Cairns to manage a large hotel there.

Certain areas of the mountains are very underprivileged, and the Department of Community Services receives many requests from local people and

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organisations - some 54 in all are funded, with a recurrent expenditure of \$16.4 million. The Minister for Community Services is continually working on these issues, and I am very pleased that, as part of the Government's response to the issues identified in the Burdekin report, an additional \$875,000 will be provided over four years to increase the number of Department of Community Services licensing officers in private, for-profit boarding houses and hostels. That is a matter that has been of great concern in some of the Blue Mountains towns. It needs some attention, and will get that shortly.

More than half of the funds provided for through the budget assistance for unemployed youth will be used to run the Government's highly successful Get Started program, which is now in its third year of operation. Mission Employment in Katoomba does a wonderful job in that area. Self-development programs, with a budget of \$5.7 million, will assist in the creation and retention of long-term employment opportunities during the establishment or expansion of existing small businesses.

I now deal with the allocations under the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing, the Hon. Chris Downy. The winning of the bid for the Olympic Games in the year 2000 has created amongst sport lovers in the Blue Mountains a strong commitment to sport in general and sporting ovals in particular. A new sporting complex is being built in Katoomba through the joint efforts of the Blue Mountains City Council and the State Government. The State Government commitment so far, to a project of about \$1.2 million, is \$400,000. The local Federal member, my parliamentary colleague Maggie Deahm, the honourable member for Macquarie, has been able to assist with a grant of \$100,000. The Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing has been very supportive.

We have been able to support the boys and girls club in Springwood, which has a membership of about 800 young people under the age of 10. It is really satisfying to see them doing their acrobats and exercises on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The club is run voluntarily. We were able to secure some land from the railways at Valley Heights and, thanks to a grant of \$50,000 from the Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing, that project is well under way. The developing areas assistance scheme, DAAS, is working well. The Government has committed another \$100,000 to the netball court in Katoomba, making the total commitment \$400,000. The people involved are very excited. During our 6½ years in

office, about \$2.5 million has been spent on other sporting facilities throughout the electorate under the capital assistance program.

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Chris Hartcher, regularly visits my electorate. Last Friday we attended the beautiful Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens. During the bushfires last year the gardens used its water supply to put out the fires and, as a result, that beautiful garden is badly in need of water. The Minister was able to give the gardens a much needed boost of \$450,000 to install a pump at Mill Creek to lift the water 12,000 feet from the valley to the top of the mountain in an endeavour to maintain the very important plant collections in the gardens that are suffering as a result of this horrendous drought.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service at Blackheath has received \$650,000 for the upgrading of its tracks. That amount has been increased in the budget by a further \$350,000. I pay great tribute to the work these people did in the January bushfires. Gregor Manson, the head ranger, who is also chairman of the Blue Mountains Tourism Authority, together with about 3,000 volunteers from the voluntary bushfire organisation, the police, the town firemen and the army, worked very hard with bulldozers in the middle of the night to put in the black line. It was a tremendous effort that saved the City of the Blue Mountains from being in any danger from the bushfires.

The Blue Mountains has a beautiful area called the Wentworth Falls Lakes. The Government has injected about \$400,000 in various grants over the years to restore it. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Ports, the Hon. Ian Armstrong, has seen fit to give the Blue Mountains City Council \$54,000 to construct a car park. Wentworth Falls Lake is a beautiful area on regatta day. It was an old railway dam that was built to fill the steam engines that hauled freight and passengers over the Blue Mountains many years ago. This year the Blue Mountains has a housing program running into many millions of dollars, as well as the South Hazelbrook area two and three backlog sewerage program, which is well ahead of schedule. The tunnel is through to Hazelbrook. On completion of those works 10 old sewerage plants will be taken out of service, which will protect our rivers and streams. The previous administration was to have those works finished by 2025, but our Government will have them finished by 1997. The tunnel will be finished one year ahead of schedule, breaking all sorts of records.

I have the pleasure of serving on a committee under my very good friend, the Hon. George Souris, the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, having a bit of country boy in me. In fact, I am the deputy chairman of that committee. The Minister has given us a grant for the restoration of the Mount Boyce landslips, which was a terribly big job; work on the Woodford bends, Hazelbrook, and Nellys Glen; as well as \$55,000 for the upkeep of lookouts in our local sights reserves. I thank the Minister for those allocations. My good friend and colleague the Hon. Garry West, Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services, attended the bushfire gymkhana recently at St Columbus. It was attended by more than 3,000 men and on display was some magnificent equipment. He was able to present a new state-of-the-art vehicle to the new brigade at Winmalee and is getting on with the building of the new police station at Lawson. Although the previous administration gave a lousy \$15 million to our bush fire fighters, the Hon. Garry West announced that this Government had

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allocated \$50 million to our voluntary bush fire brigades this year, \$1.2 million of which would benefit the 1,300 volunteers who fight bushfires in the Blue Mountains. This Government is certainly putting its money where its mouth is.

The Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services, the Hon. Anne Cohen, has visited the Blue Mountains electorate and spoken to hoteliers. We have set up a police consultative committee. We also visited the clubs, which never see anyone from anywhere else. We held a fruitful meeting at the North Katoomba Bowling Club attended by representatives from Penrith and the Lithgow area. It gives me very much pleasure to represent the people of the Blue Mountains. We will be here for a long time. I am certainly enjoying my job and getting on with it. The previous Premier, the Hon. Nick Greiner, had a great love for the Blue Mountains and was very supportive, as are our present Premier and the Cabinet.

I thank the Premier and all the Ministers on behalf of the people of the Blue Mountains for whom I make representations. The few minutes I have had to contribute to this debate do not permit me to go into great detail. However, there are many other things that we have been able to get our teeth into to clean up the mess that was left in an electorate that Labor took for granted for 12 years. Labor cannot even get a decent candidate. It has a guy who ran before - the local rag calls him "Yesterday's Man". All he can do is tell whopping big lies.

Mr SULLIVAN (Wollongong) [4.38]: I speak to the 1994-95 budget, which was brought down last week. The Leader of the Opposition responded yesterday. I will make some general comments and then proceed to deal specifically with the budget as it affects the Wollongong electorate. In Budget Paper No. 1 the Treasurer says that this budget has three objectives: first, to apply funds to quality services that are responsive to the public's needs; second, to further reduce the burden of taxation; and, third, to continue to strengthen the State's financial position. I would like honourable members to bear those three objectives in mind in the light of what I have to say. The Treasurer set out specifically in his speech the Government's record and objectives in a number of key areas. For example, he said:

In Health, we sustain the record spending with which we have systematically rebuilt the NSW public hospital system from the shambles left by Labor.

On increased education spending the Treasurer said:

A significant component of this increase is the funding of an additional 1,466 teachers, including 717 primary and secondary school teachers to reduce class sizes.

In practical terms, this means that no Year 1 class need exceed 28 students and no Year 2 class need exceed 29. From Years 3 to 6, no class need exceed 30 students and in years 11 and 12 class sizes need be no greater than 24.

Later in the speech he said:

In recognition of the growing multicultural mix in our schools, \$64 million will be spent funding educational programs for children from non-English speaking backgrounds.

On the face of it this is all very laudable. On social and community services he said:

Since 1988, the Coalition Government has boosted spending on this important area by almost 58 percent in real terms. This commitment continues this year, with a 6.2 percent funding increase to \$1.5 billion.

In order to improve its capacity to address core priorities, funding for the Department of Community Services has been enhanced by \$57.3 million in 1994-95.

He also said:

The Home and Community Care program will receive an extra \$8.5 million specifically for expansion of services to assist the frail aged, and people with disabilities who live in their own homes, with the overall program totalling \$231 million.

With regard to law and order, the Treasurer said:

The Premier recently announced that the Government would put 500 more police on the streets over the next five years to deter crime. Two hundred of these police officers will enter the force in this Budget year, substantially boosting the police presence on NSW streets.

If those statements could be given credence they would be very laudable. But what has been the record? Let us look at what the Leader of the Opposition and his researchers have been able to come up with. I quote the Leader of the Opposition:

How can you believe the extra spending given their record of underspending from the Consolidated Fund.

He went on to say:

This Government underspent its police operations budget by \$137.3 million between 1989 and 1994.

This Government underspent its Department of Community Services' Budget by \$112.3 million overall between 1988 and 1994.

This Government underspent its total Department of Transport Budget by \$110.2 million between 1989 and 1994.

This Government underspent its TAFE operations Budget by \$20.9 million between 1988 and 1994.

This Government underspent its total School Education Budget by \$22.7 million between 1988 and 1994.

And the Budget Papers reveal this year's recurrent Health budget was underspent by \$105 million.

So the Government keeps on counting the money that it did not spend as part of its programs of enhancement. This is a disappointment, from people who pretend to be responsible and caring. Program after program has been underspent, and people continually come to my electorate office to raise with me ways in which the Government is still cutting back the provision of services on the ground - home and community care, education, police or hospitals and health services. In all these areas there is instance after instance of the Government reducing funding or failing to meet the needs of the community as they exist on the ground. It is all very well to put out plush Government papers but what is being said in the budget papers does not relate to what is happening out in the community. Therefore the statements in the budget papers have to be questioned.

With the 1995 election just around the corner there has been a sudden burst of activity. The coalition, in opposition before the 1988 election and
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in government before the 1991 election, made a commitment to construct the clinical services building at the Wollongong campus of the Illawarra regional hospital. Promptly after the 1988 election the commitment was rescheduled from 1991 to 1993. Then when the 1991 election came around the coalition promised to complete the building by 1993 in accordance with the altered schedule. Of course, straight after the 1991 election construction was stopped and we were left with an uncompleted hole next to the main building at Wollongong Hospital. That is where things were left until a week or so ago when suddenly, unannounced, the Minister for Health turned up in town and said, "We are going to complete this building in the next parliamentary term". While that sort of stunt can be pulled once or maybe twice, it cannot be pulled time and time and time again.

I ask the Treasurer to ensure that genuine construction commences on the project before the March 1995 election. Constituents in the Wollongong electorate have a fair expectation in wishing to see the Government put its money where its mouth is. With \$1.275 million allocated - only 85 per cent of that will be spent on the clinical services building - everyone questions how fair dinkum the Government is. One

budget paper says the amount involved is \$1.275 million and another budget paper puts the figure at \$1.5 million. It seems that the Government has not bothered to crosscheck to make sure that what it is saying for the purposes of the coming election is consistent in the budget papers.

Mr Jeffery: You do not know how to read the papers.

Mr SULLIVAN: I suggest that the honourable member look at Budget Paper No. 4 and compare it with the information supplied to the honourable member for Wollongong to see the difference. But I will not worry the honourable member much about this because I know that it puts a strain on him and we do not want him backing out of the Parliament before the March election, when we will see his seat won by Labor. It could be said that this is an Augustinian budget - Lord make me pure, but not just yet. I turn now to the promises about balanced budgets that have been made by the Treasurer - a major feature of the budget. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 15 September is an article written by Professor Bob Walker.

Mr Jeffery: Oh!

Mr SULLIVAN: He does not support the Government so therefore he is a man of no integrity! The figures in the article show the debt and liabilities of the New South Wales Government in billions of dollars from 1988 to 1994. Professor Walker notes that the 1994 figure is a conservative estimate. The liabilities are as follows: 1988, 47.75; 1989, 48.38; 1990, 50.20; 1991, 50.49; 1992, 53.94; 1993, 54.43 - and then \$57 billion. The Government claims that it has finally got on top of debt management. It has been claimed that this Government will sort out all the debt and liability problems of New South Wales. What did the article by Professor Bob Walker in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 15 September come up with in regard to the net budget sector debt? The figures are as follows: in 1988, \$12.46 billion; 1989, \$12.33 billion - a bit of an improvement there, but then Nick did not stay around long - 1990, \$13.02 billion; 1991, \$13.84 billion; 1992, \$15.42 billion; 1993, \$14.54 billion; 1994, \$15.58 billion. The nonsense that this is a budget that caps a period of hard work, reining in debt and reducing liability and of responsible and conservative management is blown right out of the water.

The star feature of the budget is the balanced budget commitment. Many people equate the management of a nation with the management of household affairs - which is not an unreasonable comparison to make - when they talk about a balanced budget. In the period of classical economics, up to the 1930s, balanced budgets were seen as the answer to periods of recession. As Keynes pointed out, throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century the economy was set at an equilibrium of less than full employment. Balancing the budget, in itself, was not the answer to managing the economy. All that did was stop the economy and put it in equilibrium, but at a point below full employment. Keynes, in his general theory published in 1936, pointed out the folly of that approach.

Keynesian economics tells us that the time to pump prime is when the economy is in recession and that expenditure should be curbed when the economy is booming. The balanced budget proposal provides for the reverse of that situation. When the economy is in recession, expenditure is cut back because the budget has to be balanced. This, of course, further reduces the level of economic activity and results in a spiralling into contraction mode. In times of boom, because there is so much money, it is possible to spend up to the limit of the budget. That results in an acceleration of the boom and an increase in pressures such as inflation, which in itself gives the lie to the sort of harebrained, or hairshirted, economic nonsense being proposed. Professor Bob Walker points out a number of flaws in that whole approach. The article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* quotes him as follows:

... the whole idea of balanced budget legislation is flawed. It would not impose an effective discipline on the growth of State indebtedness for three reasons. First, the "budget" only relates to a part of government activities, mainly government departments. It excludes some of the public sector's most important agencies and activities: the Department of Public Works, government trading enterprises, even the Auditor-General's office and the Treasury's internal audit bureau.

... Second, the government of the day might decide what it will include and what it will exclude from its "budget sector". Indeed, even though the States have agreed to publish their Budget results on a uniform "GFS" basis, the Fahey Government recently passed legislation authorising the Treasurer to define the scope of the "Budget sector" as he chooses. Third, cash-based budgets and budget results don't cover unpaid financial commitments which are included in measures of State liabilities - a wider concept than "debt", which mainly covers formal borrowings from banks and bond issues. Hence governments could readily evade any such legislation by running up liabilities through GTEs or other agencies outside the scope of their self-defined "budget sector".

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The information contained in the article puts a nail in that concept. It is a concept that I hope the Government has the sense not to pursue. Leaving aside the 50 States in the United States of America and the way they get around their budget balancing acts, it would be counterproductive for the wellbeing of the nation. I turn to the commitment of the Australian Labor Party. In several speeches the Leader of the Opposition has pointed to measures that a Labor Party government would pursue. The generation of employment is a fundamental issue faced by this State - it is a fundamental issue for any State government. An unemployment figure of 280,000 is a damning condemnation on the management of the New South Wales Government. The Government should create a climate in which investment and economic growth can be given their heads and those 280,000 people can reasonably expect to gain employment in the not too distant future. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

One area of great concern to me is regional development, which has largely been abandoned by the present Government. By leaving things as they are, the Government has condemned certain regions to economic stagnation. The Illawarra is a classic case. Land in south-western and western Sydney that had been supplied with essential services for industrial development, such as water and sewerage facilities, has gone on the market at a cost that did not include the costs of implementing such services, but developers had to meet only a cost that had been subsidised by the previous government. Unfortunately, the Illawarra was a little out of sync with the program at the time of the change of government. At West Dapto a lot of industrial land can only be developed at full cost because it was not developed on a subsidised basis under the Labor Government. That means that land in the Illawarra, if it were to be developed, would be twice as expensive as industrial land in western and south-western Sydney.

Clearly, no-one in his or her right mind would go ahead with the development of industrial land and put it on the market in the Illawarra when developers in western and south-western Sydney can sell comparable land at half the price. That is a great condemnation of the Government's approach, which will not encourage regional development in areas that badly need it. I am very much in favour of the abolition of payroll tax, although on this subject I may not necessarily be in agreement with others in my party. If a tax is to be imposed on anything it should be imposed on computer chips. Computer chips are replacing human beings in the production process, information distribution and general activity, yet there is a tax on the employment of people, which reduces the likelihood of the achievement of full employment.

People are being replaced by machinery that is driven by computerised systems, the core of which is the electronic chip. Why not simply remove the tax from one and put it on the other? I dare say that there are people who would disagree with that idea, but it is my fundamental belief that any government considering the generation of employment for the 280,000 currently unemployed has to start thinking laterally and examine issues such as the imposition of a tax on electronic chips. I wish to explain how the Labor Party expects to pay for its proposals. In a speech delivered on 8 September the Leader of the Opposition set out the areas from which he and Opposition researchers believe necessary funding can be sourced. Spending on consultants should be slashed. This Government has created a whole industry of consultants - consultants are almost the chosen group.

Mr Souris: They are the contractors, you see.

Mr SULLIVAN: Yes, but they actually do not do very much. They tell you what you should do and you probably know what you should do in the first place. Funding for the Labor Party's commitments will be achieved by slashing spending on consultants, government advertising, office refurbishments and the level of dead rent. I guess the old education department building is still empty after it was vacated all those years ago. The Government is paying rent for expensive downtown accommodation. Funding will also be secured by halving the size of the senior executive service; streamlining administration by scrapping some government departments and amalgamating and reorganising others for greater efficiency; savings of around 5 per cent in the State's \$1 billion stores and equipment budget; establishing a council on the cost of government, streamlining existing review mechanisms and utilising the best private and public sector managers; freezing funds on low priority capital works such as Luna Park and the Homebush Bay brick pit, et cetera. How much is Luna Park costing us?

Mr Yeadon: \$6 million.

Mr SULLIVAN: \$6 million?

Mr Souris: The amount is \$25 million. It has been mentioned in every annual report.

Mr SULLIVAN: A ride on the big dipper is \$25 million - that says it all. What do the Wollongong constituents get from this budget? It has a lot of window-dressing, but I will try to give it as much credit as I can. However, one has to bend over backwards to give credit to this Government. I have already mentioned the clinical services building. It intrigues me that every time it is referred to it has a new name. Originally it was called the diagnostics services building; it was then called the clinical services building; it is now called the clinical services block. Of course, with the phase-back after 1988 the name was changed to the clinical services building and it has now been resurrected as the clinical services block. The Government deserves credit for the installation of digital subtraction angiography equipment and has provided approximately \$1 million for nuclear medicine. Each of those will be of enormous benefit to the Illawarra. An additional 52 housing units will be provided at Wollongong, Berkeley and Figtree. Considering the housing waiting lists, that is an important achievement, but the area needs more. It is important that the Government commits more funds to maintenance. It is no good erecting buildings and allowing them to deteriorate.

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Mr Jeffery: Frank Arkell will get all of those funds.

Mr SULLIVAN: It will be very interesting. I will be pleased to run against Frank Arkell because it will clear up any doubts in the mind of the honourable member. The completion of the Illawarra senior college, a major innovation of the Department of School Education, is the only reference in the budget to education projects in the area. The TAFE college has been provided with additional child-care facilities, which should be the case as we enter the twenty-first century. I am impressed by the additional funding to Illawarra Electricity for the system control project, computer software development and computer hardware upgrade. As a business entity, Illawarra Electricity needs to keep abreast of changes, although with the proposed corporatisation and privatisation of such entities, heaven forbid that this Government should manage to scrape back in and continue as a minority government next term. If that happens I dare say those entities will be flogged off and, of course, consumers will pay through the neck for the services.

The Maritime Services Board is to receive additional funding for the coal loader seawall upgrade, the Outer Harbour land site remediation, additional roadworks for the Outer Harbour, and electronic navigation aids have been installed. The fire brigade will receive additional funding for extra

modifications at the Wollongong fire station to accommodate the new aerial appliance. The Illawarra has been waiting for this facility since 1988. It has taken this tired Government seven long years, but we are almost there. I am sure the Government will not hurry. After seven long years and being such a tired Government, it will not be able to organise that service before the State election. The next Labor government will promptly provide that service.

The Office of the Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services is spending about \$3.031 million on a mobile radio network. This will lead to a more efficient public sector in the Illawarra. I dare say that if this tired Government after seven years were to manage to scrape back in, the network would probably be privatised after being installed - sold off for a song. But that will not happen and so we will not have to worry about that. The Public Works Department is committed to spending \$564,000 on estuary management for Lake Illawarra. The Minister for Public Works deserves full credit for continuing this important program to restore Lake Illawarra for people to enjoy. Pacific Power will spend \$1.15 million on a technology centre; State Rail Authority will spend almost \$4.5 million on major works, including an \$800,000 upgrade of Wollongong railway station; the Water Board is committed to projects totalling \$3.751 million for upgraded reservoir outlets at Mangerton and pumping stations at Coniston.

Mr Souris: You have done all right.

Mr SULLIVAN: Yes, but then again, I have been working hard on the Government and it takes a lot of hard work to get even a few cents. I am amazed that the Government has not made any reference in the budget papers to Port Kembla police station. I am not worried, so long as the renovations and additions costing \$500,000 are continued and completed. I hope Port Kembla police station does not become yet another clinical services building, clinical services block, diagnostic services building - whatever you want to call it - which is started, then stopped and left for years. Last of all, the Roads and Traffic Authority has allocated \$425,000 for the widening of the southern expressway from Gwynneville to Ghost Creek, \$1.52 million for minor roadworks, and approximately \$1.4 million for preservation and other maintenance work. These allocations are good and useful but, as I said earlier, when a government is primarily concerned with partisanship and takes the attitude: if you vote for us, you get the goodies; if you do not vote for us, even the sick, the aged, and the invalids will suffer because they dare not to vote for us, it is a scandal. That is the fundamental reason this Government's use-by date is well and truly passed.

Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter - Minister for Land and Water Conservation) [5.08]: My colleague the Treasurer said this budget is both responsible and responsive; it strikes the necessary balance between fiscal restraint and real increases for funding in core services. That is the essence of this budget. If one looks at the trend for expenditure on essential core services - health, education, law and order, transport - the trend line is very much upwards. Yet, if one looks at the trend line for the budget, it is downwards in actual and real terms. That is what the Government means when it refers to fiscal restraint with necessary funding for core services. Core services have increased over the last three years and are projected to continue to increase over the subsequent three years, while at the same time the level of deficit has decreased and is expected to have a downward trend over the next three years.

The budget achieves these objectives with no increases in taxes. Despite the hysterics of the Leader of the Opposition, the Government is not increasing taxes; it is in fact reducing taxes. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to fly the furphy that a balanced budget also means a goods and services tax - GST - or something like that, let him do so. The facts show that this Government is reducing taxes, not increasing them, and has no intention of introducing any new taxes or any new types of taxes. The Government - with tremendous success - is hauling back the horrendous debts incurred by the previous Labor Government. I do not know how the Leader of the Opposition can lie straight in bed when he refers to the previous Labor Government having a great record of fiscal responsibility. That would have to be the biggest joke in Australasian history. The levels of debt and unfunded liabilities were utterly appalling. The previous Government racked up those liabilities and this Government has brought those aspects of fiscal policy in New South Wales under control. The Government has turned its inheritance of

Labor's economic vandalism into a shining example of diligent

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economic management. That example has been replicated by other States and, indeed, by the Commonwealth.

The budget deficit has been reined in. In 1991-92 it was \$800 million. In 1994-95 it will be \$353 million, and only \$144 million in 1996-97. To all intents and purposes, either in that year or, technically, in the following year the budget will be balanced. Thereafter, New South Wales will have a sustainable balanced budget. The people of New South Wales will bear these facts in mind, because they have contributed significantly to the financial success of this Government and the growing financial success of this State. They have a vested interest in ongoing financial responsibility and vivid memories of the horror of Labor's ruination of their economy. They remember also the ruination by other Labor administrations of the economies of Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria. Those memories will not easily be expunged from the minds of voters in those States or in this State.

The runs put on the board by Labor during its time in government prove that its financial recklessness caused untold damage to millions of individuals, families and businesses across the length and breadth of this State. The people of New South Wales will never forget the fundamental difference between Labor and the coalition. Despite the difficulties of dealing with inherited economic vandalism and with steering the State through a national recession that Labor said we had to have, the Government has made substantial real increases in funding for major infrastructure and services. It is absolutely laughable to hear Labor shouting about alleged funding cuts and, at the same time, about fulfilling its promises to cap existing taxes and match spending initiatives with equivalent funding cutbacks. The mathematics just do not work. Labor would have to fiddle the books, as it did in 1987 and 1988 when it counted borrowings as general revenue. If Labor was so good, how come this Government, despite the horrendous economic times of recent years, has still been able to eclipse Labor's record?

Compared to Labor's last year in office, the Government has recorded increases in recurrent expenditure over and above inflation and well in excess of population growth of about 12 per cent in health, 13 per cent in education, more than 60 per cent in social and community services, and more than 23 per cent in law, order and public safety. Unlike Labor the Government does not ignore the bush. Its commitment to continued growth and development across regional areas of this State is plain to all. This financial year \$51 million has been allocated for rural education programs, \$40 million for assisting business development and \$73 million for drought and rural assistance. Hospitals will be upgraded and redeveloped. There will be more nurses, teachers and police officers, and more social and community services. More will be spent on roads, public housing, tourism, and the environment and conservation.

Nearly \$32 million has been allocated to conservation and land management projects for the budget year: \$6.2 million has been allocated for the land information system, \$6 million for landcare and \$3 million for the salt action program, more than \$3.8 million for total catchment management projects and nearly \$3.6 million for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Trust. A total of \$187 million will be spent in 1994-95 on the management of the State's water resources. This expenditure will ensure that existing programs - such as the State's rivers and estuaries policy, water quality research and management, and drainage and salinity works - and community projects including streamwatch, rivercare and phosphorous awareness are maintained and strengthened.

Major capital works to be undertaken by the Department of Water Resources this financial year include upgrading and restoration of flood levees at a cost of \$3.1 million, and the expenditure of \$5.9 million on nutrient control works to continue the fight against blue-green algae; \$3 million for rivercare management; \$9.5 million for the enlargement of Pindari Dam; \$7.3 million for the Coomealla pipeline project; \$6.7 million to reduce waterlogging and salinisation in the Murray River basin; and \$4 million for continued flood security works at Burrinjuck Dam. In respect of the recurrent program over the past five years the Government has placed increasing emphasis on expenditure on improving water quality, nutrient control, salinity control, environment protection, flood plain management and maintenance to an

acceptable level of the State's 17 major rural dams. In regard to those dams, additional funding will be generated through the installation of privately owned hydro-electric power stations at several dams. One such station is already operational at Wyangala Dam, and five more are scheduled to come into operation progressively during 1995-96.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

STOCK ROUTE LEASES

Mr W. T. J. MURRAY (Barwon) [5.15]: I want to attempt to sort out problems that exist between rural local government councils and Rural Lands Protection Boards. At present a problem exists in the north-west of the State between Coonabarabran Council and the Coonabarabran Rural Lands Protection Board. The basis of the problem is that neither body recognises the ability of the other to lease roads to stock owners who are endeavouring to feed some of the many thousands of stock in the area. Feed is abundant in the area along the local and State roads. The problem is that the council does not believe it owns and is responsible for the roads. The council claims that because the Government owns

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these roads, a government direction is needed to allow stock owners to agist their stock on the roads. The fact is that councils still own all of the roads in New South Wales, with the exception of State and national highways. Those roads have been vested in councils for forever and a day, but sometimes it is a little hard to get that message across.

If a road is leased to a stock owner, a \$5 million third party insurance policy is required, and the stock must be locked up every night. The rangers from the Coonabarabran Rural Lands Protection Board say they will not issue permits, because the stock are not to be agisted on their stock routes. They claim they have no power of control if they issue a permit, and that they cannot move the stock. They have asked what happens if the stock are lousy, who will control the length of time the stock will be out, who inspects them, and who gets the money. I assume that virtually every other council and Rural Lands Protection Board in New South Wales is well aware of the rules and regulations. The two bodies recognise the needs of the stock owners, but they must also recognise that they have the ability to do something about the problem. The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries is responsible for the Rural Lands Protection Boards. I ask him to make the Coonabarabran Rural Lands Protection Board and all rural lands protection boards in New South Wales abundantly clear about their ability to allow stock on to the highways, the action they must take, and their responsibilities.

Similarly, it would be of great benefit to the State if the Minister for Roads were to advise councils as to who owns certain roads and who has responsibility for them; and to explain that under the various sections of the Act it is within the power of councils to lease roads for cattle grazing purposes. I might add that last night Coonabarabran Council was advised that it could not legally do it. A direction must be given to legal advisers that councils can in fact allow agistment on roads under certain terms and conditions which they can impose. In this way all councils and rural lands protection boards in New South Wales will be operating on a common basis. Section 94(3) of the Rural Lands Protection Act applies only to rural lands protection boards; it does not apply to councils. It will be a big help to stockowners across the State if this matter can be sorted out.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.20]: I thank the honourable member for Barwon for raising this issue, which he discussed with me earlier. It

seems incomprehensible that at the present time there could be a situation such as he has described. The State is in very serious drought. Travelling stock routes have always been available for stock at such times. Obviously, someone has got his wires crossed or is being unreasonable and unthoughtful about the problems that exist for stock owners across the State. I assure the honourable member for Barwon that if he provides me with the details, I will do everything I can to ensure that the situation is soon brought into its true perspective.

CENTRAL COAST PENSIONER PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr McBRIDE (The Entrance) [5.22]: On the central coast there is a critical shortage of pensioner public housing. I have previously raised this matter with the Minister by addressing the House, placing questions on notice, and through correspondence. I regret to say that the Fahey Government has missed its last vital chance to address the critical accommodation shortage for pensioners on the central coast. Before providing the facts and figures which confirm this view, I want the House to be familiar with the personal plight of two of my constituents, Mr Philip Pearson and his wife, Joyce.

In the past few months Mr Pearson has been hospitalised twice, the most recent stay requiring a long period in intensive care following a severe respiratory arrest. Despite treatment, he continued to suffer the lingering effects of that condition and was required to remain on a respirator upon being discharged from hospital. The Pearsons, who are both in their seventies, live on a long and steep hill at Bateau Bay. They are a substantial distance from necessary support services - public transport, the pharmacist and their doctor, Neil Janes. This consideration is important, given that Mrs Pearson also has leg complaints that have greatly reduced her mobility.

I supported the Pearsons' request for priority accommodation, given the acute deterioration in Philip's health, but they were recently informed that the accommodation they needed was not available, even though they were not specific about the suburb they sought. The result is that an elderly man with a severe medical condition has been left on the sidewalk by the department. Perhaps the House can understand the department's dilemma in considering the lack of resources at hand in trying to place people such as the Pearsons. More than 1,500 pensioners on the central coast are waiting for public housing, and waiting times have spiralled from four to eight years under the coalition Government.

In 1988 the waiting period for public housing for aged pensioners on the central coast was four years. It is now eight years. In seven years under this Government the waiting time for public housing for pensioners has doubled. The Department of Housing's dilemma is that there is insufficient housing for these people, despite the fact that the population of the central coast is expected to increase continually and quite significantly each year. I mentioned earlier that I have regularly raised this problem with the Minister in an attempt to ensure that enough housing is provided to reduce waiting times. To his credit, the Minister has made some small concessions. For example, an additional 17 new pensioner housing units were added to the 1993-94 construction program and, during that period, as a result of representations, an additional 30 small units were also acquired for pensioner housing.

At the time I thought that, finally, the Government may be starting to see sense on this issue and was perhaps adopting a genuine, constructive

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approach. I actually looked forward to it, based on the Minister's response and the fact that it was said that there would be a significant increase in the budget for public housing for pensioners. But the budget papers handed down last week showed that a mere 22 pensioner units will be constructed at Wyoming and The Entrance in my electorate. I cannot properly express my disappointment, as local pensioners deserve more than crumbs from the table. The allocation of 22 pensioner units will barely make a dent in the waiting time faced by the 1,500 -

Mr Phillips: On a point of order: the honourable member for The Entrance has been in the Parliament long enough to know that if he is going to be genuine and speak from the heart about issues

concerning his electorate, he should not read speeches parrot fashion, especially during the time set aside for private member's statements, although he may work from copious notes.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Rixon): Order! I uphold the point of order. It is a long-established practice in this House that members should not read from prepared speeches. However, I am prepared to accept that the honourable member may have made copious notes. He may refer to them from time to time.

Mr McBRIDE: I thank the Minister. I am sure his interjection was sincere and from the heart. I am also confident that when I take a similar point of order with regard to other speakers in debate he will support me, and will do so every day in the House. Let me make my point quite clear. The Premier said in his contribution to debate on the budget that there had been a 30 per cent increase in public housing for aged pensioners. In my electorate there has been a reduction in the allocation of public housing for aged persons. Every member of this Parliament, including the Minister - who travels up there to abuse local members when he feels like it - is fully aware of the problem of public housing for the aged on the central coast. The problem faced by the Pearsons and others like them is not being addressed. There is a need for a complete review of housing stock on the central coast. [*Time expired.*]

GLADESVILLE ELECTORATE POLICE SERVICES

Mr PETCH (Gladesville) [5.27]: I want to dispel some rumours that have been propagated by the Labor Party regarding the administration of police services in the Gladesville electorate. For the information of the House, Gladesville electorate is serviced exceptionally well by two major policing establishments - that is, Ryde police station and Gladesville police station. Ryde has always been the major policing centre for the Gladesville electorate. Indeed, in the early days, Gladesville police station was merely a cottage, where the sergeant of police resided with his family. The Gladesville police station was a satellite of that at Ryde.

Shortly before the 1988 election, under Labor the Gladesville police station was to run part-time. In other words, the station would close late at night and the Eaglefone service would connect Gladesville with Ryde. I am very pleased to say that one of the first initiatives taken by this Government when it came to office was to ensure that Gladesville police station continued operating for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. This Government has always maintained that crime does not knock off in the late hours, that crime is operating 24 hours a day, and so should the police.

I read in the local paper an article under the headline "Carr's Crime Plan: The ALP Leader Hits the Streets". First of all he took on the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice, suggesting he was grandstanding when he said that the policing strength at Ryde comprised 53 uniform police and eight detectives. He asserted that Ryde was nowhere near that strength; that Ryde was well and truly under strength. When it was checked with Senior Sergeant Bob Barry at the Ryde police station, the sergeant said that Mr Carr was quite wrong because Ryde police station was at its full strength with 53 police, uniform and detectives.

I am pleased to announce that to the House for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition. When he attacks he will get the crunch of all time. He said, "It is hard to say which is worse, Mr Photios' misleading grandstanding for the media or the dead silence on the subject of policing from the member for Gladesville, Ivan Petch". That is the statement of all times! It is obvious that he was not briefed. Nobody has told him what is going on in Gladesville or Ryde, otherwise he would have been reading regularly in the papers the progress of the new Gladesville police station, a new policing centre being built at a cost of \$2,009,000 and due for completion at the end of this year. It will be one of the major policing establishments in the whole area and will provide security for 36,000 residents in an area of about 70 square kilometres covering areas of Hunter's Hill, Putney, Tennyson, Gladesville, East Ryde and parts of North Ryde. The policing centre will complement the police station at Ryde. Together they

will provide one of the strongest police forces of all time in that area.

I am pleased to note that the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, who has been attacked in this matter by the Leader of the Opposition, has now entered the House, because he will verify exactly what I am saying to the House - that the Leader of the Opposition has peddled misinformation because he was never briefed properly. Gladesville police station is, at the moment, one or two units below full strength because two excellent police officers have retired. I refer to Senior Sergeant John Flanagan and Senior Sergeant Bruce Knowles. Over the years they have given exemplary performance and service to policing the area and have earned the respect of the whole community. There is no doubt whatever that after the cramped conditions at Ryde and Gladesville have been addressed - particularly at Gladesville, with the construction of a new police station - the electorate will have its full policing strength.

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Under Inspector Barry Beavis, the patrol commander - who has done an exemplary job in the community, not only in policing and addressing crime in the area, but in forging a relationship between the police and the public - I am absolutely certain that the new police station to be opened at the end of the year will be one of the outstanding achievements of this Government. [*Time expired.*]

Mr PHOTIOS (Ermington - Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice) [5.32]: I congratulate the honourable member for Gladesville for raising this important matter. Policing in the electorates of Gladesville, Ryde and Ermington is absolutely critical. My colleague and I have been waging a war on crime for years. The crime rate has fallen. The police strength has more than tripled and there are more detectives at Ryde police station. They have more police cars. There is a shopfront facility at West Ryde that serves the honourable member for Gladesville in his electorate and my electorate in West Ryde.

I reject outright the criticisms levelled by the Leader of the Opposition when he claimed that there were not 53 police in the police station at Ryde. There are. There has been a considerable increase in police strength, which was below 30 in 1988 - a considerable increase indeed. I congratulate the honourable member for Gladesville particularly for his war against crime in Gladesville, and for making certain that the establishment of the new police station at Gladesville is on track. He has done great work and has made an enormous contribution to community policing. He is absolutely determined that that new police station will be opened before the end of the year. The work has started and it will be finished by the Fahey Government with Ivan Petch alongside, an active community based member fighting his war on crime in the electorate of Gladesville.

STRATHFIELD RAILWAY STATION PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS

Mr J. H. MURRAY (Drummoyne) [5.33]: I draw the attention of the House to a problem which has been experienced by my constituent, Mrs MacMorran of Concord, and by others in my electorate as a consequence of the closure of the pedestrian tunnel underneath Strathfield railway station. The Minister would be aware that because of the lack of police presence and general security problems the tunnel had become a dark, graffiti sprayed underpass, with the general public fearing for their lives every time they used it. At last the Government has realised that something must be done and has closed the tunnel for three months to enable Burwood Council to carry out remedial work funded by the Department of Transport.

Unfortunately, the tunnel's closure means that residents wishing to move from one side of Strathfield to the other must obtain a 20¢ platform ticket to move through the station concourse. Why should the residents of my electorate be forced to pay a toll to access their shopping centre, when major stations such as Wynyard, Town Hall and Central do not charge people using these stations as a thoroughfare? Bus passengers - mainly schoolchildren and the aged - who use the 458, 415 and 480 services, are now

being forced to undertake a 15-minute walk around the station and so risk the possibility of missing their bus connections if they wish to avoid the pedestrian toll. It is obvious that a similar layout to Wynyard or Town Hall could be adopted, with the installation of a temporary passageway through the centre of the concourse to facilitate residents wishing to pass through the station. Alternatively, free tickets could be issued for a period of three months for regular users.

I find it totally unacceptable that State Rail Authority officials can say in all honesty that they are concerned about fare evaders when they provide so few ticket collectors at most Sydney rail stations. In recent years, when Metro 10 bus tickets were issued, station staff agreed that it was acceptable to walk through the station if one produced the bus pass. It is appalling that in this modern day Strathfield station still operates under nineteenth century conditions. I call on the Minister to investigate this matter even though it may seem trivial to some, because only 20¢ or 40¢ is being charged to use the station as a public thoroughfare. Those charges could be the thin end of the wedge. We know what the Government has done in turning motorways into tollways. I call on the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads to investigate this matter and to provide free tickets for local residents wishing to use the Strathfield concourse when moving from one side of the station to the other during this three-month period.

Mr PHILLIPS (Miranda - Minister for Health) [5.37]: It is interesting that the honourable member for Drummoyne should raise a Strathfield matter. I should have liked to have heard a note of congratulation to the Government for putting up the funds to fix that tunnel at Strathfield - a tunnel I know well because of my past residency in suburbs not far from Strathfield. But he has come into this House grandstanding. There must not be many serious issues in his electorate. He asks the Minister to solve a problem that would be fixed by the SRA and local people responsible for fixing such problems. He should not waste the time of this House on issues that can be fixed by local authorities. In view of the incompetence of the honourable member for Drummoyne, I will raise the issue not with the Minister but with the Minister's office to see if something can be done, so that the member can be spoon-fed a reply.

ISOLATED CHILDREN'S EDUCATION SUBSIDIES

Mr SMALL (Murray) [5.39]: The Isolated Children's Parents Association of New South Wales, whose representatives I met with this afternoon, has raised a very important issue. In its discussion paper, the association states:

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1. Effects of drought on families and its effect on their children's educational options:

The drought is into its fourth year for many families living in the northern half of the Western Division. This on top of the high interest rate policies of the past Federal Government and low commodity prices has severely limited the capacity of isolated rural families to meet the high costs of education, hence limiting their children's' educational opportunities. In the words of the Western Lands Commissioner, Peter Davey, "The Western Division over four years has suffered a cycle of commodity price collapses, drought and high interest rates, causing distress unparalleled since the region was settled over a century ago". Because of the drought families have few sheep to shear now that wool prices are at last making worthwhile gains in price. These families should not have the additional impost of paying heavily to get their children educated.

2. State Living Away From Home Allowance:

Urgent consideration should be given to increasing the State Living Away from Home Allowance. Improving the offering of education delivered to the students home via Distance Education or improving the offering at local schools using technology is not an appropriate option for all students.

This has been a long standing issue with I.C.P.A. In the submission taken to the Premier in January 1993, I.C.P.A. sought an additional allowance as an extension to the LAHA that would only apply to geographically isolated students.

The letter added that because of the comparatively small number of students who are isolated, the cost to the Government would be minimal. I should like to identify recommendations from the Isolated Children's Parents' Association of New South Wales Incorporated, set out in that letter as follows:

1. Retain all students who currently qualify for the State Living Away from Home Allowance on the existing criteria and at the rate determined for 1993.
2. Introduce a new category of students who qualify for a non means tested Living Away from Home Allowance of \$500 per annum. These students would be those who meet the Commonwealth Government's definition of geographic isolation and are presently in receipt of the Boarding or Second Home Allowance component of the AIC or the "Away" rate of secondary students Austudy.

Estimated number of students meeting these criteria: 2200.

Cost to revenue: $2200 \times \$500 = \1.1 million

3. Increase the means tested component for the geographically isolated recipients of the present Living Away from Home Allowance by \$250 per annum.

NSW Schools Finance Directorate estimate of eligible students: 575

Cost to revenue: $575 \times \$250 = \$143,750$

Total extra cost = \$1.244 million

Transport support and the living away from home allowance is absolutely essential, particularly with drought conditions prevailing throughout 83 per cent of our State, which virtually covers all of the western division, where most of these children are. There are not a lot. There are only 2,200 children living in isolation. I am pleased today that the Federal Government has at least agreed to re-assess Austudy to align it to incomes rather than asset testing of farmers' support programs. I seek the support of our Government to provide both transport and educational needs. It is not a large request to put before Treasury.

