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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 14 March 2013

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

POPE FRANCIS

The SPEAKER: We also pray this morning for those of the Roman Catholic faith, who are no doubt celebrating at the election of Pope Francis I, who is Argentinian. We pray for him in the work that lies ahead.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

Question, by leave—That the following motions given by the members as indicated pursuant to notice be formally agreed to—proposed.

ST CLAIR YOUTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work of the St Clair Youth and Neighbourhood Team which provides information, support and activities to local residents in St Clair, Erskine Park, Colyton and surrounding areas.
- (2) Acknowledges and thanks the valued contribution of volunteers Jeanette Barton, Phil Emery, Jo Tansley, Larissa Moore, Marjorie Bellingham, Jamie Robinson, Stellios Vayenas, Leanne Bloom, Terry Hill, Judy Gough and husband and wife team Cecil and Robyn O'Donnell.
- (3) Congratulates Linda Hayman, of St Clair Youth and Neighbourhood Centre, on being nominated for a ZEST Award.

ROSEMARY CANNON AND BOYD PEARSON VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges and thanks the good work of Rosemary Cannon in achieving 15 years of dedicated voluntary service to the St Clair Youth and Neighbourhood Team.
- (2) Acknowledges and thanks the good work of Boyd Pearson in achieving 10 years of dedicated voluntary contribution on the management committee of the St Clair Youth and Neighbourhood Team.

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH OLYMPIC FESTIVAL BRONZE MEDALLIST DANIEL RIVET

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House congratulates 16-year-old Daniel Rivet, of Glenmore Park, on winning a bronze medal at the Australian Youth Olympic Festival for judo in the men's under 60 kilograms division.

AMBULANCE SERVICE MEDAL RECIPIENT KENNETH WHEELER

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kenneth Wheeler, of Colyton, for being awarded the Ambulance Service Medal for his contribution to the development of frontline management principles and training for station officers and duty operations managers within the Ambulance Service of NSW.
- (2) Acknowledges that the Ambulance Service Medal is an award that recognises distinguished and dedicated service and only 208 Ambulance Service Medals have been awarded to date.

FEI CHILDREN'S INTERNATIONAL CLASSIC QUALIFIER JESSICA TRIPP

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates 14-year-old Jessica Tripp, of Mulgoa, on qualifying for the Federation Equestre Internationale Children's International Classic.
- (2) Notes that the Federation Equestre Internationale is dedicated to the growth of equestrian sport worldwide.
- (3) Wishes her well for the competition in Mexico.

BJP PHYSICAL CULTURE NATIONAL FINALIST MEGAN JONES

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Megan Jones, of St Clair, on her second place at the BJP Physical Culture National Final in the Open Senior 21-22 Years Category.
- (2) Wishes Megan well for the Grand Competition, the highest level competition for physical culture.

AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY MUSIC BROADCASTERS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE BILL BEERENS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES—That this House congratulates Bill Beerens, of Colyton, on being inducted into the Australian Country Music Broadcasters Hall of Fame during the Tamworth Country Music Festival for his work as a radio broadcaster with WOW FM, Hawkesbury Radio and Macarthur Radio.

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH VILLAWOOD

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates St Stephen's Anglican Church Villawood for hosting the Bilingual Carols in the Car Park on 15 December 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the invaluable contribution made by the church to the Villawood community.
- (3) Commends Reverend Vo Nguyen on his outstanding service to the parish of St Stephen's.

TUMBARUMBA JOINT JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR KERRY WAKE

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the involvement of Kerry W. Wake in sport and student affairs on behalf of Tumbarumba High School.
- (2) Congratulates Kerry W. Wake on being named Tumbarumba joint Junior Citizen of the Year.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT COLIN BROWN

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the outstanding contribution made by Colin Brown, of Walla Walla, for his community service and many years in education.
- (2) Congratulates Colin on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT ARCH MCLEISH

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the outstanding contribution made by Arch McLeish, of Albury, for his service to the community, including serving as a former Mayor of Albury.
- (2) Congratulates Arch on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT TREVOR HARGREAVES

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the outstanding contribution made by Trevor Hargreaves for his years of service to the Mulwala and District Services Club and Mulwala RSL.
- (2) Congratulates Trevor on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT LIONEL GILLMAN

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the outstanding contribution made by Lionel Gillman, of Corowa, through his community work with Lions Australia.
- (2) Congratulates Lionel on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT DANIEL SALMON

Mr GREG APLIN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the outstanding contribution made by Daniel Salmon, of Albury, for his service to the community through the Australian Air Force Cadets.
- (2) Congratulates Daniel on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

LITERARY AWARDS NOMINEE NOEL BEDDOE

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Noel Beddoe, of Kiama Downs, on his nomination for the Miles Franklin prize and the NSW Premier's Award for Literature.
- (2) Notes that the University of Queensland Press has acquired the publication rights for Mr Beddoe's novel *On Cringila Hill*.

SHOALHAVEN CRICKET ASSOCIATION VOLUNTARY SERVICE RECOGNITION

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Alan Clark, Bob Webster and Sandra Webster for their significant contribution towards Shoalhaven cricket.
- (2) Notes, that between them, they have contributed more than 130 volunteer years of service to Shoalhaven cricket at a club, zone and association level.
- (3) Extends its appreciation to Alan Clark, Bob Webster and Sandra Webster and wishes them well in their retirement.

SOUTH COAST EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that in January a fire burned through over 9,000 hectares on the South Coast in Dean's Gap near Wandandian.
- (2) Acknowledges the more than 150 firefighters who worked to contain the fire.
- (3) Acknowledges Emergency Service personnel including NSW Police, State Emergency Services, Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Marine Rescue and Surf Life Saving NSW for working collaboratively throughout this period.
- (4) Congratulates Shoalhaven Rural Fire Service incident controller Ian Stewart, Acting Fire Control Officer Mark Williams and all its volunteers on their outstanding work in fighting the fire, protecting properties and keeping the public informed.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT WENDY WOODWARD

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Wendy Woodward on being presented with a Medal of the Order of Australia on 26 January 2013.
- (2) Acknowledges Mrs Woodward's extensive work in the Shoalhaven community, particularly with Bravehearts and the Nowra Show Society.