WOY WOY RAILWAY STATION

Mr DOYLE (Peats) [5.43]: I advise the House of my concern that due to Government neglect and what I regard as totally inappropriate priorities one of the State's busiest non-metropolitan rail terminals, Woy Woy, is being turned into a shambles. It was believed that the recent commencement of the long awaited Woy Woy parkway project - the construction of a multideck commuter car park and a pedestrian overpass - would provide an excellent opportunity to upgrade the railway station to provide the modern, efficient terminal for which the Woy Woy peninsula community has waited so long. Instead, we are at risk of ending up with a dog's breakfast of a design for the station and associated areas, which will compound rather than alleviate the existing problems faced by rail travellers.

The two reasons for this are the continual refusal of the State Government and the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads to designate Woy Woy as an easy access station, and the Minister's refusal to provide for the construction of lifts or escalators at the station in association with the construction work being undertaken as part of the parkway project. I do not believe that what we are asking is unreasonable, particularly when the \$7 million in recent expenditure on Gosford railway station

is taken into account and the fact that Woy Woy has only marginally fewer customers than Gosford on any week day: 9,600 as against 13,000, according to the figures provided by CityRail. What does the Government spend on Woy Woy by comparison? Peanuts. It should be pointed out that Wyong railway station which, again according to CityRail, has 4,000 passengers per day - fewer than half the number of Woy Woy - has been included in CityRail's easy access program, with extra facilities and expenditure being provided accordingly.

This raises a question that I put to the Minister: how is it decided, by whom and by what process, which railway stations are to be included in the easy access program and which railway stations are not? I can see absolutely no rationale for these decisions, other than the political agenda of the Fahey Government. By any criterion, Woy Woy should be designated an easy access station and included in this program. The station is one of the top 10 in the State outside the metropolitan area. The area from which it draws its passengers contains one of the largest populations of elderly people in Australia, many of whom are frequent rail travellers, and existing facilities are abysmal. One very long and inefficient ramp connects the rail platforms with the street and the ticket office. Facilities to assist rail passengers who are elderly and infirm, who have young families, and who have bulky or heavy luggage are non-existent. There are no lifts and no escalators.

The attitude of the Government and its ludicrous priorities can, to a certain extent, be gleaned from two letters from the office of the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads. The letters were not signed by the Minister; apparently he is far too important for

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such menial concerns as local transport issues that affect tens of thousands of people. The letter was signed by his sidekick, the parliamentary secretary for transport, our old friend Wayne Merton MP. The letters are in reply to representations made by the Ettalong Ratepayers' and Citizens' Progress Association. As a result of its concerns the association passed the reply to me. I quote briefly:

As I indicated to you on 21 February 1994, the selection of stations for inclusion in CityRail's "Easy Access" program took into account the need for a reasonable distribution of such facilities on the network. In this regard, it was considered that Gosford station largely serves the central/southern region of the Central Coast whilst Wyong station, which is some 20km away, serves people living in the north.

In addition, whilst residential growth is forecast at various locations on the Central Coast, I am informed that this is particularly the case in the Wyong area and the availability of the new facilities at Wyong station will be advantageous in this regard.

Although CityRail would like to provide "Easy Access" facilities at all stations, this is not possible due to the high cost involved . . .

This Minister, through his parliamentary secretary, contends that easy access at Wyong will be advantageous to meet residential growth. In other words, possible future passengers at Wyong are more important than the far greater number already patronising Woy Woy. Also of interest to local commuters would be the Government's view that Gosford is the easy access station for the Woy Woy peninsula and its 30,000 plus residents. The commencement of the Woy Woy parkway project was seen as the golden opportunity to remedy some of these problems. Thanks to the bungling by the Department of Transport we will have the ludicrous situation whereby funding has been provided to construct the lift wells and lift shafts for the station in the parkway project for some future use, but no funding has been provided for the lifts themselves. We will therefore have an empty, idle lift well as a monument to the continuing stupidity of this Government, while passengers struggle with their luggage. [*Time expired.*]

PORTO RIDGE DEVELOPMENT

Mr O'DOHERTY (Ku-ring-gai) [5.48]: I speak on behalf of all the residents of my electorate and, indeed, on behalf of Sydney people generally who, I know, would join with me in calling on this Government to take whatever action is necessary to save from development the area known as Porto Ridge. The previous speaker, the honourable member for Peats, as he drives south across the bridge on the freeway and passes Brooklyn on his left, would see Porto Ridge rising above Brooklyn as a magnificent, unspoiled area of bushland; a marvellous, largely unspoiled bushland escarpment that is an important scenic backdrop to that village and an important environmental backdrop to the very sensitive area of the Hawkesbury River.

I do not know why it is so, but the land has been zoned for residential purposes since 1951. I know that we knew less about and perhaps even thought less about the environment in 1951 than we do in 1994, but I do not understand how anybody could have zoned that land for residential purposes in 1951. Nonetheless, it was. Since then there have been a number of attempts to get developments up and running there. The costs of developing the area would be substantial: it is a very steep area of escarpment and there would be difficulty in putting roads through. Nonetheless, plans have existed for some years. I have in my possession a plan that was put out some years ago by the Realty property group, which no longer owns the parcel of land. It was proposed that stage one contain 220 large, luxury, single-dwelling home sites, with a 200-berth marina, a 200-room international hotel, 18 waterfront townhouses, 164 hillside terrace houses - the plan goes on and on. I am very pleased indeed that that development did not go ahead, and I am sure most of my constituents are also pleased about that. The land is still largely unspoilt.

The current owner is Industrial Equity Limited. It has not lodged a development application, but I understand that because the land is still zoned residential, a development application for the land could be lodged at any time. Indeed, a development application may even now be in the planning stage. Hornsby Council, in consideration of its recent local environmental plan, suggested to the Minister for Planning that the land be zoned for environment protection. My understanding is that in the preparation of the local environment plan council staff had not argued for environment protection and the council has a history of not arguing for complete environment protection. In 1992 Hornsby local environmental plan No. 90 was made. It would have allowed 400 to 500 dwellings, and under current dual occupancy codes the number could have been far higher.

But in 1994 the councillors in their wisdom argued against their own staff and asked the Minister to zone the land environment protection. The Minister has agreed to the LEP and has set aside consideration of the Porto Ridge area because he wants a working group to look at the issues surrounding it and some of the complex legal questions that may be involved with the Government rezoning something from residential to environment protection. There may be certain considerations that need to be worked through. The council has rejected the Minister's suggestion that there be a working party. I would urge the council to reconsider that. There is no question that the Government agrees with the council that the land must be zoned environment protection. We need to achieve that in the best possible way. The working group is a way of progressing it and I ask council to reconsider. However, in the meantime and because of my concern that at any moment a development application might be lodged, on behalf of my many constituents concerned about the area I urge the Minister for Planning to zone the area environment protection.

Importantly, I am also urging the Minister for the Environment to ask the National Parks and Wildlife Service to begin immediate investigations of

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whether Porto Ridge should be - in my view must be - added to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, which it abuts. I urge the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, once the National Parks and Wildlife Service has carried out the investigation, to investigate ways in which the Government might progress the matter. My dream and the dream of my constituents is to have Porto Ridge saved and added to the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. Any less would be a disaster for the environment and the amenity of Brooklyn and that area of the Hawkesbury

River.

Mr PHILLIPS (Miranda - Minister for Health) [5.53]: I thank the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. Members who know the beauty of the area surrounding the Hawkesbury would understand the campaign to have the issue resolved. Since the 1950s attitudes to the development have changed dramatically, and thank goodness for that. I am not aware of the issue personally but the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai has articulated the issue as he sees it and the vision he has on behalf of his constituents. I am more than happy to take the matter to the Minister on his behalf.

CANTERBURY TRAFFIC

Mr MOSS (Canterbury) [5.55]: A few years ago right turns were banned at the traffic lights at the intersection of Kingsgrove Road and Homer Street, Earlwood, in my electorate. This prevented traffic travelling north along Kingsgrove Road from turning right into another major artery, Homer Street. This gave rise to the old problem: through traffic wanting to turn into Homer Street used residential streets before the intersection. Imposition of the ban followed Canterbury Council's closing off one of its residential streets, Rolestone Avenue, because it was copping a great deal of through traffic and had become virtually a main road. The council, being responsible for the upkeep of the road and having responsibility to the residents of the street, decided that the street should be closed.

The Roads and Traffic Authority was not happy with the closure. It is never happy with the closure of residential streets because through traffic is then pushed to its rightful place: main roads. The RTA claims that as a consequence of the street closure there would be too much congestion at the intersection and so it imposed the right turn ban and allowed a right turn movement in another direction. I thought this decision was taken mainly out of spite. For some time other people and I have been requesting the RTA to do something about the intersection. It has been argued that if a right turn will not be allowed in the present circumstances the road should be widened to include a right turn lane.

At last the RTA has stated that a right turn movement will be allowed and everything else at the intersection will remain the same - the right turn movement allowed will remain. This raises the question of why the right turn into Homer Street was banned in the first place. However, the RTA wants Canterbury Council to pay for reconstruction of the signals, which will cost approximately \$50,000. This response is outrageous as the blame does not lie with Canterbury Council for closing a street. Rolestone Avenue had to be closed to prevent through traffic from traversing a residential street. Through traffic is the responsibility of the RTA. Why should ratepayers have to fork out for main road signalling?

The RTA is saying that there can be a right turn from one main road into another main road provided the local council foots the bill. This is an outrageous response, particularly as the RTA created the problem in the first place. I do not believe that ratepayers should have to fork out for this sort of work. Surely New South Wales motorists generally should foot the bill. They are the people using the roads, not just the residents of the Canterbury municipality. Obviously the RTA is not catering sufficiently for through traffic. It is trying to shift its responsibility for traffic movement and traffic signalling on to local councils. I appeal to the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads to convince the RTA that it is the authority responsible for the work and that it should carry out the work speedily at the expense of the authority.

ILLAWARRA REGION COALWASH FILLING

Mr HARRISON (Kiama) [6.00]: I wish to bring to the attention of the House my concern about the filling with coalwash of an area close to Haywards Bay in Lake Illawarra. At present the dumping and spreading of coalwash is taking place around the clock. I am led to believe that some 1.5 million tonnes

will be deposited on site, with the intention of raising the level of the ground by several feet. Apparently, this action has the approval of Wollongong City Council and, presumably, the Environment Protection Authority, although I understand that it has not been referred to the Lake Illawarra Authority. The land in question is owned by a company called Soredo Proprietary Limited and is in two sections. One section is situated east of the railway line and the other between the Princes Highway and the railway line. I am informed that it was rezoned by a local environmental plan some years ago.

There are currently three other development applications lodged with Wollongong City Council, one being for the filling of land east of the present filling and the others for the creation of residential allotments, totalling some 360 lots. I am extremely concerned about the possible effect of this filling when Lake Illawarra becomes swollen after prolonged heavy rain and the area of which I speak is no longer available to act as a detention area for floodwaters. It might well be that the flooding of home sites could be caused in the Albion Park Rail, Windang and Lake Illawarra south suburbs where numerous home sites have been established over past years. The land in question is also adjacent to the area identified in Illawarra Regional Plan No. 1 as being affected by the Albion Park airport flight path, from which at present

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some 520 aircraft movements occur per month - a figure that is expected to increase as the Illawarra region continues to develop.

Rezoning would bring about an undesirable extension of ribbon development along the Princes Highway, as well as being contrary to government policy, and would increase traffic conflict. Rezoning and development along the Princes Highway between Albion Park Rail and Dapto would remove part of an important non-urban corridor between two developing areas. I find it hard to understand how an approval involving the use of such a large volume of coalwash could ever have been given by the Wollongong City Council or any other public authority. I call on relevant Ministers, such as the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Planning, to intervene and stop all work on this area until such time as a thorough investigation is carried out and a report issued from the Environment Protection Authority, the Lake Illawarra Authority and the Lake Illawarra Management Committee.

The creation of a Lake Illawarra management authority is the result of many years of agitation by public authorities such as local councils and by persons with an interest in the welfare of the lake. I am pleased to say that the creation of the management authority has led to the expenditure of many millions of dollars by both the previous government and this Government. The development that I consider to be so offensive, the dumping of 1.5 million tonnes of coalwash in close proximity to the lake, throws a spanner in the works and flies in the face of everything that has been done previously. There is an apparent urgency, evidenced by the fact that around the clock the development company is dumping coalwash. I might be doing the company an injustice, but it seems to me that the company is intent on getting as much fill as possible in close to the lake before someone makes a public statement about that.

The dumping of coalwash defies all explanation in relation to planning principles about ribbon development and about the infill of an area declared a buffer zone between two fast developing residential areas. From an environmental point of view, the placement of such obnoxious substances as coalwash in close proximity to the lake defies explanation. If the land had to be filled, it might have been preferable for some of the silt in the lake, particularly in Haywards Bay, to be pumped out and then used for filling. That would have dewatered over a period of time. It appears that coalwash is being used because it is cheap. This is a nasty development that is being carried out with speed.

MACQUARIE SHOPPING CENTRE GAMES PARLOUR

Mr TINK (Eastwood) [6.05]: Ryde City Council recently lost a battle in the Land and Environment Court to prevent a family games parlour from opening in the Macquarie shopping centre in the Gladesville electorate. I have spoken to the honourable member for Gladesville about this matter and he agrees with

what I am about to say. On behalf of us both I would like to say that we strongly supported Ryde City Council taking on this issue, notwithstanding that the battle was lost. We also supported those aldermen who opposed the application for the games parlour in the Macquarie centre. The council has been criticised in some quarters for the legal bill involved in the case. The honourable member for Gladesville and I believe that the battle was worth fighting.

Two previous applications for pinball parlours in the area were opposed successfully. I have spoken on this issue in the House in the past. We have been at pains to ascertain from those who have expertise in this area just what the effect of such centres can be. A letter dated 25 April from the Eastwood beat police sergeant, written after consultation with his patrol commander, states that it is local police policy to object to the introduction of amusement centres, in this case within the Eastwood centre, because it is considered that such establishments contribute to antisocial behaviour and increase the incidence of street offences. It was stated that if the application were granted the police would want strict conditions to be attached to trading hours outside of school hours.

I also received a letter from Darlene Keenan, a youth development officer at one of the youth refuges operating in my electorate. Local press, service clubs and churches and all those involved in youth work consider that Darlene stands out as an expert in youth affairs. It is in the area of youth affairs that the rubber hits the road, so to speak, with youths who have difficulties with truancy, drug use and so forth. In a letter dated 14 April Darlene stated that she has eight years experience of working closely with youths who frequent amusement centres, mainly in the Manly area. She said that amusement centres encourage a rapid increase in truancy; petty crime, to feed the machines; and a lack of motivation in line with education.

Darlene said that in her work with many young people who attend such venues she found that their self-esteem was low and that their interest in school diminished. Youths link up with others involved in petty crime, which is reflected in behaviour and attitudes. She said that many amusement centres experience a level of drug and alcohol activity. In some instances young people would not be influenced towards drugs and alcohol in other settings. In her work with young people she had found that it was difficult enough to encourage some youth to attend school and attain a solid education, that the influence of an amusement centre could deter young people from seeking advice on educational issues and that they could fall into a cycle of rejecting school altogether. Darlene pointed out that the increase in the number of young people leaving school early is already an issue of great concern.

The honourable member for Gladesville and I share those concerns. The pinball parlour in the Macquarie shopping centre is now a reality. I hope
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that police resources in the Eastwood and Gladesville patrols will not be overstretched in dealing with problems of the type anticipated in the correspondence I have received, problems that plainly would not occur but for the establishment of the amusement centre. I suppose that the Macquarie centre presents a better venue than some of the other venues proposed, in the sense that it is a large commercial centre with its own security and shopfront police station. That offers some comfort that would not be available in the Eastwood centre shopping complex or the Gladesville shopping centre area.

That said, that is not the end of the problem. There is also the problem, a matter of great concern to me and to the honourable member for Gladesville, of what happens when people leave amusement centres and congregate outside. In conclusion, the honourable member for Gladesville and I express support and solidarity with those on Ryde City Council who took up the fight. In relation to the criticism that has been levelled at the council about the expenditure on court costs, as far as we are concerned it was money well spent even though, unfortunately, on this occasion the result was not the right result.

Private members' statements noted.

[Mr Deputy-Speaker left the chair at 6.09 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

APPROPRIATION BILL

PARLIAMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL

BUSINESS FRANCHISE LICENCES (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) AMENDMENT BILL

MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

ROAD IMPROVEMENT (SPECIAL FUNDING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter - Minister for Land and Water Conservation) [7.30]: The Government has exciting developments under way in forestry, most significantly the \$6 million expansion to the State's hardwood plantation establishment program. This will see the establishment rate of eucalyptus plantations increase from the present 500 hectares per annum to 5,000 hectares per annum by 1996-97. It is an exciting program and is undertaken in conjunction with private organisations and private land-holders. It is a pity that the plantation program that was under way in the late 1970s and early 1980s was stopped by Neville Wran in 1982. If that program had continued, we would have more than a decade of new plantings and of accumulated growth. We have missed out on that. This Government restarted the plantation program last year with a modest figure of \$2 million and 500 hectares, increasing this year to \$6 million and 2,000 hectares. The next stage is to reach 5,000 hectares per annum and ultimately a 100,000 hectare plantation.

It is one way that this Government is striking the necessary balance between sustainable development and responsible conservation. The Government recognises the need for the establishment of more hardwood plantation forests now to ensure the long-term viability of the New South Wales timber and forest products industries. State Forests will spend \$40 million on development works this year to ensure sustainable management in the State's four million hectares of native forests and plantations. Those funds will be expended in various electorates but predominantly in the north-east and south-east of the State. Against this background of sensible, responsible and positive management and development, what is Labor offering? Frankly, nothing more than a hotchpotch of badly formed and ill-researched ideas. I do not have time to canvass the whole raft of ideas, but let me address just a few so that the House will clearly see how out of touch Labor is with the affairs and needs of this State and its people.

Any benefit that might flow from plantation forestry under Labor's policies would be totally negated by Labor's idea of imposing a surcharge on hardwood royalties - a tax on hardwood royalties. Let us say that the tax was set at 10 per cent. That would cost the industry \$4.6 million - an extremely high cost to bear. The Labor Party has promoted the great concept of charging the timber industry an extra tax surcharge. The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, including the shadow spokesman on forestry, have been canvassing that idea as the basis for a plantation program. However, this Government has established a plantation program and allocated public money to it. The Leader of the Opposition declares himself an unabashed greenie on one hand, promising 10 new wilderness areas and a ring of national parks around Sydney.

Mr Nagle: Yes, I totally agree.

Mr SOURIS: Do you endorse a massive expansion of wilderness areas and national parks around New South Wales?

Mr Nagle: Indeed I do.

Mr SOURIS: That is an excellent idea! It should win you a lot of seats in the bush! If you are looking for a Labor revival, you will not get it anywhere on the north coast, you will not get it anywhere on the south coast and you will not get it anywhere inland. It is nice to have those comments on the record. On the other hand, the Leader of the Opposition says that he will set up a special task force on timber import replacement and export development. Those statements are utterly incompatible. The sheer hypocrisy of what he says in Sydney to the green movement and what he says in the bush and in the boardrooms is quite astounding. It is the old story of the Labor Party dancing two tunes at the same time - one for the greenies and one for the loggers. It is duplicity; it is irresponsible; it is even unbelievable.

That is why the Forest Products Association in a letter to the Leader of the Opposition only yesterday sought urgent clarification of Labor's environmental

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policies and expressed grave fears that Labor's policies would threaten the future of 25,500 timber industry jobs, cost the New South Wales economy \$900 million and place in jeopardy the planned \$320 million investment by the industry over the next two years in New South Wales. That is the type of loss of confidence we have come to expect from statements from the Leader of the Opposition. It strikes terror in the hearts of the State's productive industries.

What about winning friends in local communities? How can Labor honestly expect to be taken seriously when its leading lights go around the traps insulting people? The Labor spokesman on rural affairs, the honourable member for Port Stephens, told the *Woolgoolga Advertiser* on 28 August that Labor believes total catchment management committees are stacked with people paying political lip-service. How interesting. It is quite an insult to one of the best movements of the State - a force of catchment management committees which virtually covers all of the State, and a landcare movement which has 570 separate groups. I am sure all the hard working and committed members of TCMs across the State will be interested to learn what Labor thinks of them and their efforts.

On the other side of the coin, the Leader of the Opposition told this House yesterday that he would effectively featherbed the public service. Labor would freeze advertising of government jobs to fill vacancies from existing resources. How is that for a blatant attempt to shore up a Labor voting block among the State's public servants! That is real desperation. I have news for the Labor Party: public servants have far more integrity and dedication to their professional independence than the Labor Party gives them credit. Let us look at another Labor pearl of wisdom. It wants to set up a bureaucratic north coast water authority to take water and sewerage management away from local communities, which is totally against the advice of the Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils.

That decision must have involved some serious consultation. It was interesting when the Labor Party made its announcement. Electorates of National Party members on the north coast, including the electorates of the honourable member for Ballina, the honourable member for Lismore, the honourable member for Murwillumbah, the honourable member for Clarence, the honourable member for Oxley, and the honourable member for Port Macquarie would have been affected. In fact, the area from the Manning River to the Queensland border would have come under a single water and sewerage authority, taking away the jobs of local communities.