SHOALHAVEN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR MARILYN BEAVEN-WILLIAMS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ms Marilyn Beaven-Williams on being named the 2013 Shoalhaven Australia Day Citizen of the Year.
- (2) Acknowledges Ms Beaven-Williams' work in the Shoalhaven community, particularly her involvement with the Children's Ward at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital.

SHOALHAVEN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ms Sharon Bunyan, Ms Bronwyn Hedger, Mr Dusty Jones, Mrs Rhonda Ruifrok, and Mr Antony Weston on being nominated for the 2013 Shoalhaven Australia Day Citizen of the Year.
- (2) Acknowledges their tireless work in the Shoalhaven community and extends its appreciation for their efforts.

SHOALHAVEN YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Miss Jessica Healey and Mr Russell Macpherson on being nominated for the 2013 Shoalhaven Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year.
- (2) Acknowledges their work in the Shoalhaven community and extends its appreciation for their efforts.

SHOALHAVEN YOUNG SPORTS PERSON OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Kyle Jarrett, Mr Blake Nolan, Mr Adam Rusgnach and Ms Danielle Wise on being nominated for the 2013 Shoalhaven Australia Day Young Sports Person of the Year Award.
- (2) Acknowledges their significant achievements in their various sporting codes and wishes them well for their future careers.

COMMANDER OF ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY FLEET AIR ARM COMMODORE VINCE DI PIETRO

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Commodore Vince Di Pietro has been appointed to the role of Commander of the Fleet Air Arm at HMAS *Albatross*.
- (2) Notes that Commodore Di Pietro has had a long association with HMAS Albatross and a distinguished 37-year career with the Royal Australian Navy.
- (3) Congratulates the Commodore on his appointment and wishes him well in his new role.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE LONG SERVICE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 39 local Rural Fire Service volunteers were acknowledged with Long Service Medals presented by the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner, Shane Fitzsimmons in February 2013.
- (2) Notes that the collective service of all the recipients is 496 years.
- (3) Notes the service of Mr George Blicharz, of the Milton Brigade, who has been a member of the Rural Fire Service for 23 years.
- (4) Congratulates all the volunteers and extends its appreciation for their service.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE ASTHMA RESEARCH TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNERY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Newcastle scientists, led by Professor Joerg Mattes, on their breakthrough that has led them to create treatments to stop asthma attacks.
- (2) Notes that the discovery has already helped scientists develop therapeutic treatments to prevent and treat asthma and that laboratory tests on mice are encouraging.
- (3) Commends the hard work and dedication of lead researcher, Professor Joerg Mattes.

LAKE MACQUARIE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR MELINDA BROWN

Ms SONIA HORNERY—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the outstanding contribution of Melinda Brown, of Muloobinbah Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, who has spent 15 years improving literacy and cultural awareness among aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.
- (2) Congratulates Ms Brown on being named the citizen of the year.
- (3) Notes that the award acknowledges her work in supporting local families, helping with transport to appointments and family health checks and opening her home to people in crisis.
- (4) Commends and thanks Ms Brown for her continued commitment, dedication and service to those in need.

HUNTER MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Chairman Bob Kennedy and the Hunter Medical Research Institute on celebrating its fifteenth anniversary on 12 February 2013.
- (2) Commends the institute's board for recently approving a new strategic plan for 2013-2017, developed by Director Michael Nilsson.
- (3) Notes that the institute is focused on implementing a new patient-focused strategic plan and extending its global reach.

HUNTER ACADEMY OF SPORT

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House congratulates the Hunter Academy of Sport for promoting a sporting environment in the Hunter region in which talent is identified and opportunity provided to develop that talent to its fullest.

HUNTER STROKE TREATMENT PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that a program to ensure stroke patients are treated quickly to minimise their injury will be rolled out across the State after being pioneered in the Hunter.
- (2) Recognises that the statewide program builds on results in the Hunter, where the program has enabled more patients to be treated with a thrombolytic therapy or "clot-busting treatment" to dissolve blood clots, reducing permanent brain damage.
- (3) Congratulates Hunter stroke expert Chris Levi and his committee for developing this program.

SURFEST NEWCASTLE VANUATU STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that five Vanuatu teenagers participated in the Newcastle's Surfest in February thanks to a five-year collaboration between Stewart Free, of Elmore Vale, and expatriate Australian Simon Pettiford.
- (2) Thanks Mr Free for billeting the Vanuatu teenagers and for gathering and delivering much-needed school and surfing supplies to Vanuatu over the past five years.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH FITNESS TRIAL

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dr Ben Ewald from the University of Newcastle's School of Medicine and Public Health and his team on their important research looking at the impact of medical exercise specialists on fitness.
- (2) Notes that a trial program may show that there are big health benefits from seeing an exercise physiologist.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE CENTRE FOR ASTHMA AND RESPIRATORY DISEASES RESEARCH

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledge the great work being conducted by Professor Phil Hansbro in the race to develop urgently needed treatments for the deadly lung disorder Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease [COPD], also known as emphysema.
- (2) Notes that due to new modeling the time taken to conduct laboratory testing on the effects of cigarette smoke, the major cause of COPD in the western world, has been reduced from six months to eight weeks.
- (3) Congratulates Professor Hansbro and the team of researchers from the University of Newcastle for their work.

HUNTER MEN'S SHEDS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends members of Men's Sheds across the Hunter for working together to collect tools to aid fire-ravaged Coonabarabran.
- (2) Recognises in particular the volunteering efforts of the Swansea, Elmore Vale, Maitland, Singleton and Merriwa Men's Sheds.
- (3) Acknowledges the leadership efforts of the project coordinator, Martyn Leist, who was instrumental in the transportation of the tools to Coonabarabran.

AUSTRALIA UNDER 13 FUTSAL TEAM MEMBER TYLER POTTS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Tyler Potts on her selection in the Australian under 13 years futsal team that will play in Spain during November 2013.
- (2) Notes that 11-year-old Tyler is the youngest member of the Australian team and was selected after playing well for the Northern NSW under 12 years side at the national titles.
- (3) Notes that Tyler is a striker or midfield player for Lansdowne and is in her second season of futsal.

AUSTRALIA POST CERTIFICATE OF MERIT RECIPIENT COL HAINES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Col Haines, manager of the Lansdowne Post Office, on being awarded a Certificate of Merit by Australia Post.
- (2) Notes that Col was named in the top 10 in Australia Post's Hunter network for October 2012.
- (3) Notes that Col puts his success down to the loyal customers who transact their business in the post office.

CAPE HAWKE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates members of the Cape Hawke Surf Life Saving Club for winning the senior Lower North Coast Branch Championship.
- (2) Notes that Ben Atkinson won the open surf race, open ironman and open board races.
- (3) Notes that Connor Shakespeare won the under 17 years surf race, with club mates Aaron King, Bryce Grant and Mitchell Hamilton finishing in the next four places.
- (4) Notes that Clare Hern won the 13 years beach sprint and beach flags events, replicating her country championship results.
- (5) Notes that Layne Grant won the 12 year girls ironwoman, swim, board and beach sprint and finished second in the beach flags.

BILL AND ROSLYN MITCHELL FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bill and Roslyn Mitchell, of Wingham, on celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary on 2 February 2013.
- (2) Notes that the couple are both from dairy farming families in Currumbin in Queensland and that they met in Sydney where Roslyn was nursing and Bill was a marine engineer.
- (3) Notes that Bill and Roslyn have four children and six grandchildren who all travelled to be with them for the anniversary.
- (4) Notes that Bill and Roslyn attribute their long relationship to respecting and considering each other.

JUMP FOR THE CURE FUNDRAISER NICOLE VAN DIJK

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Nicole van Dijk, of Tinonee, on her undertaking to overcome her fear of heights by skydiving in the Jump for the Cure fundraising campaign for research into type 1 (juvenile onset) diabetes through the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.
- (2) Notes that Nicole's daughter, Cheyanne, attends Taree High School and is a type 1 diabetic requiring four insulin injections every day.
- (3) Notes that Nicole has raised more than \$1,000 and is hoping to raise more money by the time she has to undertake the skydive.

KEVIN AND ROSEMARY LAMBERT SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kevin and Rosemary Lambert, of Forster, on celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 28 February 2013.
- (2) Notes that Kevin was born and raised in Taree and Rosemary emigrated to Australia from the United Kingdom when she was fifteen.
- (3) Notes that Kevin and Rosemary have five children and moved to Forster after bringing up their family in Sydney.

COMBINED HIGH SCHOOLS SECOND XI TEAM MEMBER BRYAN WARREN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bryan Warren on his selection in the Combined High Schools Second XI for the second successive year.
- (2) Notes that Bryan is in year 12 at Great Lakes College and represented the Hunter Education Region in the Combined High Schools titles.
- (3) Notes that Bryan will now compete in the NSW Schoolboys Cricket Championship to be held in Sydney in March.
- (4) Congratulates Bryan on being the second highest wicket taker in 2012 and on his selection in the NSW Schools Cricket Association team.

NSW JUNIOR STATE CUP UNDER 18 RUNNER-UP TAREE TOUCH FOOTBALL TEAM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the players, coach and managers of the Taree under 18s State Junior Cup touch team who were runners up in the final in Port Macquarie.
- (2) Notes that the team was coached by Darren Rowsell and narrowly lost the final 12-11 to Bankstown Jets.

ULTRAMARATHON SWIMMER WARREN KEEGAN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Warren Keegan of Forster on winning the tenth annual Bloody Big Swim, the ultramarathon race on Port Phillip Bay in Melbourne.
- (2) Notes that Warren won the 11.2 kilometre swim five minutes ahead of the runner-up, John Van Wisse, one of Australia's premier ultramarathon swimmers.
- (3) Notes that Warren also won the Gold Coast Pan Pac Masters five kilometres open water swim, the Canberra's Sri Chimony nine kilometres swim and the Forrester's Beach ocean swim.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT ELIZABETH WEBB

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Elizabeth Webb on being awarded an Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day Honours.
- (2) Commends Mrs Webb on her tireless volunteer work and service to the Glenreagh community over many years.
- (3) Wishes Mrs Webb many more years of volunteer work.

CLARENCE VALLEY 2013 AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Vois Bancroft on being named the Clarence Valley Citizen of the Year, which recognises her many years of volunteer work with numerous organisations within the Clarence Valley especially in the Lawrence area.
- (2) Congratulates Ms Bronte Beresford on being named the Clarence Valley Young Citizen of the Year, which recognises her many sporting representative achievements and her community service works.
- (3) Congratulates the Lower Clarence Community Garden Inc. on being named the Clarence Valley Community Achievement Organisation Award and acknowledges the many hours of work performed by the volunteers in providing a wonderful garden environment for the community to enjoy.
- (4) Congratulates Mr Noel Welldon on being named the Clarence Valley Local Hero which recognises the wonderful work that Noel does in assisting those less fortunate in the community.

RICHMOND VALLEY 2013 AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Shirley Wheatley on being named Richmond Valley Citizen of the Year, which recognises the many years of volunteer work and community service she has provided to the Richmond Valley, especially in the Casino area.
- (2) Congratulates Ms Alice Warner on being named the Richmond Valley Young Citizen of the Year, which recognises her community service and winning the Casino Lions Youth of the Year Quest along with a number of other awards throughout the year.
- (3) Congratulates Mr Kenneth Whitton on being named the Richmond Valley Sports Person of the Year, which recognises his years involved in supporting local boxing in the Casino area.
- (4) Congratulates the Casino RSM Youth Club on being named the Richmond Valley Sports Team of the Year, which recognises the many hours of coaching and training provided in the pursuit of excellence in the sport of boxing.
- (5) Congratulates the Casino Beef Week Committee on their Beef Meets Reef @ Evans Head Event winning the Richmond Valley Community Event of the Year Award.