Water and sewerage jobs in every shire and council would have been placed in one bureaucracy. The cost would have been unbelievable, not to mention the bureaucratic and anti-development stance that obviously would have been taken. It was an incredibly stupid suggestion and it drew reactions from members of Parliament and the communities concerned. We have not heard another word since. Nothing but silence. The policy has been dropped because it did not even stand the test of the first five minutes. Within five minutes this multi-billion dollar announcement on the north coast was gone.

The coalition is delivering good, progressive government and responsible economic management to

the people of New South Wales. This budget is further evidence of that success. I should like to give some examples of how it has helped in my electorate of Upper Hunter. For roadworks \$27.4 million has been allocated, taking the total spending on roads in the Upper Hunter from 1992 to 1995 to more than \$90 million. An amount of \$4.7 million has been provided to upgrade rail facilities, including four additional Xplorer carriages to service the region. The Xplorer program has been one of the most successful programs for new rolling stock and upgrading passenger services on country networks.

The new Xplorer train which passes through my electorate en route to the New England area to the north-west and south to Sydney has proved to be such a success that additional carriages have been ordered to meet the increased demand that this excellent service has generated. I pay tribute to the State Rail Authority, to CountryLink personnel and to all of the people involved in putting together the service, whether they be station personnel, on board personnel or administration, engineering or maintenance personnel. All have pulled together to produce a service that has shown a substantially increased demand for patronage.

A record of more than \$16 million has been allocated for health spending, which is up 5 per cent on last year and includes upgrades especially in relation to Mudgee District Hospital - an issue that has been hard fought over the years. It is pleasing to see that substantial upgrading is occurring at that hospital. School and TAFE facilities have been allocated \$14.5 million, including more than \$3 million on capital works for TAFE and \$1.57 million on capital works to more than 20 schools. This is in addition to the capital works program for schools in my electorate over the last year or so, works that have only recently had official opening ceremonies at some five schools in the Muswellbrook area, and two schools in the Gulgong area officially opened last Saturday.

Maintenance has been allocated \$8.8 million and capital improvements for public housing will receive more than \$6 million; \$750,000 for salinity control in the Hunter River; \$650,000 for improvements to the Scone-Aberdeen water supply; more than \$122,000 for 11 community group salt action projects; \$55,000 for land and water conservation projects; \$20,000 to complete major erosion control in the Upper Mooki River catchment on the Liverpool Plains; and \$75,000 for rural coach facility improvements at Mudgee, Gulgong and Scone. The Liberal-National Government will continue to build on its economic successes as it moves into its third term of government after the March election. I commend the Treasurer for this responsible budget that adheres in real terms to the principle of encouraging priority

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spending. During the past three years the Government has contained debt and reduced the deficit and will continue to do so during the next three years.

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [7.40]: Let me take up what the Minister for Land and Water Conservation said about forests. When I was a lad and all my family were on the land, I used to visit Oberon and Burruga. Trees were everywhere; it was a beautiful spot. Today all those trees have gone. The scene is the same when one looks down on Sydney from the top of the hill in Lilyfield Road, one sees nothing but pollution hanging over Sydney. Before this Government came to office I took that route to get into the city. At that time the city was clear. It is now full of pollution, and the trees are gone. The Minister for Land and Water Conservation also spoke about the schools in his electorate. He referred to all the great things that were happening and how he was organising this and organising that. Nothing is happening in relation to the schools in my electorate. One of the primary schools has only two special language teachers.

The Minister also spoke about all the great things that are happening in his electorate in relation to public works and transport. They are not happening in the electorate of Auburn. This budget is a partisan political document and Government members are expressing partisan political views about the allocations it contains. The Olympic Games will be held in the electorate of Auburn, not in the electorate of Strathfield as claimed by the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, a claim supported by the honourable member for Strathfield. However, when the trees were being planted around the Olympic site, not one school in my electorate was represented. The trees were planted by students from schools

in the electorates of Ermington and Strathfield. That shows the bias of this Government. After I kicked up a stink about it, a student from North Auburn Public School was given the great prize of being invited to plant a tree. That is absolutely outrageous and is yet another demonstration of the Government's partisan attitude.

The theme of the budget is that the Liberal-National Party Government is building a better future. Nothing could be further from the truth. The budget contains nothing for working families west of Vacluse, south-west of the north shore or north-west of the suburbs of Coogee, Bondi and Bronte. There are long queues at hospitals and at the Department of Housing. Schools are understaffed. The Police Service is overworked. In 1989 the then Minister for Police announced that the Government intended to build a new police station at Auburn within a year. It is now estimated that that police station will be built in the 1995-96 financial year. The budget contains the threat of a sales tax à la Fightback, and State income tax.

The budget contains insufficient funding for the large ethnic population, particularly in the electorate of Auburn. In typically dishonest fashion the Liberal-National Party Government under Premier Fahey is trying to squeeze more money out of the honest, hardworking people from the west of the city of Sydney under the guise of presenting a balanced budget. The Treasurer informed this House that all except two of the states of the United States of America have balanced budget legislation. It is all very well to say that, but of course those states have goods and services taxes and/or state income taxes. In the State of New York one pays a local government GST, a state government GST, state government income tax and local government income tax. The hardworking families - not the privileged and wealthy people who are represented by this Government, but the real people of New South Wales - do not want those taxes.

Those same hardworking families have seen the closure of hospitals and schools by this Government and the lengthening housing queues. When I became the member for Auburn in 1988, 88,000 families were on the waiting list for housing accommodation. There are now 175,000 families on that list, which does not include families that have been removed from it by the department on the pretext that they have changed their addresses and cannot be found. Public housing in New South Wales is in absolute crisis. But we have HomeFund, a scheme under which a lot of people who could not afford to buy their own homes wasted a lot of money. In his contribution to the budget debate today the honourable member for Blue Mountains referred to Ministers by their first names instead of by their proper titles. He spoke about how wonderful it was that Bruce, the Minister for Transport, and Chris Hartcher, the honourable member for Gosford, were in the mountains to help him.

The Minister for the Environment, the honourable member for Gosford, paid a great deal of money for a pump to pump water from a valley so that a garden could be watered. I have no problem with that, except I am sure that if the problem had been in a Labor electorate the pump would never have been built and the water would never have gone to the Tomah gardens. Wonderful things are happening in the marginal electorate of Gladesville! That electorate will receive \$14.8 million more than the Liberal-held electorate of Lane Cove. I cannot talk about it, of course, but I refer in passing to the infamy of the cheque for \$674,000 right on the eve of the by-election for the electorate of Parramatta. In any event, the Government attempted to buy votes in that by-election. Promises worth \$1.4 billion were made, and none of them will be fulfilled. However, on 26 March 1995, the new member for Parramatta will ensure that those promises are fulfilled.

I turn to health. The Minister for Health claims that the budget contains an increased health allocation of \$490 million. However, \$320 million of that will come from the Federal Government. So in real terms health spending has increased by only 3 per cent after being cut back over the past few years. Last year \$15 million was cut from the health budget. This year's budget does not contain a real increase in spending on

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previous years. As usual, the Government has looked after its mates. The majority of new capital works in health are in electorates, particularly marginal electorates, held by Liberal Party and National

Party members. The electorate of Ermington will receive \$1.25 million to upgrade one school, \$7.7 million to upgrade the wharf for the RiverCat, and Ryde Hospital will receive \$33.5 million. What a disgrace! The budget does not contain much for Auburn District Hospital and contains nothing for Lidcombe Hospital. When I became the member for Auburn in 1988, the electorate had three hospitals. Under this Government, one hospital has survived. It is on a five-year program, and if it does not perform it will be shut down. The Government is busy ensuring that the electorate of Ballina - and the honourable member for Ballina is in the Chamber - is being looked after. The Premier's electorate, which is slightly marginal, is being looked after. The electorate of Murwillumbah will get top-class health facilities.

[Interruption]

Am I cutting the honourable member for Ballina to the bone? He could not be upset because his electorate is getting a great deal in roads, hospitals and education. In the budget debate 12 months ago he proclaimed that his electorate was getting more than any other electorate. He will make exactly the same claim in this debate.

Mr D. L. Page: Because it is true.

Mr NAGLE: Yes, it is true, because the honourable member for Ballina happens to be a member of the Government. On 26 March 1995, when he is on this side of the House, his electorate will be subjected to the real test. The Labor government will give his electorate that money if it is entitled to it and if it deserves it. We will act honestly. We will not be politically partisan, as this Government is in making sure that it props up marginal electorates before an election. Many specialist medical services are being lost to Auburn. Recently a young man was involved in a serious car accident in Park Road at Auburn. He was taken to Auburn District Hospital, a very good hospital with hardworking and dedicated staff, and spent seven hours waiting to be treated in the casualty section. He was then treated by a doctor who had difficulty with the English language.

That is the situation he was faced with. Of course, it does not worry those opposite because it happened at Auburn. The Government cannot win Auburn, so it has decided it will not give Auburn much funding, but it will make sure that the honourable member for Ballina and the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs - whose electorates are in danger of being lost to Labor - are looked after. That may be the reality, but honourable members should consider the hypocrisy of it. The Government said it would employ 600 new nurses over a period of four years, but the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti in the upper House said that the Government would employ 600 nurses in one year. He forgot to ask the Minister for Health. It was one of those minor details. Now, of course, the Government has to find 600 nurses in one year to fulfil the promise made by the Hon. Brian Pezzutti. However, the Government may not be able to do that and it may be that we will get 600 nurses in four years - but not one of those nurses will be coming to Auburn; they will all go to Ballina and -

Mr D. L. Page: How many hospitals do you have?

Mr NAGLE: The honourable member for Ballina asked how many hospitals are located in my electorate. In 1988 there were three. How many are there now? One, waiting on a five-year plan.

[Interruption]

The honour member should relax; his time will come. Just calm down. He will be on the Opposition benches on 26 March, and will know what it is really like. The Government wants to close 29 hospitals. It wants to change the hospital system and privatise hospitals. Even though it is mundane and not trendy, housing in western Sydney is crucial to those who do not have it. People who cannot afford to buy the houses they need rely on public housing. Funding has been given for 3,100 new housing units in New South Wales and Auburn will get 100 new dwellings. Of course, it does not matter to members on the other side of the House. In the last five years I have submitted 2,100 applications for

public housing, and the area is to get 100 new units. The Auburn electorate is a high density area. People want to live in the area where their families live. They do not want to go to the western suburbs of Sydney. Irrespective of that, I am to get 100 new dwellings, and I should thank God for small mercies, because it is a Labor electorate as opposed to the electorate of Ballina.

While the hippies on the north shore and in the eastern suburbs enjoy their arts funding, the people of Auburn - and in particular the people of western Sydney - wait for housing and repairs to their homes. Mrs B is a nice old lady I have known all my life. I came from a Housing Commission family. In 1950 we moved to Regents Park and lived in a Housing Commission house with lino on the floor. I remember the struggles my parents had. Mrs B lived in the area at the same time and her house, built in the late 1940s, is now falling down. She has waited two years to get substantial repairs done to the house in Richardson Avenue, Regents Park. She had to rely on the kindness of an officer of the Department of Housing - not the kindness of the honourable member for The Hills with all the money that he has. He comes from The Hills and even looks wealthy. He is not worried; he is up there in The Hills where people have nice, two storey homes, swimming pools, trees, and everything; but the poor, struggling people of Auburn have nothing. And they are not going to get anything from the Government's budgets until we change the government.

As we move towards the year 2000 and the Olympic Games, Auburn may be lucky enough to get an Olympic village, which it is hoped will be used for housing. Of course, if this Government is re-elected
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on 26 March - and I pray to God it will not be - those houses will be sold at high prices and the people of Auburn will not get a look-in. The Government now admits that it needs the 2,200 teachers it got rid of in 1988-89. So, over four years, it will spend money to bring those teachers back into the education system. That is fine for those people who have the money to obtain a good education for their children, but what happens with schools that have 95 per cent of students who come from a non-Australian background? How do those students obtain the right education? For example, consider my history. My father worked extremely hard and did a lot for his six children, but I was forced out of school at the age of 14 years and nine months, and I started working. I was lucky because Labor governments introduced better education for people such as me. I was able to go to night school and to university and obtain a university degree. I owe a lot to Gough Whitlam and Neville Wran for what they were able to do for education.

But this Government could not care less about anyone from Auburn because, as I said, it cannot win that seat. So why worry? The politics of the matter are that the Government adopts the attitude that it will simply give the Auburn electorate what is absolutely necessary, as long as it can look after its own interests. I will never do to the electorates of members opposite what the Government has done to the people in Auburn. In 1990 Sydney had one of the worst hailstorms in history. More than 40,000 windows were smashed, and 4,000 roofs of houses were ripped to pieces. What happened? The Auburn people did not get a look-in. Bankstown City Council received approximately \$400,000 to clean up its parks. Auburn Council got not a penny. People in the Auburn electorate got nothing. When a similar storm hit the northern suburbs, the councils got \$9.6 million. When Nick Greiner was Premier I told him that I would never do to him what he had done to the people in my electorate. I will not, because this Government has taught me that.

Another problem that is occurring in my electorate relates to violence in schools. We read about it all the time. It does not matter that the senior executive officer of the schools in my area could not care less about it. He denies the problem exists. A young boy coming home from Birrong Boys High School was attacked at Regents Park railway station by a group of people with a machete; they cut him up. A friend who intervened was knocked down and had his head kicked. That was on Regents Park station. When I worked on the railways Regents Park station had station attendants working on the platform. Now one does not even have to worry about buying a ticket; just take a punt with the inspectors. This Government's answer to violence is video cameras. Honourable members will remember the great advertisement with the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads saying, "This is a video camera.

Look at those kids painting the trains". The answer to violence on trains is not the installation of video cameras. What is the point of screaming into a video camera if someone is attacking you?

The solution is twofold. A greater police presence is imperative and, in the long term, there must be appropriately trained staff to deal with the problem. In its true style the Government has chosen to ignore both solutions, as the problem is not relevant in this affluent ivory tower created by the Fahey Government. The answer is to provide help and money, not in marginal electorates but in electorates where they are necessary. The mother of one of my branch members in the Labor Party was walking down the stairs to Auburn station. She said that a young lad tripped her, she fell down the stairs and injured herself. She is 85 years of age. Before she was taken to hospital a discussion occurred with the station master. His view was that even though those stairs led into the station, they belonged to the police and the council, not to the State Rail Authority; that his responsibility began only if the lady had walked a bit further and got on to the railway station. That was his mentality, and he was brought to task for it. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

New South Wales has great law and order. As I said earlier, in 1989 I was promised that extension work would be carried out at the Auburn police station. Now, that is not going to happen until 1995-96. I base that on the promise of the Government as set out in a police manual. The only allocation for prisons in my electorate is for the Mulawa Support Centre, a \$445,000 administrative support building at Silverwater. That is all that has been allocated for prisons, other than that the Government is building a new prison out there. The Government is so big on multiculturalism. The Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Justice attends every ethnic function I attend; he is there handing out cheques and saying what a wonderful person he is.

Only about 15 words in the budget related to the ethnic community; in last year's budget I counted 172 words. Obviously the ethnic community is not doing too well under this Government, because the Government thinks it may not be able to win that vote. When I was elected in 1988 the ethnic affairs office had been established in Auburn for a decade. The Government closed that office and built a great ivory tower for ethnic affairs, for Kerkysharian and his people, in Ashfield. The Government decided to close the ethnic affairs offices in the suburbs and establish one office at Ashfield. If a person is unemployed, has a number of children, and cannot even afford to feed those children, how can that person afford to get to the ethnic affairs office at Ashfield? My office has now become the ethnic affairs office. My electorate assistant, who is present, could tell honourable members how many ethnic people come to her for assistance. We are fortunate that a fair bit of Federal funding and a little bit of State funding have assisted in the establishment of good local ethnic organisations that can help. In the main my office is now being substituted as the State government office block in Auburn, because that is where the people want to come as they cannot go anywhere else. There used to be a branch of the
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Government Insurance Office in Auburn that was doing very well, but that was streamlined and closed. That is what has happened under this Government. But of course there is a GIO in the electorate of Cronulla.

Mr Kerr: A GIO office?

Mr NAGLE: Yes, of course there is a GIO office in your electorate. If there is not, you have been slack in not getting it. The Public Works Department has carried out a lot of work in the electorate, particularly for the Olympic Games. The public has been told that the \$100 million Olympic swimming pool at Homebush will be great for everyone. A document that had been distributed in my electorate said, "We would have liked to have kept Lidcombe Hospital opened". Lidcombe Hospital was a specialist hospital for the elderly, people with brain damage, people with multiple sclerosis and for the retraining and rehabilitation of people with paraplegia. That hospital had been there for something like 50 years, but it was closed down because the Government said all of those services could be transferred to Bankstown Hospital, which will be finished in 1997. But the Government has closed down nearly 90 per cent of that hospital and only 10 per cent of it remains.

All that was needed to rebuild that hospital, on the Government's own specifications, was \$40 million for all the capital works, and \$20 million to refit the hospital, a total of \$60 million. But \$60 million could not be found because the hospital happens to be on about 400 acres of land in the centre of Sydney. If I were cynical and sceptical, which I am not, I would say that this Government really wanted to close Lidcombe Hospital, not because it cares about the elderly and infirm in western Sydney, but because it wanted to sell that land so that it could balance its budget. I should not say that, but that is exactly what I am going to say. It has been rumoured that the Government is going to have a Japanese golf course there. Can the honourable member for Cronulla inform me of the truth of that?

Mr Turner: No.

Mr NAGLE: There will not be a Japanese golf course there because Carnarvon golf course is next-door. There will not be a commercial development on the site, but the Government will sell that 400 acres. The hospital has been there for a century. There is a heritage order on the property, so the Government may not be able to pull it down, but it will not have to do any work on it. Though there is a heritage order on that property, no renovation work will be carried out to preserve those old buildings. The hospital used to be called the Lidcombe old men's home. At one time it was a boys' home. But nothing is being done to preserve our history. If the building collapses and falls down the bulldozers will go through it. The multiple sclerosis centre is the only body that can stay on the Lidcombe Hospital site, and that is owned privately. That is tragic.

The elderly in my electorate and the electorates of Bankstown, Granville, Parramatta, Ermington and Strathfield need that hospital. Even the member for Strathfield has attended a protest meeting to keep it open because it is not a general district hospital. Lidcombe Hospital is a specialist hospital for the elderly, the infirm, paraplegics, car accident victims, people with diabetes, multiple sclerosis - who can attend Ferguson Lodge - and people who have suffered brain damage. Those people who have suffered enormously can go to that hospital. But it is going to close down. That will be one of the greatest tragedies, and one of the worst legacies after seven years of Fahey-Greiner Government mismanagement of the State of New South Wales. The worst day for this country was when the coalition came to government. The Government has done some good things. It improved the freeway from the boundary of my electorate at Strathfield through to the end of it at Granville. While I acknowledge that the work was done and it is a good road, a toll booth was constructed and motorists are charged a fee for using it. Of course that was a minor detail.

The toll booth was not located in the electorate of Strathfield, because the member for Strathfield did not want it. He is the same member who was silent when the Minister for Education was saying that the Olympic Games were going to be held in his electorate, when in fact the site is in my electorate. The Government misses out on revenue now that motorists can leave the motorway at Silverwater and avoid the tolls. The Government would not put the toll gates in the seat of Parramatta because at the time this decision was being made the electorate of Parramatta was held by a Liberal Party member. Why would the Government want a toll booth in the Liberal seats of Strathfield or Parramatta? When Andrew Ziolkowski became the member for Parramatta he was able to persuade the Government that it would be better to put the toll booth in another place - namely, in my electorate. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, the tollgates will go and people will be able to use that freeway without being required to pay a toll. Mind you, motorists do not have to pay a toll to travel on the freeways in the electorates of Government members, the gardens of the north shore; there are no tollways in the electorate of the Minister for the Environment. The toll on the Newcastle expressway was removed after the coalition won in 1988.

The Government is willing to put toll roads in working-class areas, as has happened with the M2 and the M5. I promise the member for Myall Lakes - who is interjecting - that we will ensure that there will be a tollway in his electorate, and then we will see how he likes it. This budget is really a budget for politics; it is a budget for the next election. The Treasurer really could not care less about the people I represent.

As far as I am concerned I represent people who vote Liberal, people who vote National - if there are any people who vote National in my electorate, though I doubt that there are - and people who vote Labor. I act for all the people. It is crucial

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to ensure that we get a balanced budget, a decent budget for all people - not an election budget, not a gimmick.

I remember the cartoon in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* when the budget was brought down by the Premier. It depicted the Premier as a captain at the steering wheel, with the steering instrument, telling the engineer to speed the ship up. The caption said "Steady as she goes" - steady as she goes to an election; steady as she goes for the Government, not for other people. The reality is that it will be steady as she goes for this Government, not for people in my electorate but steady as she goes for marginal seats. The Government generously channels funds to the affluent members of this society and gives preferential treatment to coalition members of the House. The people of western Sydney are desperately craving jobs. There is 20 per cent unemployment in my electorate.

Mr Turner: Go and see Paul Keating.

Mr NAGLE: Yes, I accept what the honourable member for Myall Lakes says. Not all of the fault can be channelled home to the Fahey Government. But the Fahey Government has not done much to help unemployment out in the west, and it will not do so.

Mr Langton: It has had \$50,000 in six years.