SOUTH GRAFTON RSL SUB-BRANCH ANNIVERSARY

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the South Grafton RSL Sub-Branch on its seventy-fifth birthday in January 2013.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work undertaken by its members in supporting the wellbeing and care of serving and ex-serving Defence Force personnel and their dependants.

LEADERSHIP AMBASSADOR AWARD RECIPIENT JOYCE CLAGUE

Mr CHRIS GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ms Joyce Clague on being awarded the 2012 Leadership Ambassador Award for her outstanding contribution to the advancement of Indigenous peoples' lives.
- (2) Acknowledges her many years of service in various executive positions on the Woolitji Co-operative, Maclean, including eight years as chairperson.
- (3) Acknowledges the many programs implemented by Ms Clague including the housing program, small crop farming operations, and education and social activity programs for members and their children.

ALBION PARK LITTLE ATHLETICS STATE TEAM MEMBERS

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jade Mustapic, Shenay Edwards, Taylah Vella, Karissa High, Ben Fowler, Dylan Plumridge, Zac Daniel and Jye Shumack of the Albion Park Little Athletics Club under-11 and under-12 divisions, for assisting the New South Wales team retain the Trans-Tasman Challenge at the Campbelltown Sports Centre.
- (2) Acknowledges that the athletes won their places on the team following trials held last year, with Jade being the New South Wales captain for the second year.

NATIONAL SAUSAGE KING COMPETITION RUNNER-UP MOUNTAIN SIDE MEATS

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House congratulates Nathan Alcock, Shaun Hill and Bradey Monteith of Mountain Side Meats, of Shoalhaven Heads, on recently achieving second place at the National Sausage King Competition in the Australian pork sausage division.

QUEEN'S SCOUT AWARD RECIPIENT TIMOTHY BOOTH

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Timothy Booth, of Kiama Downs, on being presented with the Queen's Scout Award.
- (2) Notes that the Queen's Scout Award is the highest award attainable within the Venturer Scouts category for 15- to 18-year-olds.

BERRY SHOW GIRL 2013 ELLE DAVIDSON

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Elle Davidson, of Coolangatta, on recently being named the 2013 Berry Show Girl.
- (2) Notes that Elle is currently studying law to become a criminal law prosecutor.

BERRY SHOW 125TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that this year is the 125th Berry Show.
- (2) Congratulates Paul Gibson, President of the Berry Show Society, and the Berry Show Society committee for successfully staging the 2013 show.
- (3) Acknowledges that the Berry Show joins a small number of regional shows around New South Wales to reach this milestone.

KANGAROO VALLEY PIONEER MUSEUM

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Elaine Apperley and the Kangaroo Valley Pioneer Museum for successfully applying for funding to provide for the construction of a new machinery shed.
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution Elaine and her team make to promoting knowledge about local history particularly among students and young people.

KIAMA RIDING FOR THE DISABLED

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Carmen Netherclift and Kiama Riding for the Disabled for recently securing funding for the upgrade of their amenities block.
- (2) Acknowledges the tireless dedication and contribution of Carmen and the extraordinary impact of their effort to aid and assist people with a disability.

KANGAROO VALLEY SHOW 2013

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates David Kent and the Kangaroo Valley Show Society for organising the successful 2013 Kangaroo Valley Show.
- (2) Acknowledges that the show continues to receive strong support from the community with many residents taking the opportunity to visit the show on the Friday, a local public holiday.

KIAMA RUGBY SEVENS

Mr GARETH WARD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that Kiama Rugby recently celebrated the forty-first anniversary of the Kiama Rugby Sevens competition.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication of Mark Bryant, as coordinator, and the efforts of the Kiama Rugby Club committee to ensure the community celebrated this milestone.

MUSLIM HIGH ACHIEVER AWARDS

Mr ROBERT FUROLO—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the recipients of the Muslim High Achiever Awards in 2012.
- (2) Recognises the outstanding results achieved by the following Higher School Certificate students who received an ATAR of over 99 in 2012: Sarah El Dadoun, Karin Mohammed Nahim, Shubash Quazi, Adam Tabikh, Salsabeela Diab, Zafar Ahmed Mohamed Rizvi, Tasmiah Tahsin Islam, Zarwa Yaseen, Tanbeer Khan, Aima Ali, Waseem Buksh, Sahra Magan, Ayah Salhab, and Sosan Sahar Rahimi.
- (3) Commends the 47 students who achieved an ATAR of 90 and over.
- (4) Acknowledges the work of Bayt Al Zakat Australia in organising the Muslim High Achievers Awards.

PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT SENKA POLETANOVIC

Mr ROBERT FUROLO—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ms Senka Poletanovic for receiving the 2012 Public School Parent of the Year Award.
- (2) Recognises Senka's outstanding contribution to public education, her support for the school community and her advocacy on behalf of the teachers, students and community at Riverwood Public School.
- (3) Notes her achievement in establishing a kitchen classroom and a vegetable and herb garden, as part of the Kitchen Garden program, for Riverwood Public School.
- (4) Acknowledges the 29 other recipients of the 2012 Public School Parents of the Year Awards.

PATRICIAN BROTHERS' COLLEGE FAIRFIELD DIAMOND JUBILEE

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Patrician Brothers' College Fairfield on the celebration of its Diamond Jubilee.
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution made by the Patrician Brothers and lay teachers to the education of young men in Fairfield for over 60 years.
- (3) Acknowledges the academic, sporting and cultural achievements of the members of the Patrician Community.
- (4) Recognises the college's Irish Catholic heritage.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL GOLDEN JUBILEE

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Westfields Sports High School community on its Golden Jubilee.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication of present and former teachers of Westfields Sports High School, to the education of students for over 50 years.
- (3) Acknowledges Westfields as the first Sports High School in Australia.
- (4) Recognises the tradition of the school in producing world class sportspersons.

CHINESE ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN SYDNEY CELEBRATION

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Chinese Association of Western Sydney for holding the Australia Day and Chinese New Year Dinner on 20 January 2013.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work of Mr Hung Ly, Mr James Chan, Mr Michael Chan, Mr Pho Quang Hang and other members of the Secretariat of the Celebration Preparation Committee for organising such a successful evening.
- (3) Recognises the work of the committee in their promotion and preservation of Chinese culture for the Chinese Australian community and the Australian community as a whole.

VIETNAMESE LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the 2013 Year of the Snake Tet Festival was held between 1 and 3 February 2013.
- (2) Congratulates the Vietnamese Community in Australia, New South Wales Chapter, and in particular Chapter President, Mr Thanh Nguyen, for organising the festival held at Fairfield Showground.
- (3) Acknowledges the significance of the 2013 Year of the Snake, Lunar New Year, to Vietnamese Australians.
- (4) Acknowledges the significance of the lunar new year celebration to the social, cultural and economic fabric of New South Wales.
- (5) Congratulates the students who were recognised at the festival for their outstanding achievements in the 2012 Higher School Certificate.

SYDNEY INDO-CHINESE YOUTH SPORTS ASSOCIATION LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Chinese new year celebrations held on 3 February 2013 in Cabramatta were a great success.
- (2) Congratulates Association President, Mr Thay Lim, JP; Ms Lisa Tran and the Sydney Indo-Chinese Youth Sports Association on all their hard work in organising the function.
- (3) Acknowledges the significance of the lunar new year celebration to the social, cultural and economic fabric of New South Wales.
- (4) Recognises the significance of the 2013 Year of the Snake, Lunar New Year, to all Australians.

ASIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Asian Chamber of Commerce and Industry for successfully hosting the Canley Heights Lunar New Year celebration on 8 February 2013.
- (2) Recognises the hard work of Chamber president, Mr Trinh H. Nguyen; Ms Tiffany Nguyen and the organising committee for their efforts in ensuring the success of the function.
- (3) Recognises the contribution of the Asian business community to trade and commerce in south-west Sydney and New South Wales.
- (4) Notes the growing significance of China and South-East Asia to the economic prosperity of New South Wales and Australia.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE BUDDHIST SOCIETY LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for the successful 2013 Year of the Snake Lunar New Year celebrations held at the Mingyue Lai Temple, Bonnyrigg, on 10 February 2013.
- (2) Recognises the hard work of President Mr Vincent Kong, Chairman Mr Ha Thanh, Vice Chairman Mr James Chan and the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for ensuring the success of the celebrations.
- (3) Acknowledges the tremendous generosity of the Chinese Buddhist Society in their donation of \$37,000 to Fairfield Hospital for the provision of medical equipment.
- (4) Recognises the growing popularity of Buddhism in Australia's spiritual landscape.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr GUY ZANGARI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Australian Chinese Association of New South Wales for the success of the 2013 Chinese New Year Banquet celebrating the Year of the Snake held on 15 February 2013.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work of the association for ensuring the success of the celebrations.
- (3) Recognises the growing significance of the Chinese community to the social, cultural and economic fabric of New South Wales.

LAKE MACQUARIE POLICE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL—That this House:

- (1) Notes the valuable contribution made by the Lake Macquarie Local Area Command, led by Superintendent Craig Rae, to ensure the "Our Mates, Our Families" fundraising benefit night was a success.
- (2) Acknowledges the support of Inspector Sam Crisafulli, Senior Constable Rod Griffin, Senior Constable Evan Chivas, and Constable Jessica Wilkinson of the Lake Macquarie Area Command who assisted on the evening.
- (3) Thanks Mr Rae for his volunteering efforts in his local community and congratulates him on a successful evening, which raised more than \$20,000 for NSW Police Legacy and the Rixon family.

PITTWATER SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

Mr ROB STOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Pittwater's surf life saving clubs for their outstanding efforts keeping Pittwater's beaches safe over the summer holiday period.
- (2) Recognises the selfless commitment of Pittwater's surf life saving club volunteers.
- (3) Notes the invaluable role Pittwater's surf life saving clubs play in patrolling Pittwater's beaches, educating families and saving lives.
- (4) Commends all of Pittwater's surf life savers on their continuing efforts on behalf of the community.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS AT THE HAGUE REPRESENTATIVE JESSE CAREY

Mr ROB STOKES—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates northern beaches student Jesse Carey on representing Australia at the international model United Nations at The Hague.
- (2) Recognises that Mr Carey was selected following strong performances at both State and national model United Nations forums.
- (3) Commends Mr Carey for his passion and enthusiasm towards international human rights and improvements in global health and education.
- (4) Notes the efforts of Mr Carey to encourage and inspire other students to gain a greater understand of international affairs.

SUMMERNATS CAR FESTIVAL WORLD RECORD PARTICIPANT MATTHEW BASANOVIC

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Matthew Basanovic, of Bargo, for taking part in the recent Summernats Car Festival world record.
- (2) Notes the record was for participation in the largest simultaneous burnout.
- (3) Notes that Mr Basanovic works at BSR Smash Repairs in Tahmoor.
- (4) Notes other local participants included Josip Basanovic, Daniel Vince, Tim Colefax, Ricardo Crawford, Frank Basanovic and Malcolm Westridge.

WOLLONDILLY HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the 2012 Higher School Certificate high achievers from the Wollondilly region.
- (2) Recognises the significant dedication and effort of each student to achieve these results.
- (3) Recognises the following students who achieved a placing in the top 10 per cent in the State:

Alexandria Stone, Alysse Curra, Bernadette Banasik, Bria Robertson-Smith, Brodie Veness, Courtney Smart, Erin Garrett, Jessica Strangio, Jordan Perizzi, Katherine Watson, Lindsay Neale, Megan Bickle, Melissa Smith, Nicolas Wolf, Rachel Brown and Victoria Nicholson.