Mr NAGLE: Exactly. When I was a station assistant with the railways there were jobs everywhere for people: on stations and shunting trains. I have done all of them. It was a great place to work, but it was a dangerous place as well. I remember driving one morning to the signal box out at Erskineville, and hearing on the news that a shunter whom I knew had been jammed between two carriages when shunting the trains. They could not pull the trains apart because once they did that he would have died. They had to bring his family in. But the Government now would not care less about him because such people are fodder. We do need jobs. I plead with the Prime Minister to put more funding into jobs in my electorate, and I plead with the Premier of New South Wales to do the same.

This Government cannot provide the people of New South Wales with a decent level of health care, education or housing in places where they really count, that is, in Auburn, Parramatta, and west of the Sydney central business district. It would be interesting to ask the honourable member for Myall Lakes whether he has ever visited the seat of Auburn. The answer would be no. I have visited his electorate. I have been invited by the fisheries cooperative to have a look at what goes on up there in the seat of Myall Lakes. The honourable member for Myall Lakes is invited to come to my electorate at any time. One of the foremost advisers of the Liberal Party is in the public gallery. I advise him to tell the Government to get its act together.

The Government wants to introduce a balanced budget, not as a way of debt reduction but as a means of imposing more taxes on hardworking families of New South Wales. In the final analysis for the people of western Sydney, the people of Sydney and the people of New South Wales enough is enough. The sooner this Government is defeated on 25 March 1995, the sooner the Treasurer of New South Wales, who delivered this budget will no longer be in a position to deliver a budget, the Leader of the Opposition will be Treasurer and Premier and will deliver a budget for all people of New South Wales. The sooner we find out the truth about the finances of New South Wales, the sooner the State of New South Wales will advance under a Carr Labor government.

Mr TURNER (Myall Lakes) [8.10]: I congratulate the Government, the Treasurer and the Premier on this budget. I will address the matters in due course that were mentioned by the honourable member for Auburn. They go to the very crux of the Labor Party: it tells untruths and lies, and distorts the facts in

relation to the budget and generally about what is happening in New South Wales. The budget allocates to my electorate an infrastructure input of \$43 million by way of capital programs. That means a great deal of employment for my people. Rather than offer rhetoric the honourable member for Auburn should get off his tail and do a bit of work for his electorate. In that way he might be able to share in some of the capital works programs that my electorate has been able to get. Sometimes it pays to work harmoniously and in conjunction with the government of the day for the benefit of one's constituents, rather than for the benefit of one's own political party.

The bulk of the capital works funds that my electorate has received relate to roadworks. The Pacific Highway goes through my electorate from Taree to Bulahdelah. It was sadly neglected by the former Labor Government. Indeed, the whole of the north coast was a desert forgotten by the former Labor Government. This Government has recognised and accepted that much needed to be done not only to bring it up to a satisfactory standard for day-to-day travel, but for future travel as the use of the Pacific Highway continues to build. I regularly receive notification and thanks from tourists travelling to my electorate that that highway is improving. I do not wake up every morning with a lump in my throat waiting to hear what accidents have occurred and when. Regrettably, however, accidents still occur on the highway, but I do not think any amount of money will ever completely overcome that problem.

The significant funding this year is for the continuation of work on the Taree bypass. That was announced initially by the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport when she represented the electorate of Manning. Since the electoral redistribution I have taken responsibility for the Taree area. An amount of \$17.6 million has been included in the budget for the continuation of the Taree bypass. It will be finished, it is hoped, in about 1997, ahead of time. This week tenders were called for the third stage, which is well ahead of schedule. It is no accident that we are meeting that timetable and, indeed, exceeding it, because private enterprise is involved and is doing the job.

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The other significant amount of funding that has been allocated to the Pacific Highway, and which also is very gratifying, is \$7.6 million for the Bulahdelah to Coolongolook deviation. That has been the subject of some discussion for some time. It will cut out O'Sullivan's Gap and the Wootton bends area, both notorious black spots from which the Federal Government withdrew funds. It is totally abhorrent that the Federal Government should acknowledge black spots, killer spots, spots where people are regularly maimed and injured, yet withdraw funds. Nevertheless, the budget has provided \$7.6 million for further work on that deviation to cut out O'Sullivan's Gap and the Wootton bends area. When that work gets down to pavement work it will link into the Coolongolook to Napiac section, which will then link into the Napiac to Rainbow Flats section - a 14 kilometre dual carriageway that I recently opened - which will then link into the dual carriageway of the Taree bypass, which will then link into the work done in the electorate of the honourable member for Port Macquarie and so on up the coast. Real work is being done on the Pacific Highway, work that never would have been done but for this Government recognising the need for the work and accelerating it.

An earlier Opposition contributor spoke about tollways and said that he would ensure, when the Labor Party gets into government, that a tollway would be put in the middle of the Myall Lakes electorate. I am pleased to hear it. If that will accelerate the roadworks in my electorate, if that will accelerate the safety aspects of the Pacific Highway in my electorate, if that will make it better for people to travel, I am prepared to take the flak. The more people injured, the more people killed on the Pacific Highway, the more angst for me. Having suffered from the loss of both my parents on that highway when I was a young person, I take a very strong interest in ensuring that we spend the maximum amount of dollars on the Pacific Highway and I do not really care how that is achieved. If a tollway is put there that means that private enterprise will be involved, which means that more public funds will be available to reconstruct other dangerous roads to make them safer for other people.

I concentrate on roads. I spend a quarter of my time on roads. In country areas the roads are the very lifeblood of parliamentary representatives travelling from one part of their electorate to another. We do not have the complex public transport systems that the city areas have. We must rely on cars for our day-to-day activities - shopping, taking the kids to school and taking the kids to sport. In addition to those amounts I mentioned, \$17.6 million for the Taree bypass and \$7.6 million for O'Sullivan's Gap and the Wootton bends area, a further \$500,000 has been allocated for the upgrading of passing lanes and other work on the Pacific Highway. The Bucketts Way at Gloucester received \$355,000 and the Lakes Way, which is the main thoroughfare from the highway into Forster and Tuncurry, received \$776,000 for continued upgrading work. That road was sadly neglected by the former government. This Government has provided consistent funding to upgrade it. We have a lot more to do, but that road is certainly much better than it was under the previous Labor Government.

A comparison of funding during the last three years of the Labor Government and the last three years of this Government reveals that road enhancement funds in my electorate have increased by 269.8 per cent. That is, in the last three years of the Labor Government for road enhancements in my electorate we received \$6.63 million; for the last three years under this Government we received \$24.5 million. Those figures speak for themselves. A welcome announcement in the budget was the \$1.4 million for the Forster-Tuncurry community health centre. It is well and truly overdue in my electorate. We have a very high aged population in the electorate and a very high population of small children. The community health centre has been operating from rented accommodation for some time, which is quite unsatisfactory. The announcement of the proposed community health centre will concentrate all community health services in a centralised and easily accessible location, which will be of great help to all those who need that sort of service.

A further addition in the budget was funding for the Hallidays Point school. Hallidays Point incorporates Hallidays Point, Red Head and Diamond Head. It is a growing area in my electorate, an area in which we promised to build a school. We have come forward with those funds and over the next 12 to 18 months that school will be built for the Hallidays Point, Red Head and Diamond Head community. We estimate that the school will cost about \$1.3 million, excluding the land, which has already been purchased. I must be critical of the Treasurer in relation to one matter. I would be wrong if I was not concerned about police officers in my electorate. No allocation has been made in the budget for the funding of the Forster police station. In 1988 the then Minister for Police, the Hon. Ted Pickering, announced that my electorate would get a new police station. I regret to say that in 1994-95 the funding will still not be provided. As I have said to the Treasurer previously, it is imperative to the police officers particularly, and the community of Forster-Tuncurry generally, that a police station be funded.

The working conditions of police are not satisfactory for present operations and adequate funding must be provided to enable a proper police presence in the Forster-Tuncurry region. Having said that, I reiterate that the budget provides \$43 million worth of capital works programs in my electorate and I have to be thankful for that. It recognises the wide infrastructure needs of my electorate. I have spoken about roads, schools, and community health but some of the other matters - they are not pretty matters - which nevertheless are very important elements of infrastructure, include sewerage works. Millions of dollars have been provided to upgrade sewerage in the Forster-Tuncurry area: to continue funding for the Pacific Palms sewerage scheme, \$1.8 million; the

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Bulahdelah sewerage scheme, \$3 million; and \$80,000 for a sewage pumpout facility at Forster boat harbour, with \$44,000 to complete the sewage pumpout services at Legges Camp. Those are important projects to preserve the pristine condition of the Myall Lake, Wallis Lake and Smiths Lake area, a fine initiative by the Government which will pay benefits for our children's children as public awareness increases in environmental considerations in the lakes and oceans around my beautiful electorate.

I referred to Hallidays Point school. The capital works program also provides \$560,000 for the Taree TAFE rural studies centre and open learning centre; \$110,000 for upgrading of Tuncurry-Forster TAFE. I have also received notification from the Minister for Education that there will be massive

upgrading of Gloucester primary school with the provision of a new library, a hall, a canteen and other provisions to bring Gloucester primary school up to a reasonable standard. In relation to waterways, funds are provided for the Taree boat ramp, which serves the Manning River. Navigation aids in Wallis Lake will be funded and Maritime Services Board equipment will be upgraded. The waterways in my electorate are the third busiest in the State and it is important that the MSB should have the proper equipment to carry out its duties to the many recreational and professional boaters.

In relation to recurrent funding I compliment and pay thanks to the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for the Ageing in that he has provided \$2.526 million for programs under his administration. Included are child protection, pre-school and day care centres, vacation care, family and individual support projects, community development, the home and community care program, supported accommodation services, youth services and disability services. Though the Minister and I may have had words about it, I thank him for his provision of funds for the Manning youth refuge. It was forced to close for reasons which were nothing to do with this Government or the Minister, but in view of the need and requirement to reopen the refuge funds were made available. The reopening of the refuge has been warmly welcomed by the people in my electorate.

At present in my electorate bushfires are raging. By and large we were spared by the bushfires in January although we had our share, but nothing like other severely affected areas. In this regard I welcome the provision of a total of \$1,609,900 to the three Bush Fire Council areas in my electorate. As a recognition of the incredible role that Bush Fire Brigades and the 70,000 volunteer bush fire fighters in this State undertake, I am pleased that the Government has seen fit to increase by 27 per cent global funding in the budget, to \$39 million. In the Gloucester region \$451,861 will be received - an increase of 169 per cent on the amount for the previous year, in recognition of the need and the work of the volunteer bush fire brigades. The Greater Taree City Council will be a little disappointed at the figure of \$582,769, a 33 per cent increase, for it has been acting very responsibly in working towards a seven-year program of upgrading. It would have liked slightly more funding. The Great Lakes Council is to receive \$575,270, an increase of 82 per cent on funding for last year.

There is no doubt that the Government has recognised the priorities in country New South Wales - roads, with \$33 million in my electorate; health, with the provision of a community health centre; education, with improvements to the TAFE service and the new school at Hallidays Point; and community services. This is a well balanced budget which responds to what people are calling for. I now turn to the budget globally. From what we have seen in the House recently there is no doubt that the Labor Party intends to work on the big lie. Already it has brought out the GST scare. The fact is that the Constitution does not allow the States to impose a goods and services tax. In the last State election campaign when the Leader of the Opposition was wandering around screaming out the GST scare Ralph Willis, the then Federal finance Minister, went on television to say that the States cannot raise a GST. But Bob Carr did not take one step backwards; the lies just kept flowing.

Bob Carr might like to explain how he will raise the funds for the budget he has talked about. Will he introduce a death duty, a favourite for the Labor Party? I think he might, and I will certainly be telling people in my electorate that they had better be aware of the possibility that the Labor Party, if ever it gets into government in this State - God help us if it does - may well impose a death duty. The Labor Party has made statements about a balanced budget. I remember the wonderful economics of the Labor Party in its budgets when I was first elected to this place. It claimed that it was zero budgeting. If the figures were short \$500 million the Labor Party would borrow \$500 million from the bank, claim it under income and instantly there was a balanced budget. There were zeroes all along the bottom. The Labor Government conveniently forgot about the \$500 million it had borrowed. It did not pay the money back; this Government had to. The Labor Party should start being honest by telling people the truth about how it intends to balance its budgets, where it will raise the money for its budgets if ever it is elected to government, and what taxes it will impose. I believe there is a great possibility that it will impose death duties because I have not heard one interjection from the other side at my suggestion. I commend the budget.

Mr CLOUGH (Bathurst) [8.30]: This budget has both good news and bad news. In the main it is a budget designed to hide the Government's deficiencies and is an attempt on its part to win the 1995 election. I have been in this Parliament since 1976 - except for a short retirement in 1988 - and my instinct tells me that this Government has the same smell about it that the Unsworth Government had in November 1987. I assure Government members that it is a fatal smell. I sincerely trust that the people of New South Wales will have the good sense on

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25 March to elect a Labor Party government to return some of the services to our people that have been lost under the seven years administration of the present Government.

I should like to address the proposition for balanced budgets. I listened very carefully to the contribution made by the honourable member for Myall Lakes, who has had local government experience. I cannot understand why the attitude is held that an entire capital debt has to be borne by the current population for the construction of a capital works project that is intended to be used for 50 years. There is a well-established practice in the Westminster system of government that loan funds should be used to build long-term projects. There is no chance that the people of New South Wales will accept the concept of a balanced budget. We all know what will happen under a balanced budget: when times are good, services will be plentiful, but when times are tough services will go out the door, as have hospital services, education, transport and many other services in the past seven years.

In my electorate some 1,200 jobs have been lost from the railway, power stations, the Roads and Traffic Authority and many other bodies that depend upon government departments to provide employment to maintain the cities that I represent, with ability. I turn now to a favourite Government talking point: roads. In recent years there has been a great deal of work done on roads in my electorate between the cities of Lithgow and Bathurst. The State Government stakes a claim for the kudos for those works but has forgotten to tell the people that not a cent of State Government money has gone into it. All the funds have come from the Federal Government, except for new roadworks between Mount Lambie and Lawsons Creek. It is my understanding that the State Government is providing the funds for that project and that this budget sets aside \$7.8 million for that purpose. That, in my opinion, is part of the good news of the budget.

I also refer to two other areas for which funds will be allocated, and for which I believe the money will be well spent. The Land Information Centre in Bathurst, previously known as the Central Mapping Authority, is without doubt one of the most efficient public service units in New South Wales. It has resisted all attempts by the private sector to emasculate it. I note that amounts of \$1.2 million and \$6.2 million will be spent on the Land Information Centre for fitting out and digitalisation of equipment. I pay tribute to the Government for that. I trust that the Government has recognised that the Land Information Centre is too valuable an asset to fall victim to party politics.

I cannot say the same, however, about two schools that are being built and for which funds are included in the budget. Schools are being built at Wallerawang and at Portland, at a total budget cost of \$2.1 million at Wallerawang and just over \$1 million at Portland. Again, the majority of this funding comes from the Commonwealth. Not only does this Government claim Commonwealth funding as its own in the budget but it is to be observed that, for the first time, the capital works programs of electricity undertakings have been included. I heard my colleague, the honourable member for Penrith, refer to that point last evening. She was understandably annoyed that large amounts of capital works that have been performed by Sydney Electricity, Prospect, Illawarra and all country county councils are being included as government budget achievements. The truth, of course, is that they are now milking cows for the Government to balance its books. For the Government to claim as its own the capital works of bodies outside the direct control of any Minister in the Government is patently false.

I turn now to the condition of hospitals in my area. In 1987 an amount of \$8 million was put aside to upgrade the existing hospital at Lithgow. Some time after the election of the Greiner Government that \$8

million was taken out of the capital works program and never surfaced again. Since then the hospital at Lithgow has gradually run down, mainly because of the productivity gains forced upon all hospitals. I might add that when a Labor government comes to office in March next year that policy will cease. Country hospitals are at the mercy of the larger city health areas and they have little hope of competing for the allocation of funds.

Lithgow hospital has fallen into such a deplorable state that about 18 months ago a group of citizens formed a committee to seek government backing to borrow money to build a hospital for the citizens of Lithgow. This meant that the citizens of Lithgow themselves would have had to borrow about \$20 million. The Government promised to contribute \$1.8 million for each of three years. Three different sets of consultants visited Lithgow and all agreed that the project was good, mainly because the people of Lithgow would be paying for a hospital and letting the Government off the hook. The chairman of the committee, a former alderman of Lithgow City Council and former mayor, Jim Robson, told me that a decision was expected from the Government in December, a decision that would outline whether the Government was prepared to guarantee the repayment of the loan of \$17 million or \$18 million.

It is my belief that the committee also sought a proviso which I included, that in the event that the operation failed it would not be sold to a private operator but would remain a public hospital. Month after month the people waited for a Cabinet decision. I told Jim that he could be sure there would be some reference to the project in the budget but the 1994-95 budget does not have a word about the Lithgow hospital. I can say quite honestly that the National Party candidate for the seat of Bathurst is in a state of dire panic. He has realised that the Government has dumped him and that there is no possibility that he will pick up that seat. Even at this late stage, if the Government were to give some indication of intent to fund that hospital, it would not be believed, because there are still 200-odd outstanding promises from the 1988 election. We do not expect that a promise now

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from a government that has abandoned Lithgow in the budget would have any bearing in Lithgow. On the contrary, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the shadow minister for health, Dr Andrew Refshauge, has given a firm indication to the people of Lithgow that a public hospital will be built there, that project to be included in the first budget of the future Australian Labor Party government of this State.

Why is Lithgow being treated like this? It is not hard to work out. About 68 per cent of Lithgow people vote Labor, and have done so for many years, except in 1988. The proposal that the Labor Party put to the people of Lithgow in 1988 was unacceptable and the community reacted accordingly. Many people feel that because Lithgow people are working men and women they have a poor appreciation of politics. I have a warning for anyone who thinks that that is the case and might seek to take advantage of those people: Lithgow is a politically and industrially astute area, and in that respect probably has equal rating with Newcastle and Wollongong. Lithgow is steeped in union and Labor Party tradition. The Lithgow community knows when the right thing is being done by them and when they are being used. So, Lithgow hospital personnel will continue to wait - or have a false promise made to them - until the election next year.

I contrast Lithgow with Oberon. Oberon needs a multipurpose centre and has recently been granted almost \$3 million to build that centre. The budget papers make no reference to that centre; nor does the non-budget capital works program. A further inquiry reveals that most of the funds for this worthwhile project were to be provided by the Federal Government. Oberon is one of the fastest growing areas in my electorate. It is the centre of a timber industry, it has extreme climatic conditions during winter, and its hospital requirements are greater than those of towns of similar size located in climatically better areas. Oberon needs the multipurpose centre. I do not mind how much pork-barrelling the Government does; I am prepared to accept it. When Labor is in government it will honour the commitment of this Government to build the multipurpose centre in Oberon. The centre will provide for the people of Oberon and those who live to the south with a place to take sick relatives and friends during the winter months, when it is sometimes almost impossible to traverse the road between Oberon and Bathurst.

I was pleased to see that some eight housing units are being built in Lithgow and another 29 in Bathurst. Probably one of the major problems represented to me by various constituents is the desperate shortage of public housing. The number of people who rely on government housing for somewhere to live is growing every day. As I said earlier, probably 30 per cent of the people who see me have some problem with housing. I pay tribute to the two officers of the Department of Housing at Lithgow and Bathurst for the herculean efforts they make to ensure that the best possible deal is available to those who seek housing.

Secondary industry in Bathurst has relied partially over the years on the Clyde Engineering Company, particularly in the manufacture of State Rail Authority and other railway locomotives. This time last year the Minister for Transport announced that 223 new jobs would be provided at Clyde Engineering as the State Rail Authority was going to place an order to build a locomotive. Twice the Minister repeated that announcement and as I passed him in the Chamber he reminded me of the wonderful things the Government was doing for the workers at Clyde Engineering. It is now history that that locomotive contract went to Mittagong, in the electorate of the Premier. Clyde Engineering got nothing.

Persistent rumour in Bathurst is that Clyde Engineering will close at the end of this year. When I heard this I wrote to the chief executive officer of the National Freight Corporation and also the Federal Minister for Transport advising them of the situation and asking if it was possible that Clyde Engineering be given consideration if any orders for locomotives are forthcoming because it is a decentralised industry on which the city of Bathurst heavily relies. I am pleased to say that I received a reply from the National Freight Corporation. It has led me to understand that if any contracts are to be sought, Clyde has been placed on the list of tenderers. I look forward to the National Freight Corporation obtaining the contracts and I trust that the contracts will not be pulled out of Bathurst and put into the Mittagong works because it is more convenient for the manager who lives there and, of course, is situated in the electorate of the Premier.

One other major concern in my electorate is the allocation of \$500,000 to continue plantings in the radiata pine areas of Oberon. Oberon is growing mainly because of its involvement in the timber industry. The two giant producers of sawlogs and particle board are CSR and Boral. They produce a great deal of material for export. Unfortunately, though the railway line to Oberon still remains, it needs massive upgrading. The Government has steadily moved backwards from carrying out any work on the railway line. There was a time when a group by the name of Silverton was going to install the railway line. CSR has made a definite commitment to install the railway line if it is granted a new allocation of timber, which will be determined in the next few weeks. Applications closed on 9 September. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

There were four applicants: CSR, Boral, Laminex and a firm by the name of Pacfor. Pacfor came from nowhere. As far as I am aware, it has nothing. Bathurst City Council loaned Pacfor \$50,000 to prepare an environmental impact statement. The moment they started preparing an EIS the warning signals sounded. Why was a firm going to the expense of spending so much money in the preparation of an environmental impact statement when it had not received any indication it was to win the contract? Pacfor does not have a mill or works site. If it is to be given the contract, its intention is

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to move into Brewongle. The people of Brewongle are farmers - it is prime farming land, probably the best in the Bathurst district - and are vigorously opposed to the proposal. The only people who seem to want the mill at Brewongle are some councillors on Bathurst City Council and on Evans Council.