TELARAH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH RETIREE STAN FARNHAM

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Stan Farnham retired from his position as the coordinator of Telarah Neighbourhood Watch in February 2013.
- (2) Thanks Mr Farnham for his 24 years of community service to Neighbourhood Watch as the Telarah area coordinator.
- (3) Wishes the group's current executive the best for the future as Telarah Neighbourhood Watch marks 25 years of operation.

MAITLAND MERCURY 2012 SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Maddison Elliott, of Gillieston Heights on being named the *Maitland Mercury* 2012 Sportsperson of the Year.
- (2) Notes that Maddison Elliot also received the 2012 NSW Sports Federation Young Athlete of the Year (With A Disability) Award.
- (3) Congratulates Abbey Harkin on receiving the *Maitland Mercury* 2012 Young Sportsperson of the Year Award.
- (4) Congratulates Mindaribba Warriors Rugby League on being named the Team of the Year.
- (5) Congratulates All Saints College St Mary's for its rugby league team receiving the Junior Team of the Year Award.

MAITLAND CITIZEN OF THE YEAR MAX RAY

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Max Ray, of East Maitland, on receiving the 2012 Maitland Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award.
- (2) Notes Max was recognised for his significant contribution to Masonic Lodges and involvement with Probus, Meals on Wheels and holding community barbecues to raise money for various charities.
- (3) Thanks Max for his efforts and wishes him well for the future.

MAITLAND YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR PHOEBE FERGUSON

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Phoebe Ferguson, of Rutherford Technology High School, on being named the 2012 Maitland Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year.
- (2) Notes Phoebe was recognised for her leadership qualities and contributions to the school's drama performances.
- (3) Wishes Phoebe all the best with her future endeavours.

MAITLAND SHOWGIRL 2013 KELSEY LUCAS

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kelsey Lucas of Thornton on being named 2013 Maitland Showgirl.
- (2) Wishes Kelsey all the best with her future endeavours.

MAITLAND MERCURY 170TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Notes the *Maitland Mercury* marked its 170th anniversary of newspaper publication on 7 January 2013.
- (2) Congratulates the *Maitland Mercury* on its longevity as the second oldest newspaper in New South Wales and the oldest regional newspaper of mainland Australia.
- (3) Wishes the *Maitland Mercury* management, staff and readers the best for the future.

MAITLAND HARNESS RACING INTER CITY PACE CARNIVAL

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Notes the fiftieth Inter City Pace harness racing final was run at Maitland Showground on Saturday 5 January 2013.
- (2) Notes the final was won by four-year-old colt Scandalman trained by Ian Wilson and driven by Jim Douglass.
- (3) Congratulates the Maitland Harness Racing Club on its staging of the Inter City Pace carnival and wishes the club all the best for its future meetings.

MAITLAND MERCURY COONABARABRAN BUSHFIRE APPEAL

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Notes the efforts of Kevin Flaus in organising the Maitland Bushfire Appeal for Coonabarabran and ensuring the delivery of donations.
- (2) Thanks the Maitland businesses that supported Mr Flaus, particularly disability services organisation Mai-Wel, which provided a truck to transport the donations to Coonabarabran.

MORPETH SISTERS OF MERCY MASS OF THANKSGIVING

Ms ROBYN PARKER—That this House:

- (1) Notes a Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Morpeth in 1883 was held on 13 January 2013.
- (2) Thanks the Sisters of Mercy for their contribution to the Morpeth and Maitland areas over the past 130 years.

CATHERINE SULLIVAN CENTRE

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the director of the Catherine Sullivan Centre, Clare Hopley, for her work with hearing-impaired children in Strathfield.
- (2) Congratulates the Catherine Sullivan Centre for helping parents of children born with a hearing problem.
- (3) Notes the centre was opened in 1969 by the Dominican Sisters.

WORLD FIGURE SKATING CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLISTS DANIELLE O'BRIEN AND GREGORY MERRIMEN

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates ice dancers Danielle O'Brien and Gregory Merrimen, of Strathfield, for winning Australia's first international ice dance medal.
- (2) Commends the Olympic Winter Institute for representing Australia at an international level and for winning its sixth straight international title at the 2012 World Championships in Poland.
- (3) Encourages Danielle O'Brien and Gregory Merrimen to reach greater achievements at the Four Continents Championships in Japan.

ASIAN PACIFIC OCEANIA POWERCHAIR FOOTBALL CUP REPRESENTATIVES JAMES AND ANDREW KIM

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Strathfield twins Andrew and James Kim for being chosen to represent Australia at the Asian Pacific Oceania Powerchair Football Zone Championship.
- (2) Supports their goal of representing Australia at the next world cup in 2015.

TRIBUTE TO WARWICK WEBSTER

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI—That this House:

- (1) Commemorates the life of Warwick Webster, a former Olympian, world record holder and swimming coach who passed away on 16 December 2012.
- (2) Commends Mr Webster's work in Ashfield and other local communities as a swimming teacher, coach and life mentor.
- (3) Extends its condolences to his family, friends and former students on their loss.

TRIBUTE TO JACK O'REGAN

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the life of Jack O'Regan, a long-time Ashfield resident and social campaigner who recently passed away on 5 January 2013 at Pittwood Nursing Home at age 100 years and four months.
- (2) Commends Mr O'Regan's work for the rights of the disabled and elderly and as an ardent campaigner for his community.
- (3) Extends its condolences to his family on their loss.

AUSTRALIAN ATHLETICS CHAMPION JAMES ROACH

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Croydon junior James Roach for being the fastest in his age group in Australia with a time of 12.54 seconds over 100 metres.
- (2) Congratulates James for his National School Championships win in 2012, his silver medal in the 200 metres, and on winning the 4 x 100 metres relay.

STRATHFIELD ROTARY

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Suzanne Freud who will become the first female president of Rotary Strathfield from July 2013.
- (2) Acknowledges the work that the Strathfield Rotarians do in helping the community through charity fundraising and by promoting peace and friendship throughout the community.