Mr Causley: What about the mayor?

Mr CLOUGH: The mayor of Bathurst wants the mill, and I do not know why. Obviously the Minister has heard of the kerfuffle between the mayor and me. It is no secret in the Bathurst district that

the mayor and I do not get along. I do not get along with the mayor because my job is to represent the people of the city of Bathurst to see that they get good government locally, not necessarily at a state level. There is dissension between most of the people in Bathurst and the council, particularly in regard to the Pacfor development. The people of Brewongle do not want the works to start in their town.

The mill will use some 300,000 litres of water every day, causing a drain on the district's water supply. There are three rivers in the Bathurst district: the Fish, Campbell and Macquarie. I understand that the Campbell River is to be used. It is doubtful whether the system operating at the moment will be able to provide sufficient water. In addition, in the first instance the majority of the timber will come from Orange and, of course, will be transported along the already overworked Oberon-Bathurst Road. But in the long run the majority of the timber will come from the Oberon area. For a number of reasons it is commonsense to build this new type of mill at Oberon. The primary reason is that the construction of the mill will continue the upward surge of Oberon. For many years Oberon has been a neglected part of the State. It is isolated and has no public transport apart from buses that connect with trains coming to and from Mount Victoria and a community bus that runs to Bathurst each day.

Regrettably, railway passenger services to Oberon were cancelled many years ago by the Government of which I was a member. Freight services were eventually closed down under the David Hill regime, something to which I also objected at the time. This Government has moved away from railways, a movement that must cease. The Government must come back to rail, because the volume of traffic on our highways today is enormous. Recently, while on a run home at about 11 p.m. after I had attended a function in Lithgow, to keep myself alert I started counting the trucks that were coming towards me from the Bathurst district in the 65 kilometre zone. In about three-quarters of an hour or one hour between Lithgow and Bathurst I passed 100 fully laden semitrailers making their way into Sydney.

There is a need to re-establish the railway line to Oberon. CSR has given an undertaking that it will restore the line and assist in upgrading infrastructure if it is successful. Boral is, of course, a giant in the timber industry. It has hardwood sawmills on the north coast and on the northern tablelands. From my point of view, the ideal result would be for Boral and CSR to organise a joint approach to State Forests under which Boral would get the sawlogs and CSR would have the remainder of the trees to press ahead with its manufacture of particle board. CSR has a sophisticated and efficient plant at Oberon and I believe it should be given the opportunity to press ahead.

I am concerned about Pacfor. I do not believe it has sufficient money to put down a payment on a knob of blue, let alone run a multimillion dollar business, and will be actively seeking overseas finance. If the information coming to me is correct, that finance will come from Switzerland. My thinking is that if Pacfor is granted the allocation, it will then sell it and pull right out, leaving a fully foreign owned and operated investment in the middle of our area. If the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, who is at the table, is talking with his colleague the Minister for Land and Water Conservation, whom I believe has responsibility for forests, they should give due consideration to the factors I have raised.

It is not a question of which party or which side of this Parliament makes the decision. It is a question of making the best possible move on behalf of the people of New South Wales generally. What should be taken into account is whether the somewhat fleeting benefit that would become available to the nearby city of Bathurst and the township of Oberon would be outweighed by the enormous benefits that would flow to Oberon should the allocation be granted to an Oberon firm, or should the third contractor or Laminex be prepared to set up in Oberon. Oberon needs the allocation and I believe Oberon should get it.

I want to refer to only two other matters. The funds allocated in the budget to the Legal Aid Commission are mostly for equipment. I am worried about one aspect of legal aid. I do not intend to enter into the argument that occurred in this House today; I am speaking on behalf of my constituents. Many women who have children to raise are being granted legal aid, but at the completion of cases in which property settlements are made the Legal Aid Commission is taking action to recover, in some

cases, very large amounts of money. If the money cannot be repaid, the Legal Aid Commission takes out a lien over the relevant property, so that if it is sold the first amount of money to be paid is the \$10,000, \$12,000 or \$15,000 owed to the Legal Aid Commission. I believe the Legal Aid Commission has been forced to take that action because insufficient funds have been made available to it.

I am amazed that some people receive legal aid. People who should be able to pay their legal bills are given legal aid. However, the woman who has come through a divorce and receives a property settlement but has no money and probably has three or four kids to look after has a lien put on her home to make certain the Legal Aid Commission is repaid. I understand that at this stage the New South Wales Government is not a signatory to the Commonwealth child care agreement. That belief has been conveyed

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to the Leader of the Opposition by no less a person than the mayor of the city of Bathurst. To keep faith with my responsibilities to all of my constituents, I make a plea for the mayor of the city of Bathurst to urge the Government to sign the Commonwealth child care agreement.

Mr BLACKMORE (Maitland) [8.57]: It is indeed a pleasure for me to take part in the debate on the 1994-95 State budget. As the Treasurer said in his Budget Speech, the budget is built on a commonsense balance between the need for continued strong financial control and the needs of the State economy and, of course, the community, which is still bearing the burden of recovery from the recession we had to have. The Government has set three clear objectives for the 1994-95 budget. These objectives combine to take full advantage of improving revenue, not only for the short-term needs of the State but also to ensure that we will continue to build a better future for our children and their generation.

It is pleasing to note that members of the Marsden branch of the Liberal Party, from the electorate of Ermington, are present in the gallery tonight. Sitting with them is the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, with whom I am very proud to have been associated, particularly having regard to the many multicultural communities in my electorate. The three objectives put in place by the Government are to apply funds for quality services that cater for the needs of the community; to further reduce taxation; and to continue to strengthen the financial position of the State of New South Wales. By adopting these objectives the Government has identified the areas of pressing need and has set controls from 1994-95 which embrace the concept of commonsense priorities.

I am deeply grateful for the announcement that the State budget contains an increased allocation of a massive \$22.23 million to capital works in the electorate of Maitland. I am sure that increased allocation will be welcomed by the many citizens of the electorate, who can look forward in anticipation to new and improved services. It is great news for Maitland, as it will result in construction on local projects at unprecedented levels. The responsible economic management brought to New South Wales by the Fahey Government is paying dividends right across the State. Nowhere is this more evident than in Maitland. This emphasises the Fahey-Armstrong Government's commitment to placing priority on the issues of health, transport, education, and law and order.

Those are all positive, commonsense priorities, built around the needs of people in the Maitland electorate, and they include: \$13.1 million for the redevelopment of Maitland Hospital; \$1.363 million for the upgrading of Tocal Agricultural College; \$800,000 for public works to improve Stroud water supply; \$274,000 for the Hunter Valley flood mitigation project; \$1.016 million to the Martins Creek quarry and State Rail facilities in the electorate; \$4 million for the construction of Metford railway station; and \$1.451 million for 27 new Department of Housing accommodation units. Incorporating allocations from last year's budget, the Maitland electorate has received an immense boost to capital works, totalling \$40.123 million.

The total roads budget for Maitland is \$10.5 million, compared with last year's budget allocation of \$7.643 million. The roadworks include: \$77,560 for the provision of an interchange at the intersection of

the New England Highway, Weakleys Drive, Thornton Road and Anderson Drive, between Beresfield and Thornton, which has been partly funded by the Federal Government; \$800,000 for the construction of the Taylor Avenue deviation on Raymond Terrace Road, East Maitland; \$524,000 for the reconstruction and sealing between Bucketts Way, Stroud, and the Dungog boundary; \$25,000 for a passing lane from Lochinvar to Kaludah Creek, north of Maitland on the New England Highway, which is also partly funded by the Federal Government.

The roadworks also include \$1 million for the construction of traffic control facilities from Aberglasslyn Road to Racecourse Road, Rutherford; \$86,000 under the extended 3 x 3 program for Maitland City Council; a \$300,000 New England Highway restoration, including provision of northbound and southbound passing lane at Airds Hill near Rutherford; a \$250,000 restoration of the central carriageway at All Saints College, Lochinvar; a \$210,000 restoration of pavement in Dowling Street, Dungog; a \$237,000 restoration of pavement at East Maitland; \$770,000 for minor road improvements; \$350,000 for traffic facilities construction; \$105,000 for restoration of pavement at Nelsons Plains; \$236,00 for restoration of pavements at Seaham; and \$157,000 restoration of Main Road 90, Stroud. The budget allocation for road funding has brought great news for the entire Maitland electorate. People in the electorate have been waiting for years for a roads budget like this, and I am proud to have been part of putting this together.

The \$500,000 allocation to be spent on the upgrading of Stroud Road, between Stroud and Dungog, is perhaps the best news of all. For years parents of children travelling on school buses from Stroud to Dungog have had to live with the fear of the possibility of a serious accident on this treacherous stretch of road. Numerous deputations and representations were arranged with various authorities, all to no avail. Thankfully, the Government has finally recognised the potential dangers of this road and the funds are now forthcoming. Since I was elected member for Maitland, I have presented the upgrading of this road as a major priority, and it is great to have this allocation included in the budget and to know that this vital remedial work can now proceed. The citizens of Dungog and Stroud will appreciate the benefit of this upgrading, and residents of the upper Hunter will have a much improved access to coastal resorts and the Pacific Highway.

I wish to pay tribute to the many people associated with the Stroud Road improvements for their enthusiastic support and cooperation, in particular the Alison family, for making the land

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available for the realignment of the road, and the members of Dungog Shire Council; the mayor, Councillor Allen Fairhall; the general manager, Perry Landy; the engineer, David Uphill; and the foreman, Leon "Doc" Wilson. The assistance given and interest shown by those people in the establishment of this new road link is truly commendable. A further benefit for the electorate of Maitland is the allocation in the budget of \$5.1 million for improvement to the State Rail network. A new railway station will be constructed at Metford, at a cost of \$4 million, providing improved public transport for residents and students. More than \$122,000 has been allocated for the laying of additional concrete sleepers, and \$150,000 to improve track drainage on the main line.

Staff at Martins Creek quarry will appreciate Freight Rail's investment of \$850,000 in the program to replace a primary rock crusher at the Martins Creek works. This is most encouraging news for the loyal citizens of Martins Creek, with whom I am proud to be associated. Rural transport facilities will be improved by a grant of \$43,000 to Maitland City Council for the purchase and installation of public transport signs. Bus stop signs will be installed on all bus routes in the Maitland area and will assist passengers using local services. This project is being funded from grants provided to local government and community groups under the successful non-urban transport program. This program is designed to provide rural passengers with facilities that are more convenient and comfortable and offer adequate shelter from cold and inclement weather conditions. Maitland electorate has received funding of \$185,000 since the program commenced in 1991. New facilities built under the program include a \$142,000 bus-rail interchange at Maitland, which is providing passengers with an easier and more comfortable switch from one mode of transport to another.

In education more than \$820,000 will be spent on capital works and maintenance for both school and TAFE facilities in the Maitland electorate in this financial year. The budget includes funding towards projects in the electorate, valued at \$1.54 million in a statewide budget of \$459 million. Funding in the 1994-95 budget includes almost \$700,000 for schools in the Maitland electorate, allowing for major works, repairs and external improvements to 13 schools. This includes the completion of a communal hall at Telarah public school, school and ground improvements, \$126,000; ongoing repairs and upgrading, including Dungog High School, \$275,000; Metford public school, \$50,000; Paterson public school, \$50,000; Gillieston public school, \$30,000; Millers Forest public school, \$30,000; Hinton public school, \$30,000; Lochinvar public school, \$30,000; Iona public school, \$20,000; Largs public school, \$20,000; Martins Creek public school, \$20,000; and Maitland Grossmann high school, \$15,000. More than \$120,000 is also provided for ongoing maintenance at the Maitland campus of the Hunter Institute of Technology.

Funding for the Maitland electorate is part of the New South Wales Government's extensive commitment to improve education facilities throughout the State. This year's capital works and maintenance budget represents an increase of 46 per cent on the \$313.6 million spent in 1988. In the health portfolio the Government has sustained the record spending which has resulted in the New South Wales public hospital system being systematically rebuilt from the shambles left by Labor. In his presentation speech the Treasurer said that this year's health budget will include a record capital program of \$460 million, an increase of more than 18 per cent on 1993-94. By the end of the financial year, this Government will have spent more than \$2 billion rebuilding and expanding the health infrastructure since it came to office.

This money has helped build or redevelop 45 hospitals since the Government took office, making it the biggest reconstruction of any hospital system in Australia. This is more than double the number achieved by Labor in the last five years of its administration. We are in no doubt about the growing demands on public hospitals. Last year hospitals in New South Wales handled 28 per cent more patients in need of critical acute care than in 1988-89. The capital works budget for the Maitland electorate allocates \$13.1 million for the redevelopment of Maitland Hospital, which will provide a new admissions centre, a 40-bed medical ward, a 40-bed surgical ward, a 24-bed acute care psychiatric ward, and an eight-bed coronary care ward. As the tendering for capital works was more favourable than first anticipated, sufficient funds were available to finance additional facilities, including the eight-bed coronary care ward.

Unfortunately, in recent times some outlandish claims have been made by the Opposition in relation to the standard of patient care and attention at Maitland Hospital. As a frequent visitor to the hospital I can say only that such an attempt to discredit the loyalty and efficiency of the hospital staff is demeaning and truly unworthy of such dedicated persons. It is worth noting that in 1986 a political promise was given by the local member at that time that the redevelopment of the Maitland Hospital was on Labor's agenda. But there was no positive realisation of these objectives until the coalition came to office. In regard to public housing the Treasurer indicated that more than \$455 million is being provided for community housing in 1994-95. This will permit the commencement of more than 3,100 new housing units and includes \$5 million for special housing initiatives stemming from the Burdekin report.

In the electorate of Maitland \$1.451 million is being provided for 27 new Department of Housing accommodation units. That now makes a total of \$2.688 million spent on housing in this electorate in the last two years. The coalition's commitment to the environment is reflected in the \$720 million in recurrent expenditure that has been committed to environmental management, remediation, education and monitoring programs across all policy areas; and a further \$535 million has been earmarked for capital works and infrastructure which will achieve long-term improvements to the environment. Almost

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\$100 million has been allocated to country councils to allow for more water supply and sewerage projects. The budget has provided an allocation of \$800,000 to assist the Great Lakes Council with the

augmentation of the Stroud water supply. The proposed work includes construction of a 50 megalitre off stream storage facility, and a two megalitre per day water treatment plant.

The community of Stroud will benefit greatly from this work through improved water quality and a more secure supply of water in times of drought. The \$3.59 million project is due to be completed in early 1996. Most of the construction work was undertaken by the private sector and the funds were an important contribution to the local economy through the creation of new jobs. Funding of \$12,700 for two community group salt action projects was announced in the budget. The salt action program is a strategy for joint action by the Government and the community, to manage and control salinity levels within the land and water resources in New South Wales. Salt action funds are provided to assist community groups to improve management practices on dry land and irrigation farms and monitoring salinity and waterlogging problems. An allocation of \$750,000 for work to control salinity in the Hunter River has also been announced. The grant is for a real-time monitoring system to be called SCADA - supervisory control and data acquisition - which collects information about the river, dam heights, water quality and rainfall through instruments positioned throughout the valley.

The Department of Water Resources and other agencies will use the information to forecast changes in the river, for managing salinity and other water quality indicators. In the budget \$660,000 is provided as a contribution to the Hunter Catchment Management Trust to assist its flood mitigation program and \$20,000 to Maitland City Council to assist with its Maitland flood plain management study. Further State funds totalling \$65,000 have also been provided within the budget from the flood program to assist the trust to continue a rural flood mitigation works review and the Maitland crib wall levee management study. The financial assistance reflects the State Government's continuing commitment to implement sound floodplain management in the Hunter Valley. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

As announced in the Premier's economic development statement, the payroll tax threshold will be increased from \$500,000 to \$600,000 in two stages, commencing from 1 January next year. Every business in New South Wales currently paying payroll tax will save tax under this initiative. More than 1,000 businesses will cease paying payroll tax altogether. Small business will have a wider scope for growth before they face payroll tax costs, which will also assist employment prospects. The next matter I shall speak of is essential industry support for the rural sector. While most of the business sector is experiencing the benefits of recovery, there remains one area in desperate need of assistance. The drought is a major national, social and economic problem requiring a joint response by State and Federal governments. At present 83 per cent of the State is drought declared, yet in many cases farmers are prevented from obtaining welfare assistance because of the Federal Government's assets test.

Whilst the Commonwealth Government has announced some alleviation of those hardships, it still does not give any relief to the rural sector for the provision of fodder. That is very much needed in the rural sector. Our Government is making every effort to persuade the Commonwealth to address this anomaly. At a State level the Government has taken urgent action to assist our farmers through the crisis. In the budget more than \$73 million is being directed to rural assistance and combating the drought. The Treasurer in his statement emphasised that the Government remains committed to the successful sale of the State Bank of New South Wales. This constitutes the single biggest step the Government can take to reduce liabilities. Contingent liabilities of the order of \$19 billion will be addressed by a successful sale, further protecting the State's AAA credit rating.

The Government is also committing an extra \$150 million to the reduction of the State's unfunded superannuation liabilities, and full funding of superannuation for the entire State sector is being phased in. It is also determined to plug the funding hole left by Labor administration in this area. The decision by the coalition to attack this problem means that in 10 years the State's superannuation liabilities will be more than \$20 billion lower than would have been the case if the Government had merely let Labor's inaction continue. The extensive funding initiatives in the budget of commonsense priorities have been made possible only by the Government's strict adherence to tight financial control. It is also abundantly clear that funding increases into the future are dependent on ongoing financial restraint.

Whilst all indicators show that the economy is growing, the Government must maintain its commitment of sustaining strong financial management. A constant review of the costs of administration by all departments is essential and imperative for the identification of future savings. The removal of the 1.5 per cent productivity savings requirement imposed on all agencies except health and education since 1988-89 is welcomed. This program has been successful in achieving significant efficiencies and has ensured better value for the public dollar. Our ongoing commitment to strong financial management is reflected in our priorities to further reduce the State deficit, liabilities and taxes, with the prime objective of building a better future. In conclusion, I extend my sincere gratitude to the many members of my electorate and thank them for their loyalty and support. I look forward with confidence to the future and to the sharing of our security and achievements as a consequence of the commonsense priorities contained in the 1994-95 budget.

Mr GAUDRY (Newcastle) [9.20]: The honourable member for Maitland made it quite clear when speaking about capital works and spending in

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the Maitland electorate that this is an election budget that has been grabbed together by two means. The first is a history of underspending in electorates and the carrying forward of that spending to add to capital works in marginal electorates at this time. The second is the picking up of unexpected funds from increased taxes, charges, fees and fines - an 8.5 per cent increase - which have resulted from a much better financial performance in Australia during the recovery period over the past year. That is apparent from the budget papers. It would be a great advantage if the Government showed in the budget, in the allocations for capital projects, any amount carried forward from past underspending.

Let me examine the record of the Government. In the past seven years this Government has underspent \$137.3 million in the budget of its police operations; it has underspent \$112.3 million in the budget of the Department of Community Services; it has underspent \$110.2 million in the budget of the Department of Transport; and it has underspent \$20.9 million in the budget of its TAFE operations. Health, public transport, education and housing - areas that are very important to the ordinary citizen - have suffered the greatest impact because of the Government's underspending. I am not suggesting that no money has flowed to my electorate from the budget. The honourable member for Maitland drew attention to the Honeysuckle program. An amount of \$62.3 million was spent in the electorate of Newcastle. That is a valid spending for my electorate, a most important commercial, residential and recreational hub for the whole of the Hunter.

Yes, the money was spent there - and rightly so. But when I dig a little deeper I discover that \$32.9 million of that amount is within the building better cities Honeysuckle development spending, which includes the Federal Government contribution. It is not clearly shown in the budget papers, but it is important to note that \$70 million of that \$100 million being spent in my electorate under the building better cities program comes from Federal Government funds and that \$30 million is State funds. What will happen to those funds in future? They must be spent in the electorate rather than be repatriated to Sydney. The Honeysuckle program is wonderful, and I am sure the whole of the Hunter will be able to take advantage of it.

Honourable members should have access to information regarding spending within their electorates that is below the level of the amounts given out by Treasury. I instance particularly expenditure by the Department of School Education. I acknowledge that it might be nice for good news to be announced in the newspapers or by honourable members from the Government side, but local members should at least have access to that information - it is part of their responsibility. That certainly did not happen with the Department of School Education spending in my electorate, and I am sure that it was not the case in many other electorates. Spending in my electorate is significant, and rightly so, but there could be and there should be more funding, particularly for health, public housing and public transport.

The budget clearly states that the Government has put aside \$200 million for a rainy day, looking for

ways in which to spend that money in the future. That money could be spent now and should be spent now. Health is of major concern in my electorate, as I am sure it is in other electorates. An amount of \$1.4 million has been included in the budget for essential refurbishment of the Nickson wing of the Royal Newcastle Hospital, which was damaged in the earthquake, and the Wansey Dialysis Centre. The budget shows that \$105 million of recurrent funding was underspent last year, \$40 million of which was in respect of hospitals. My calculations show that that amount of underspending would allow for 4,000 hip replacement operations. That brings it down to the level of the ordinary patient whose name is on a hospital waiting list, a person who is waiting in pain.

Those funds could be injected into the system and spent positively to assist people in my electorate and, of course, people in many other electorates. I recently conducted a health care survey in my electorate. The people in my electorate responded by saying that they were waiting for oncology services, orthopaedic services, urology services, ear nose and throat services, and emergency services. When one listens to stories of people waiting in pain and suffering, one understands that for people at the service delivery level, statistics about spending and pats on the back in respect of the performance of the health care system mean very little. A person who is waiting for weeks for oncology services and whose life is threatened by that delay in treatment would say that there is a much better use for that \$200 million than putting it in a rainy day fund. Let us see it spent now! The Newcastle Mater Misericordiae Hospital, which provides oncology services in the Hunter, has two linear accelerators. The setting up and development of that service has received enormous support in the Hunter through community fundraising, telethons and significant community donations.

The demand in the whole of the Hunter region for oncology services requiring linear accelerators would justify the provision of 2.7 accelerators in 1994. Staff specialists at the Mater hospital have said that the people justifying the provision of the extra 0.7 of an accelerator in fact are missing out on the service. It is a low cost, highly effective service for people suffering from a range of cancer problems. In many cases treatment in the oncology unit means the difference between experiencing pain and suffering, and having an improved quality of life. Despite the need, there is no indication from the Government that the service will be increased in this round of funding. In fact, there will be further problems because one of the linear accelerators will be out of action for four months by March 1996 for servicing, which will exacerbate the situation and add further people to the waiting list.

In the last few days I have been involved with issues associated with the Independent Commission Against Corruption and spending in the Parramatta area. A letter from the Treasurer, and Minister for the Arts which has been circulated in the House shows

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that \$675,000 was added to the forward estimates for the Department of Planning to be spent in the Parramatta area for work on a National Trust property. That is good spending and I am not complaining about it, but if demand has been established for a life support service such as is provided by a linear accelerator I am sure the money is there and could be found. Such spending is essential and money must be found - and found now.

I refer to housing. I am pleased that 64 units of accommodation will be built in the electorate of Newcastle in the coming year. It will mean that we can chip away at the huge waiting list for public housing accommodation in my electorate and across the Hunter - but it is only chipping away. People now being offered one bedroom pensioner accommodation applied in August 1987, so they have been on the waiting list for seven years. People in their sixties and seventies renting in the private sector and waiting for such accommodation are in a difficult situation. People being offered one bedroom single accommodation have been on the list since July 1987; and for one bedroom community accommodation the relevant date is November 1988. The Government has not addressed this real problem and more has to be done.

Special allocations to marginal seats have been mentioned. The regional office of the Department of Housing in the Hunter has been transferred to the seat of Maitland. Why would this be done? It was

centrally located in Newcastle, where the majority of its work is carried out. As it covers the central coast its location in Newcastle is even more appropriate. How much has the move cost? Was a cost-benefit analysis done? Is this a classic example of waste and mismanagement by a government department or by the ministry? Has it been done purely for election purposes? Public transport is a pivotal issue in my electorate, particularly the impact of government decisions on employment. Since the Government came to power Cardiff workshops have been closed and at the end of this year we will see the closure of Broadmeadow locomotive works, with a total of 705 jobs gone. The Broadmeadow train control area has been targeted for closure. There have been changes to the Hunter Valley train crewing roster and the coal train crewing roster depot, which will remove 145 more jobs from the electorate.

The loss of those 145 jobs will mean the loss of \$8 million in salary. This money will be taken out of the electorate, with the resulting economic and social consequences for the electorate and the people who lose their jobs. In relation to the Government's attention to public transport I refer to the integrated transport study, a study that will give us the public transport plan for the whole of the lower Hunter into the next century. It was due last December. It is now going on for 10 months late. Perhaps it will be handed down by the end of this year. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

The study received \$200,000 of Federal Government building better cities funds, yet the report is nine months late. Would any private sector employer accept a consultant who handed in material that late? It is a disgrace. Either the people conducting the study are incompetent or the Government does not want the results published. The transport study should be issued now so that we can justly make critical comment on it. Another issue is the Government's plan to terminate rail services at Civic station. This does not meet the wishes of the people of Newcastle or the wishes of the people of the Hunter Valley and they have said so in the petition that has been lodged asking that services be continued to Newcastle station. The latest poll taken by the *Newcastle Herald* showed that 67 per cent of people who responded wanted rail services to continue to Newcastle station.

Another issue is the Government's decision to sell off the bus depot at the top of Newcastle. The loss of the terminus has been a disaster for Newcastle bus services. There is great difficulty in finding a place for the buses to stop. In public transport, health and housing, whilst there has been spending in my electorate, the Government has failed to meet the needs of the electorate and to listen to the people. Under the Growth Centres (Development Corporations) Act 1974, there is another group that makes decisions in the electorate, the Honeysuckle development corporation. It is important to examine closely the consultation mechanisms of that legislation. There is no doubt in my mind that greater consultation is needed between the Honeysuckle development corporation and the people of the Newcastle area, both elected representatives and the general public, and that an improvement of the Growth Centres (Development Corporations) Act is needed.

Mr SMALL (Murray) [9.40]: It is an honour and a privilege to speak to this most creditable budget. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Premier, all Cabinet Ministers and anyone else who has been able to identify the economic needs of our State and has been connected with this budget. This Government has been in office for almost seven years. Premier Nick Greiner started the economic repair of this State after 12 years of Labor Party government and overspending. The previous Labor Government left this administration with a huge debt. It is a creditable achievement that this Government is able to come to the House now with such a good budget, particularly in these most difficult economic times. In the most stringent of financial circumstances the Government has taken a good grip on management and has provided New South Wales with a much more secure economic future.

The Government shares a duty of care, a duty that is vital to the welfare of our families, to the constituents in our electorates and to the State. The people have given us the duty of taking care of the State. I draw attention to the achievements that have been made in health services over the past few years. In my electorate a sum of \$20.3 million is provided for the Murray regional health system, which covers eight hospitals. Another four hospitals have been identified in other catchment areas, particularly those aligned with Griffith, Wagga Wagga, Albury and

Mildura. All 10 hospitals have been the subject of major improvements. They have the ability to provide aged care facilities, an ability they did not have eight or 10 years ago.

I hope that two hospitals, one at Urana and the other at Wentworth, will move into a multihealth system. Such a move would be to their considerable benefit. The area is now waiting for the Federal Government to provide the extra funds necessary for aged care, nursing home beds in particular. The State Government is prepared to make the provision but Federal approval is required. The Federal Government has agreed that four hospitals in the State can move to a multihealth function, but 12 hospitals are needed before that can be done. Well in excess of \$5 billion, about a quarter of the budget, is being spent on health services, so I do not understand how anyone can claim that the Government does not care or that it leaves many problems unresolved. My electorate does not make those claims. Medical specialists now visit areas in the Murray electorate and the Riverina region, but that would never have happened 20 or 30 years ago. For elective treatment people had to travel to Sydney, Melbourne, Bendigo or Albury, and although some people by choice still travel to Albury, they do not have to travel longer distances any more. This Government has done an extremely good job, particularly under the present Minister for Health.

Health is not the only sector that is in good order. Since taking office this Government has embarked on a program of reforms in education. Those reforms have since come into effect. Children from Victoria have been attending New South Wales schools to reap the benefits of enhanced educational reforms. Victoria is, of course, now making the same reforms. In my electorate there are 67 schools. I do not hear many complaints about the educational system; mostly I hear that people are very pleased that school councils are working well with parents and citizens associations and that money is being provided to school councils to enable them to identify special areas of need. There will never be complete satisfaction in education, health services or any other area but it is my belief that the Government has done extremely well under difficult circumstances and in a time of debt repayment.

Law and order is a major aspect of the budget. I cannot speak too highly of the police in the Murray electorate and adjoining country regions. They do an excellent job. People talk about police corruption; I know of none. In my area we are fortunate to have police who are prepared to carry out their duties, tasks of great responsibility, under great difficulties. Times have changed a great deal. These days our police have to cope with many different circumstances and hardships, including problems associated with drugs and increased crime resulting from the unemployment levels of the current downturn in the economy.

Road funding is another aspect on which I congratulate the Ministers involved. Matt Singleton, as a former Minister in this House, started the 3 x 3 fuel levy program. The honourable member for Barwon and the present Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads and the Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads have also done good work in that area. A sum of \$30.8 million is allocated this year for expenditure on roads in the Murray electorate. That is an increase of some \$6 million in the past three or four years. All I can say to anybody who starts complaining is that any deficiencies do not come about through a lack of funds. Every cent collected in road funding now goes into roads, whether under the 3 x 3 program or by the desired amounts being allocated by the Government. Previously, not all such revenue collections were clearly going into roads. A watchdog committee has been established to make sure that happens. I am very pleased about the upgrading of roads.

My electorate is very concerned with environmental issues, particularly in relation to water and drainage. Irrigation is being improved, resulting in an enhancement of properties. Recently the Minister introduced the Irrigation Corporations Bill, which is landmark legislation. The irrigation management board, through appointed members who are irrigators, is working through that legislation. Irrigation is not an easy matter. The board is working to provide for the corporation and then for the privatisation of its own organisation. That work was started under the former Minister for Land and Water Conservation, now the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and has been continued under the present Minister. The

board is heading towards privatisation. It will be a unique achievement to hand over capital structures with the guarantee of improvements being undertaken where necessary, with both the Government and irrigators themselves providing asset refurbishment. I am very pleased to see that improvement.

This year \$13.241 million has been budgeted for drainage facilities in the Berriquin irrigation area and Coomealla will receive a joint venture program of some \$6 million to \$7 million to enhance its irrigation by piping most of the water, which is a much more efficient management process than using open canals. I am pleased to see all the irrigation management plans for environmental needs are continuing. The Federal Government also provides funds to assist with irrigation improvements.

The removal of stamp duty for properties passing between intergenerational farming families - parents to children to grandchildren - is most welcome. Many farming families cannot afford to pay stamp duty these days when the property is passed on through the generations. It is essential to keep the family farm intact; the family farming unit is such an important part of Australia. Of course, under present drought conditions, that is extremely difficult. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Premier and the Deputy Premier for acknowledging something that I and many other people representing land-holders have been fighting for over the last four or five years. As from 14 September, when the budget was brought down, eligible farmers will not pay stamp duty when they hand over the property to other family members, be they sons, daughters and/or grandchildren.

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Within the Murray electorate this year there is a capital works program expenditure of \$49,534,590. Many small towns and villages do not have sewerage. This expenditure for facilities to dispose of sewage will enhance the purity of the water supply from the rivers by filtration and river pump-out stations along the Murray River. There will be environmental improvement along the Edward and Murray rivers, to the benefit of users of river boats, paddle steamers and other river craft. It is commendable that \$4.227 million will be spent in those projects this year. It is pleasing that the capital works program has taken on board the exceptional needs of small country towns and villages, whether it be 45 people in a little village like Pooncarie or 8,000 in a place like Deniliquin. Everyone is looked after equally and all are able to work with the shire councils in an endeavour to improve their lifestyle.

For the past six years there was only one motor registry office - at Deniliquin. The previous Labor Government removed many registries from police stations, compelling country people to travel great distances, for example, from Pooncarie to Wentworth, a distance of at least 150 kilometres, to get vehicles registered. The police were placed under great stress in carrying out those duties as well as their other duties. If the police were called out, that was the first priority. If anyone wanted their vehicle registered or their licence renewed, they had to wait or come back on another occasion. It was a very unreasonable situation. It is wonderful that motor registry services are now available at Wentworth, Deniliquin, Finley, Hay, Corowa, Moama and recently at Moulamein. This gives the police more time to attend to crime and policing duties. I would like to see the township of Barham secure motor registration facilities for shire residents.

I was given the opportunity to introduce the Emu Licensing Bill. I had received much correspondence from farmers wanting to start emu farms. For many years Western Australia has had emu farming. Farmers here were looking for alternative forms of farming, particularly in the western division where sheep are mostly all that can be run and few areas grow wheat. Farming is stressful because of low rainfall. The Emu Licensing Act has led to quite a unique situation. Commencing with no licences 15 months ago, there are now 134 licences issued, a third of which are within the Murray electorate. Certainly it is one industry that is expanding.

An announcement was made in the past few days about additional funding being provided for fire equipment for the 13 councils within my electorate. Much concern has been expressed that, because of the unfortunate fires in the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and along the south

and north coasts, those areas would receive virtually all of the funds available for firefighting equipment and upgrading. I am pleased to see the fairness of the distribution of more than \$1 million to the 12 shires and one municipality in my electorate. Balranald received a 200 per cent increase, one of the highest in the State. The lowest had an 8 per cent increase. The Murray electorate suffered major fires in 1987 and 1990, so this distribution of funds is most welcome. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Many firefighters from places such as the Riverina and the Murray electorate came to Sydney to help fight the January fires. It is commendable that these wonderful volunteers took such a huge risk. The Premier and the former police Minister paid tribute to them for they were worthy of praise. It is wonderful to see the way that this country and its people come together in adversity to fight together or to share resources. Today the elderly population is increasing. People can start to enjoy life when they retire, which is quite different to what it was many years ago. Men and women are living eight years longer than they did 30 or 40 years ago. This is an example of medical science achievements. To show their respect for the elderly the governments of nearly all the States of Australia have given travel subsidies to senior citizens so that they can enjoy a quality lifestyle.

Almost 700,000 senior citizens carry the Seniors Card. They have the advantage of being able to make purchases in stores offering discounts and in major stores and business houses, and to make travel arrangements. I have strongly advocated the introduction of a national seniors card. My electorate adjoins the Victorian border and many of my elderly constituents travel to Melbourne because they have relations there and because Melbourne is a much closer than Sydney. Unfortunately they do not receive the travel concession benefits offered by the Seniors Card; I hope they will in the future. Similar circumstances apply on the Queensland border, the South Australian border and the Western Australian border. A national seniors card would be of great benefit.

Finally I should like to refer to the tragedy affecting Australia at present: the drought. Australia is the most arid country in the world. Water has always been referred to as liquid gold, and it is now very much liquid gold. Queensland has been affected by the drought for four or five years. I am aware of constituents from my electorate who moved to Queensland six or eight years ago and who have experienced nothing but drought for most of that time. Because of heavy losses they have been forced off the land and completely out of farming. That is a terrible stigma for a family that has lived on the land and is committed to it. The effects on the welfare and future of both parents and children are tragic. Northern New South Wales is the second worst affected drought area in Australia. The Darling River is virtually only pools of water, with no water flowing beyond Wilcannia down to Menindee Lakes. One has to live in that area to understand the seriousness of the drought and the hardship to families living in isolation. Naturally they are looking for government support.

I pay tribute to Senator Collins for visiting the drought affected areas to comprehend the severity of the drought and its dire consequences. Today the

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Prime Minister has announced that families with little or no income will be able to receive certain social security benefits. I am concerned that those benefits will be available only to those in areas of identified prolonged drought. Some families in the 83 per cent of New South Wales that has been drought declared - but which have only been affected by drought for perhaps three, six or 12 months - will not meet the eligibility criteria. Most of the criteria relate to those in areas that have been drought affected for two or three years. I would like to think that the doors will be opened wider to assist all people suffering financial stress.

I am pleased that the new criteria will not involve an assets test - under which farmers are assessed on their assets but not on their income - but an income test. If those criteria were applied more generally right across drought declared areas, that would be a fair way to help those in need. An income test, rather than an assets test, is also needed to qualify for youth educational grants under the Austudy scheme. That would help many of our youth in isolated and rural areas who require an education. They should have the same right as any child living near a major school, or in a town or city. I pay tribute

where it is due. I sincerely hope that the broadening of the eligibility process will apply to all areas, regardless of how long they have been drought declared. The Government has brought down a fair budget that will provide resources for the 1994-95 financial year, will be beneficial to the people of New South Wales and will lay the foundation for a balanced budget in the next financial year.

Mr CRITTENDEN (Wyong) [10.05]: The budget presented by the Treasurer last Wednesday is the seventh and final budget of the coalition parties. They have come to the end of their tenure of office. In many respects the budget replicates the desperate throw-money-around-like-a-person-with-three-arms approach adopted by the Government in the recent Parramatta by-election campaign. The people of the Parramatta electorate realised that the promises made by the Government, which involved more than \$1.5 billion, were completely phoney. The people of New South Wales will realise that this desperate bid by a government devoid of ideas and vision, a government well and truly into its hallucinogenic stage, cannot deliver the essential services the people of New South Wales rightly expect and, indeed, demand. I intend to deal with four aspects of this so-called financial statement: the provision of hospital and ambulance services; the provision of the Home Care Services, which is a State government responsibility under the home and community care program; and the level of policing resources in the Wyong electorate. At page 5.76 of Budget Paper No. 2, we are told:

The NSW population growth rate of around 1 per cent per annum continues to exert tremendous pressure on the demand for health services. The ageing of the population is also increasing demands on the Health system.

Indeed, on page 5.79, we are told that people aged over 65 consume four times more health resources per capita than those under 65. My electorate has many residents over the age of 65. These facts are beyond dispute. I find it incredible that New South Wales has a government that claims that it intends to increase the number of ambulance officers in New South Wales by 200 to meet this burgeoning demand. On the surface that claim looks fairly good. In reality it is fairly hopeless. In the 1991-92 financial year, average staffing in terms of effective full-time ambulance officer positions in this State was 2,570. In 1992-93 that figure decreased to 2,450 personnel. In 1993-94 the figure decreased even further to 2,377 personnel. If honourable members are to believe this Government, the estimate for 1994-95 is 2,581 personnel. The net increase in ambulance personnel from the 1991-92 financial year will be a paltry 11 officers to serve the 3 per cent growth in population - excluding the compounding factor, of course - that has occurred since 1991 and the increase in the aged population, which consumes four times the health resources of the population under 65.

But there is more bad news. The recurrent funding in the 1991-92 estimates for employee related costs of ambulance personnel was \$108,665,000. But the Ambulance Service bureaucrats, who wanted a pat on the head from the ineffective Minister for Health, decided to cut corners. They did not bother calling in replacements when officers were away sick or on long service leave. They actually managed not to spend \$12 million of the Ambulance Service budget in the 1991-92 financial year. Ambulance stations were left understaffed, or with no staff at all for long periods of time. The reason was simple: to avoid spending \$12 million the Government was prepared to put lives at risk, and lives were lost.

That was the financial year immediately after the last State election. Honourable members need not wonder what would be in store for the people of New South Wales if this callous Government were returned to bring down a budget for the 1995-96 financial year. Ordinary people in the State might have promises dangled before them now, in the run up to the State election, but, on past performances, should this Government be returned, these promises will meet the same fate as the \$12 million that was not spent on the Ambulance Service - the \$12 million that was never spent, even though people's lives were put at risk. The Government's deliberate run down of the Ambulance Service commenced in 1991-92. It was only recently, when two people on the North Shore suffered heart attacks and no ambulance was available to transport them to hospital, that the Minister was galvanised into action. Apparently this north shore Government acts only when it affects the north shore.

I turn now to the hospital services referred to in Budget Paper No. 2. We are told, under the heading "Other Initiatives" on page 5-81, that \$2.8 million will be provided for new health services on the central coast. Well, that is very interesting, because it was the current Treasurer, when he was health Minister, who authorised the construction of stage two of Wyong hospital. I have no doubt he did so in good faith, but his successor failed to carry out the promise by making stage two of Wyong hospital operational. The reality is that an integral part of stage two of Wyong hospital was the maternity wing.

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But, ever since the Wyong hospital maternity section was officially declared open by the current, inept Minister for Health in July 1992, not one baby has been born in those delivery suites. Is it any wonder that this house found it necessary to censure such an incompetent Minister? The Minister for Health behaves more like an escapee from *Days of Our Lives* than someone who is trying to administer a health portfolio in the 1990s. He gave an assurance at the opening of the maternity wing in July 1992 that he would get things up and running as soon as possible, and that beds would be filled by Christmas of that year. Well - as with the other members of this Government - his word is not worth a cracker. We are still waiting for the day when babies will be born at Wyong Hospital.

Recently, because Wyong Hospital had empty maternity beds but no staff to service those beds, Mrs Crouch from the Wyong electorate gave birth to a son at the Caltex service centre on the F3 freeway. Despite the number of babies being born, despite the ward having been built and despite the promises made, women from the Wyong electorate are expected to make the dash to Belmont hospital or to Gosford hospital for their confinements - always hoping, of course, if they need an ambulance that the Minister's cost cutting has not resulted in the ambulance station being closed at certain times. I wonder if the \$2.8 million in so-called additional funding for the Central Coast Area Health Service includes the \$500,000 that should have been allocated to Wyong anyway for the maternity section which has not been used during the last two years. I wonder whether Wyong hospital will get the four bed, high dependency medical unit that it so urgently needs.