TRIBUTE TO KAREN BROWN

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL—That this House:

- (1) Notes the passing of Karen Brown, Development Officer for the Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI] on 23 February 2013 after a courageous battle with breast cancer.
- (2) Acknowledges the valuable contribution Karen made to HMRI since joining as a Development Manager in 2004 where she brought a deep understanding of the donor perspective and a deep interest and respect for medical research.
- (3) Conveys its respect to Professor Michael Nilsson, HMRI Director, and her colleagues during this difficult time.
- (4) Extends its condolences to Karen's husband Greg, daughters Ali and Hannah, and her extended families in Australia and New Zealand.

LAKE MACQUARIE SPORTS AWARDS

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL—That this House:

- (1) Notes the Lake Macquarie Sports Awards were held on 16 February 2013 and that this event acknowledges the outstanding performances of the city's sporting men, women, boys and girls and highlights the endeavours of the volunteer administrators.
- (2) Recognises the joint winners of the Lake Macquarie Sportsperson of the Year – Iain Jensen (sailing) and Nathan Outeridge (sailing).
- (3) Thanks and congratulates all the winners for their contribution to sport in the region.

ELIZABETH MACARTHUR HIGH SCHOOL MEMORIAL GARDEN

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the students from Elizabeth Macarthur High School who are building a memorial garden in memory of Lisitua Tupola.
- (2) Notes that the garden was suggested by Lisitua as a way for the school to acknowledge students the school has lost in the past.
- (3) Notes that the materials for the garden were donated by Masters Gregory Hills and Narellan Sand and Soil.
- (4) Hopes that the garden is an enduring memorial of Lisitua and other students from Elizabeth Macarthur High School.

KU STARTING POINTS MACARTHUR VOLUNTEER MARY SMITH

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mary Smith on 20 years of volunteering at KU Starting Points Macarthur.
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution KU Starting Points makes to the lives of young people within the Macarthur area by building learning foundations and offering different life skills and experiences.
- (3) Wishes Mary Smith and KU Starting Points every success for the future.

MACARTHUR RURAL FIRE SERVICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the volunteers from Macarthur Rural Fire Service who answered the call for assistance and joined the battle on the fire front this summer.
- (2) Acknowledges and commends the volunteers on their willingness to put their lives at risk to help protect the lives and properties of others.
- (3) Acknowledges and commends the members of the Fire and Rescue NSW, Ambulance Service, Police and the State Emergency Service for their efforts and hard work during the 2013 fire emergency.

MACARTHUR MAGIC SPECIAL NEEDS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lynda Jordan and Geoff Golden on the foundation of the Macarthur Magic Special Needs Football Club.
- (2) Acknowledges the importance of inclusion and acceptance in the lives of the young members of the Macarthur Magic Special Needs Football Club.
- (3) Notes the support of Macarthur District Soccer Football Association for the newest club in the competition.
- (4) Wishes the Macarthur Magic Special Needs Football Club every success for this season and its future.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S CRICKET TEAM MEMBER SARAH COYTE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Australian Women's Cricket team on their World Cup win.
- (2) Acknowledges Sarah Coyte, of Macarthur, as a member of the Australian team.
- (3) Notes that Sarah Coyte plays for Campbelltown-Camden Ghosts.
- (4) Wishes Sarah every success for the future.

MACARTHUR PINK FLAMES UNDER 13 SOFTBALL TEAM

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Macarthur Pink Flames Under-13s softball team on their win in the Australia Day Tournament.
- (2) Notes that the Macarthur Pink Flames Under-13s team is a representative squad with members selected from within the Macarthur District Softball Association.
- (3) Notes that the Macarthur team played teams from South Australia, Victoria, Canberra and New South Wales.
- (4) Wishes the Pink Flames every success for the future.

NATIONAL SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT CHANTELE LADNER

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Chantelle Ladner, from the Macarthur District Softball Association, on winning the best female pitcher award at the softball National Championships.
- (2) Notes that this was Chantelle's first national tournament.
- (3) Wishes Chantelle every success in her softball career.

MOUNT ANNAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Dylan Hadley, Abbey Croft, Heather Austin and Calista Turner on receiving excellence in academic achievement scholarships.
- (2) Congratulates Jessica Delaney on receiving an excellence in sporting achievement scholarship.
- (3) Congratulates Ashlei Lal on receiving the excellence in leadership grant.
- (4) Notes that the recipients showed outstanding academic results and leadership skills throughout primary school.
- (5) Acknowledges that the scholarship program is run at Mount Annan High School to further develop the potential of students.

SYDNEY FC W-LEAGUE PLAYERS ELIZABETH RALSTON AND AMY HARRISON

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the hard work, determination and long-term commitment of Elizabeth Ralston and Amy Harrison, in being members of the W-League Sydney FC team who made the W-League final.
- (2) Congratulates Elizabeth, Amy and W-League Sydney FC on their 3-1 victory in the W-League grand final.
- (3) Wishes Elizabeth and Amy every success in their football careers.

MARGARET THOMAS RETIREMENT

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the retirement of Margaret Thomas from the Mudgee Region Business Enterprise Centre after 18 years of service.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Thomas has played an important role in creating new opportunities in the business and rural sectors across the region.
- (3) Congratulates Mrs Thomas on a job well done and wishes her and her husband well in their retirement in Brisbane.

A TOUCH OF ORANGE CHARITY BALL

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work of Hugh Gardiner and his committee for raising \$105,000 at the A Touch of Orange charity ball 2012.
- (2) Notes that the funds raised will be allocated to providing a patient transport car to assist Orange patients travel to and from treatments and towards a research project at Westmead Hospital.
- (3) Congratulates Hugh and his committee and wishes another successful charity ball in 2013.

CHRIS CONDLIFFE RETIREMENT

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the 33 years' service that Chris Condliffe, retiring principal of Canobolas Rural Technology High School at Orange, has given to the New South Wales education system.
- (2) Notes that Mr Condliffe had been principal of Canobolas Rural Technology High School for seven years.
- (3) Thanks Mr Condliffe for his service to the education of children and wishes him a long and happy retirement.