We already have the specialist physicians in place. All we need now is some medical monitoring equipment and a will on the part of this Government to ensure that people who have a slight medical complaint or a possible heart flutter can be monitored at Wyong hospital rather than be transferred to Gosford. From past experience I am sceptical about whether Wyong hospital and the residents of Wyong shire will benefit because, apparently, the residents of Wyong shire are not trustworthy enough to be members of the Central Coast Area Health Board. The names of two members of the then Central Coast Area Health Board - people from Wyong shire with no party affiliation - were omitted from the *Government Gazette* of 5 August 1994. They were people who were respected in the community, who had links through TAFE and the RSL respectively. They were replaced by one Liberal Party hack, one failed Liberal Party candidate.

That action shows where this Government's priorities lie. It demonstrates the complete lack of commitment on the part of the Government - and its censured Minister for Health in particular - to the needs of Wyong hospital. In recent times we have been told that we cannot have a maternity section because we cannot get an additional anaesthetist to be rostered on for emergency deliveries. On the face of it there is a shortage of anaesthetists but, as stated in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on 8 September 1994, the Hunter Area Health Service has managed to get three of the four anaesthetists it requires. The Hunter Area Health Service has not been sitting on its hands. It is not good enough to have an area health service board dominated by the Gosford Liberal Party machine. The Hunter Area Health Board has got off its hands and has ensured a better service for its area.

If there is a genuine desire to obtain staff it can be done. We were told, before the official opening of the maternity section at Wyong hospital, that problems would be experienced in obtaining a paediatrician. The effort was made and we resolved those problems. There was then a campaign to suggest that it was impossible to obtain obstetricians. Despite the best efforts of some Gosford

obstetricians, and their determination to maintain their market share and ensure that clients from the Wyong electorate continued to travel to Gosford, we actually obtained support from obstetricians who wished to establish a practice at Wyong Hospital. As soon as that hurdle was overcome, we had to face the problem of obtaining another anaesthetist before babies could be born at Wyong Hospital.

I suspect that when we have solved the problem of the anaesthetist we will be told that we need to have a brain surgeon appointed before we can deliver babies at Wyong. That is about the only excuse they will have left for obstructing the project. But there are some things that could be done smoothly, quickly and economically. The Department of Health should get a few management accountants to instruct the area health board in basic discounted cash flow models and cost-benefit analysis, because that is all that is required for the Central Coast Area Health Service to investigate whether it should purchase its own ambulance vehicles and hire off-duty ambulance officers for interhospital transfers within the area health service and between the Central Coast Area Health Service and hospitals outside the area. Presently the population is exposed.

An ageing population that requires four times more health resources is exposed to a greater health risk when ambulances have to be called away from stations because of the interhospital transfers. Ambulances which are supposed to meet emergency service needs in the community should not be taken away for interhospital transfers. I turn now to the issue of the Home Care Service. For most of this year I suppose I would have averaged at least one letter a week to the Minister for Community Services about the withdrawal of the Home Care Service from one of my constituents. Very often the Home Care Service has been provided for a long period of time - up to 10 years. What has happened is that this Government, which claims to put people first by managing better, is simply trying to transfer the responsibility. They are trying to deny people in my electorate their independence and ensure that they are removed from their own homes and placed in nursing homes, because the Federal Government has to foot the bill for the nursing homes; not the State Government.

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It is pretty sad when we cannot get governments in this country to organise things so that we achieve the best return - both to the people and in respect of financial costs. Honourable members will see, on page 260 of Budget Paper No. 3, that the operating cost of the Home Care Service will allegedly increase from \$109,577,000 in actual terms from the last financial year to \$113,883,000 for the current financial year. That is an increase of a little over \$4 million. That might scratch the surface; it might actually do a little good. What concerns me and a number of agencies on the central coast is that the Home Care Service may be privatised. If that is the case, that \$4 million will be soaked up in employee related costs connected with redundancy and so forth. I do not believe that is putting people first by managing better. I urge the Government to ensure that wherever possible people may obtain their independence by being able to live in their own homes.

Recent figures relating to crime in the Wyong electorate are staggering. Serious assault, violent sexual assault, robbery using firearms, malicious damage, assault and stealing are on the increase. The situation is drastic. The incidence of violent sex crimes, indecent assault and street crimes is now well above the State average. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has painted an alarming portrait of crime rates in Wyong. This matter requires urgent attention. Figures show that between 1991 and 1993 the incidence of serious assault has risen by 21 per cent; assault, 5 per cent; violent sexual assault, 79 per cent; use of firearms in armed robbery, 58 per cent; other robberies, 56 per cent. Crimes that were worse than the State average were: violent sexual assault, 37 per cent higher; street crime, 29 per cent higher; and indecent assault, 16 per cent higher.

The community's perception that crime rates are increasing is justified and genuine, as shown by the figures. The Fahey Government has so far been unwilling to act. However, the figures show that better policies are needed to tackle serious crime or more members of the community will become victims of crime while others continue to fear for their safety. The problem of this burgeoning crime rate is

exacerbated by the lack of resources allocated to Toukley patrol. Of all the patrols on the central coast Toukley is the most underresourced.

Often at night only one patrol car is on duty to service an area that extends from Kanwal, in the middle of my electorate, to Gwandalan, which is halfway into the electorate of Swansea. That one car has to service an area that could involve 40 to 45 minutes travelling time. That is not good enough in an area that is increasingly becoming a dormitory suburb of Sydney. Unfortunately, the undesirable elements of the big city are coming to the central coast. The information provided in the budget is in aggregated form. The budget papers consist of many volumes. However, the budget is sadly lacking in helping people, getting results, and doing something to provide a better State.

Mr O'DOHERTY (Ku-ring-gai) [10.25]: I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak tonight about the benefits of the budget for the people of New South Wales and for the people of the electorate of Ku-ring-gai in particular. I am also pleased to have the opportunity to address some of the comments made by the previous member, particularly his comment about a budget that he alleged did not deliver a better future. I draw a sharp distinction between the economic management and commonsense priorities of Premiers Greiner and Fahey and the irresponsible, reckless and dehumanising economic achievements of Prime Ministers Keating and Hawke.

Since 1988 this Government has been the bulkhead or bastion holding back the worst effects of the recession from the people of New South Wales. I am not saying it has not been tough in New South Wales; it has been tough. It would have been tougher had it not been for the economic management and commonsense priorities of successive coalition governments protecting the people of this State from the worst ravages of the Federal recession. If Labor came to power in 1995 there would be nobody to stand up against the Federal recession; there would be nobody to manage the economy to provide a better future for the people in this State and to provide them with the bulkhead to protect them from the impact of the Federal Labor Government's policies.

I ask honourable members: who can remember the last time Bob Carr spoke against the policies of his mates in Canberra who created this recession and sustained the recession? As the economy slowly comes out of recession some families will never recover from the impact of the recession. Who can remember the last time Bob Carr or any Opposition member spoke against that? Who can remember the first time Bob Carr ever spoke against that? Absolute silence! He is the man who wants to be and purports to be the alternative premier in New South Wales. Yesterday he spoke for barely 20 minutes. He had his usual one-liners.

All the court jesters were lined up on the front bench and all the poor working men and women on the back bench. They laughed at all the right places. They laughed when he turned around and grinned at them; they laughed when he looked up at the press gallery. They responded to all the one-liners, but every one of them who has a brain and cares about his or her constituents was thinking: where is the substance in what our leader is saying? There was none. Where was the detail of his alternative plan for the management of New South Wales in a tough time? Where was his plan for continuing the growth in the New South Wales economy - continuing the recovery that is taking place in New South Wales better than it is in any other State?

Where was his plan for standing up against what the Federal Labor Government continues to do for us? Where was any word from Bob Carr yesterday about the amount of money that the Federal Government takes from the citizens of New South Wales in taxation and farms off to all the other States? Where

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was any word about income tax sharing arrangements? Where was any word about the increasing propensity of the Commonwealth Government to provide tied grants to our departments? It is spent on its pet political projects and pet ways but limits the amount that this Government has to spend on the real priorities of the people of New South Wales.

Bob Carr did not mention that once. What did he have to say about interest rates? Not a word! What did he have to say about the Federal Government's lack of interest in the drought? Not a word! I want to focus on what has been achieved by coalition governments since 1988 rather than focus on the negatives. I will focus particularly on what has been achieved by the Fahey-Armstrong Government, and I want to talk a little about the Ku-ring-gai electorate. In March 1995 the choice will be between a government with sound economic principles - which has managed the economy of New South Wales to provide a better future for the people of New South Wales - and Bob Carr, the jackal, the court jester, the man with plenty of glib one-liners, who said nothing about the previous Federal Labor Government causing the most hardship for families in Australia this century. Bob Carr said not one word against his Federal mates in Canberra.

In the 1994-95 budget the commonsense priorities of the Fahey-Armstrong Government will continue to buffer New South Wales as less Federal money is coming to us directly from income tax and tax sharing arrangements. Less Federal money is available for State priorities because of the overuse of tied grants and because of the effects of the recession. This budget will provide not only a buffer against those things; it will also increase spending for the people of New South Wales in each of the core areas of government. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that this Government, through sound, responsible economic management, has been able to increase spending in education, health, law and order, community services, transport and roads. It has increased expenditure in those areas even though there has been a fall in returns from Canberra and other revenue sources.

This Government, through economic management, will provide a better future for the people of New South Wales. It will continue the planning and gentle reforms that have been taking place. I will give some examples in my electorate. One of the priorities of this Government is to improve public transport not just for today and tomorrow but for years to come. I am delighted that the budget includes a major upgrade of Hornsby station. It will provide easy access for the disabled and ageing members of our community and for people with prams and strollers. The upgrade, which will cost about \$3.2 million and will begin very soon, will provide a better facility for the people of Ku-ring-gai and surrounding areas and will be just one of a number of things in this year's budget which will attract new customers to the vastly improved rail services provided by this Government.

I pay tribute to my friend the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads, the Hon. Bruce Baird, for his continuing commitment to and fine work in reforming rail and roads throughout the State. Over the years the honourable member for Barwon has also been a major player in that reform. When we attract more customers to rail services in Hornsby and elsewhere in New South Wales we improve the environment of New South Wales as there is less reliance on cars. It is a clear goal of the Government and me as member for Ku-ring-gai to increase the use of public transport and revitalise the facilities provided by this Government. Less reliance on roads is better for the community, the environment and our future. This year planning will commence for the Hornsby to Parramatta rail link. The people of Ku-ring-gai and surrounding suburbs will be able to use that Hornsby to Parramatta rail link to go to work in the morning, come home in the evening, go shopping, visit families, go to the football or go to the city. There is an allocation in this year's budget of half a million dollars to commence planning for that rail link. The total project, which is estimated to cost \$400 million, will be a lasting monument to this Government.

A major commuter parking facility is under construction at Hornsby station. Funding for this project has been provided in this year's budget. An additional kiss and ride service will be provided, disabled parking and easy access from parking facilities on the eastern side of Hornsby station. About 400 car parking spaces will be provided at a cost of \$2.4 million. That important part of the public transport strategy of this Government will integrate different transport modes. In 1988 the rail system was completely run down. The red rattlers had holes in the floors and doors that did not close. The red rattlers were dangerous and the rail system was in a shambles. This Government has completely rebuilt the rail system. Under the previous Labor Government there was no integration of different modes of transport. This Government has been working on that integration. The new commuter parking facilities

at Hornsby station will be part of that integration.

I will briefly mention other features of the public transport budget for the Ku-ring-gai electorate which include an interchange at Mount Kuring-gai station, a small station which services the growing Mount Kuring-gai community. I receive many representations from people at Mount Kuring-gai concerning that rail service. This Government will provide a number of facilities at Mount Kuring-gai railway station, in particular an interchange, a car park and kiss and ride facilities at a total cost of \$150,000. An amount of \$10,000 will be spent this financial year to commence work on those projects. While I am on the subject of Mount Kuring-gai railway station I might mention that there has been a deliberate campaign of misinformation and lies, sadly some of which have emanated from State Rail staff in my electorate. A fax that is purported to have come from within State Rail has been sent to a constituent. It stated that in March 1995 the Government was

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going to remove all staff at Hawkesbury River station at Brooklyn. This station is another important intermodal link.

People who go to Hawkesbury River station come off the Dangar Island ferry and off their own boats, which are moored at Brooklyn. They walk, catch a bus or even drive a car from Brooklyn. There is no plan to remove staff from that railway station or any other railway station in the Ku-ring-gai electorate. Stations that are staffed now will still be staffed by this coalition Government next month, the month after, in December and in March 1995. I want to scotch that rumour immediately - a rumour that is obviously politically motivated. The choice of March 1995 is no accident. It is quite disgraceful for State Rail staff members to be deliberately spreading that rumour, which they know to be false.

The environment in the electorate of Ku-ring-gai is extremely important to me as the local member, to the Minister for the Environment - to whom I pay tribute for what he achieved in this budget - and to my constituents. An effort has been made to save the Berowra Creek, the most contentious environmental issue in my electorate. I have spoken about that matter on numerous occasions in this House. Indeed, I mentioned it in my maiden speech. I continue to speak about it. The Government is setting the pace with regard to environmental issues in my electorate. In the past 12 months it signed the first community contract, with Hornsby Council, to clean up Berowra Creek, a model for the rest of Sydney in the management of urban waterways. Berowra Creek, like so many other waterways in Sydney, is surrounded by urban areas with all the associated problems. Not only are there sewage problems; there are problems with run-off from our urban environment in its many forms: from industry, agriculture, roads, houses, and the overfertilisation of rose gardens and lawns. Such material finds its way into the creek and provides the nutrients that may cause algal blooms.

In recent months the Water Board allocated \$7 million for immediate improvements to Berowra Creek as a result of that community contract. The funds have been used to rectify a major source of occasional pollution in Berowra Creek that occurs following heavy rain when stormwater leaks into the sewerage system through cracked pipes, pipes in need of repair, illegal connections, or other means. Stormwater can increase by up to 10 times the volume of material flowing through west Hornsby sewage treatment plant. On those occasions full tertiary treatment of the sewage is not possible before the effluent is returned to the creek. A program using special environment levy money is plugging the worst of those leaks by attacking stormwater overcharges or surcharges at their source, resulting in a major improvement to the Berowra Creek environment. The Water Board has been working hard to comply with new Environment Protection Authority guidelines - another key commitment of the Government under our community contract to reduce the volume of nitrates in Berowra Creek. The Water Board has met that requirement. There is now a lesser level of nitrates going into Berowra Creek than there was some months ago before we began this part of the program.

This year's budget includes further environmental works to be carried out by the Water Board at the Hornsby Heights sewage treatment plant, including sludge dewatering, flow control, the upgrade of stage one, the provision of a new clarifier, stormwater collection, alkalinity addition, new treatment controls and

data systems. Around \$2 million will be spent this year at the Hornsby treatment plant for works that are worth around \$6 million. The achievements of the Minister for the Environment will remain a monument to him and will provide a better future for the people of New South Wales in our natural environment. The dramatic increase in the budget for the management of our national parks system for our extremely important natural environment, natural assets and resources is a great achievement. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

It will benefit the people of Ku-ring-gai, who are very proud of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. They will be even more proud if we are able to save Porto ridge and have it about the national park - a matter I mentioned earlier this evening when private members' statements were noted. Spending on roads is another important priority in the Ku-ring-gai electorate for 1994-95 and has been a priority of the Government since 1988. People need only cast their minds back to 1988 and the years before to get the true picture of neglect of the State's road system under Labor. The quality of life for people around Sydney and throughout New South Wales has improved dramatically since the coalition came to office in 1988.

That improvement is continuing. And it is not just a case of building roads and allowing them to fill up with cars. The Government is committed to a better public transport system, well integrated with private and other modes of transport. In this growing metropolis we face the challenge of being able to provide a road system that is safe and efficient. The electorate of Ku-ring-gai has commenced many millions of dollars worth of roadworks and the Government will continue those improvements, including some important works in Hornsby Heights that I have been particularly anxious to achieve. Traffic light construction at Hookhams Corner is currently under way and traffic lights and an extra turning bay are planned for the corner of Galston Road and Somerville Road. I continue to press for the needs of the people of Hornsby Heights.

There is tangible evidence of a clear difference between the education policies of the coalition Government and those of Labor. The policies of the Government have returned to the community choice in their children's education, their children's future, and a say in the way that their local schools are educating their children. Community choice, community accountability and parental involvement were not spoken about before 1988-89, but they were important parts of the policy of the incoming government. They

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have become not the exception by any means but the expectation of the people of New South Wales. It is expected that communities will have a strong involvement in local schools; that parents will have a strong involvement in the education of their children; and that the community will make meaningful decisions about the way schools operate in the local community. The Government has set that clear policy direction.

The re-allocation of some policies led to the pulling down of that great monolith in Bridge Street - that is the structures of the centralised bureaucracy - and the relocation of people and money to where services were supposed to be delivered - the school level. If, by any stroke of misfortune, Labor were returned to office in 1995, schools would again be neglected by Labor. One hears nothing positive coming from the Opposition about education. All one hears is criticism. It is easy to criticise and it is easy to mouth platitudes, but where are the policy settings and directions in education, as in so many other areas, that give any insight into how Labor would run the State? We have no idea because all we have is criticism. Labor has been quick to criticise the education policies of the Government but it has no clear education policy of its own. Through this budget, as was announced recently, the Government will return 1,466 teachers to schools by March 1995, which means that in round terms there will be an additional 3,000 teachers over and above the number of teachers in the school system in 1989. They are not just spread willy-nilly throughout the system; they are targeted at key policy areas for this Government to provide a better future for children with particular needs in the school system.

Extra teachers are targeted at early literacy and early education generally, at post-compulsory

education, and at providing better and multiple pathways for students to move from secondary education on to the rest of their education, whether that be tertiary education, technical education or an apprenticeship. Multiple pathways will be provided for people to achieve the goal that is most appropriate to them rather than squeeze them through one narrow gate. The higher school certificate is a world-class qualification. Do not take my word for that, nor the word of the Minister for Education, the Hon. Virginia Chadwick, who has done such a marvellous job in providing this better future for the people of New South Wales through a better education system. Take the word of the international reference group established by this Government. Independent international experts in education come to assess our system.

Talk about accountability! One never heard about accountability under the Labor Government, and will never hear it under Labor. This Government has an open, accountable education system and a world-class higher school certificate, according to the experts. We can be proud that our children attend such high quality schools in New South Wales. My electorate of Ku-ring-gai will have 23 new teaching positions by term 1 of 1995. Only hollow promises are heard from the other side, but the Government has provided 23 new teaching positions, that is 11 equivalent full-time positions in schools in my electorate, nearly 1,500 teachers to be appointed across the State. Another key increase in education this year will be the appointment of 200 new counsellor positions, taking the ratio of students to counsellors to the best it has ever been in this State. I will say more about student welfare when I hand down the report of the Government advisory committee on education, which inquired into education strategies for boys.

Apart from the extra teachers and other provisions for recurrent education spending, some capital works in my electorate are worth noting. The conversion of administration facilities at Berowra public school continues in its centenary year with an allocation of \$165,000. The library at Mount Kuring-gai Public School is to be developed. This is a small school which would probably be closed down under a Labor government, as would the school at Brooklyn, because of Labor's policy on small schools and composite classes. But not under this Government. Mount Kuring-gai Public School remains open and the Government will continue to develop it. The amount of \$50,000 has been allocated for the library at Mount Kuring-gai school because the kids at that school deserve to have good library facilities - as do the kids at every other school in the State. Maintenance to the value of \$1.14 million is to be carried out to improve facilities for schools in my electorate in 1994-95. The maintenance list is too detailed to read in the time available, but I know that students and teachers will be thankful for that money.

Hornsby Hospital is a community health facility that has been serving the northern suburbs of Sydney for generations and continues to do a sterling job. In the 1994-95 budget \$243,000 is allocated to complete the angiography suite, a project worth nearly \$1 million. I will continue discussions with the Minister for Health about further improvements to Hornsby Hospital and I look forward to being able to advise my constituents about them. The Government is providing a better future for the people of Ku-ring-gai in other ways, which I do not have time to mention this evening. I will make this information available to my constituents in other ways. I return to where I began, by saying that the Fahey-Armstrong Government provides not only the best but the only hope for the people of New South Wales having a government in 1994 and 1995 that will support their interests and stand up against the excesses of the Federal Labor Government.

Honourable members will not hear criticism from the Leader of the Opposition or his cohorts on the other side of the House, but they will hear the Government, led by Premier Fahey, continuing to stand up against Canberra and against shrinking revenue from Canberra and from our own sources because of the recession that Canberra created. The

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Government will provide increased facilities and services to the people of this State in all of the areas that matter most; providing not only a better present but a better future through commonsense management of the economy in New South Wales. That is the choice people face in March 1995, and it bears thinking about. No-one else will stand up against the worst excesses of Canberra, which continually imposes increasing interest rates and irresponsible management. Every day there is another bad announcement

for the people of New South Wales. Only this Government stands in the way of the Federal Labor Government having its way with the people of New South Wales. [*Time expired.*]

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Shedden.

BILL RETURNED

The following bill was returned from the Legislative Council without amendment:

Building Services Corporation (Amendment) Bill

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BILL

Bill received and read a first time.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr West agreed to:

That this House at its rising this day do adjourn until Thursday, 22 September 1994, at 9.00 a.m.

House adjourned at 10.57 p.m.