AUSTRALIAN RUGBY SEVENS SQUAD MEMBER JACK MCCALMAN

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jack McCalman, of Cumnock, on his selection for the Australian men's rugby sevens side at the Australian Youth Olympic Festival.
- (2) Notes that Jack plays a flanker in the 15-a-side rugby game and was part of the New South Wales Open Seconds in 2012.
- (3) Wishes Jack well in his rugby union future.

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH OLYMPIC FESTIVAL ROWER LUKE WEEKS

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Kinross Wolaroi School rower Luke Weeks on his selection in the New South Wales team to compete at the Australian Youth Olympic Festival.
- (2) Notes that Luke competed as a lightweight in the men's lightweight, double men's heavyweight and quads heavyweight at the regatta held at the Sydney International Regatta Centre.
- (3) Wishes Luke every success in his future sporting endeavours.

LYNETTE RILEY RETIREMENT

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Lynette Riley has been a valued member of the staff at Nanima Preschool near Wellington for 36 years.
- (2) Notes that Ms Riley was instrumental in giving Aboriginal children a great sense of history through relating her own personal life story and also gave a sense of culture to Aboriginal and non-Indigenous children.
- (3) Thanks her for her dedication to the education of young Aboriginal children and wishes her well in retirement.

MOLONG PLAYERS AWARD WINNER MARK OATES

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mark Oates on being awarded the Best Variety Performance by an Individual at the annual Canberra Area Theatre Awards on 16 February 2013.
- (2) Notes that Mr Oates received his award for his portrayal of Forest Gump in the Molong Players comedy production of the *Wizard of Oz* in 2012.
- (3) Recognises that the Molong Players annual production has been running for 30 years and has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charity.
- (4) Wishes Mark Oates and the Molong Players further success for their 2013 production.

UNITED STATES BOWLING CONGRESS WINNER JASON BELMONTE

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Jason Belmonte, of Orange, on winning the final of the United States Bowling Congress held at North Brunswick, New Jersey on 25 February 2013.
- (2) Notes that the two-handed player now sits at the top of the tenpin bowling Professional Bowlers Association rankings.
- (3) Wishes Jason Belmonte further success in his chosen sport.

FONTERA PROUD CHEF FINALIST KATHERINE OFFNER

Mr ANDREW GEE—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates apprentice chef Katherine Offner, from Racine Restaurant, on being named a finalist in the Fontera Proud to be a Chef 2013 mentorship program.
- (2) Notes that Miss Offner is one of 32 finalists from Australia and New Zealand to be selected for the program.
- (3) Wishes her well at the competition and in her chosen profession.

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY OF AUSTRALIA NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Bankstown Vietnamese Community of Australia [VCA] in organising a successful Vietnamese New Year Festival at Fairfield Showground between 1 and 3 February 2013.
- (2) Acknowledges the President of the VCA, Thahn Nguyen, for his hard work in organising this event.
- (3) Notes the Vietnamese new year festival is one of the most important events for the Australian-Vietnamese community.
- (4) Wishes all Australians, particularly members of the Vietnamese, Chinese and Indo-Chinese communities a peaceful and prosperous Year of the Water Snake.

MULTICULTURAL MAWLID CONCERT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Darulfatwa Islamic High Council of Australia in hosting the 2013 Multicultural Mawlid Concert on 9 February 2013 at Sydney Olympic Park in Homebush.
- (2) Notes that the 2013 theme was based on "Live Loving Muhammad".
- (3) Notes that the 2013 Multicultural Mawlid Concert had performers from a diverse range of Muslim backgrounds including Arabic, African, Harari, Indonesian and Pakistani.

WORLD JUNIOR SYNCHRONISED SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITOR RACHEL LYNCH

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Rachel Lynch who is competing for Australia in the upcoming Junior Synchronised Skating Championships in Finland next month.
- (2) Congratulates Rachel on her dedication and achievements in competitions.

WORLD JUNIOR SYNCHRONISED SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITOR NINA KOSLOW

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Nina Koslow who is competing for Australia in the upcoming Junior Synchronised Skating Championships in Finland next month.
- (2) Congratulates Nina on her dedication and achievements in competitions.

WORLD JUNIOR SYNCHRONISED SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITOR ISABELLE RANDELL

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Isabelle Randell who is competing for Australia in the upcoming Junior Synchronised Skating Championships in Finland next month.
- (2) Congratulates Isabelle on her dedication and achievements in competitions.

STATE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS MEDALLISTS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Katelyn Stephenson, Jessica Morissey, Maddie Emmet Duignan and Sienna Macdonald on their bronze medals in the 10 to 12 years New South Wales age group swimming championships.
- (2) Wishes the team luck in future competitions.

STATE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS BRONZE MEDALLIST KATIE MATER

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Katie Mater who won bronze in the 200 metres individual medley at the 13 to 15 years New South Wales age group championships.
- (2) Notes Katie swims for the Castle Hill Dolphins.
- (3) Wishes Katie good luck for future competitions throughout the season.

THE HILLS STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the volunteers of The Hills State Emergency Service's team who helped clean up roads in The Hills during the heavy winds in February 2012.
- (2) Notes the true passion and support our volunteers give us and how vital they are to our community.

THE HILLS YOUNG HERO AWARD RECIPIENT ALEX ROBERTS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the individual effort of young Mr Alex Roberts, of The Hills area, who was awarded The Hills Young Hero Award for his work on recycling.
- (2) Notes his dedication and zeal, hoping that his initiative will attract others in the community to support causes that benefit the area and wider State.

THE HILLS SENIOR HERO OF 2013 LIONEL SMITH

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lionel Smith on being awarded The Hills Senior Hero of 2013 for service to the community including 70 years in the Rural Fire Service.
- (2) Acknowledges the great work of our senior community who continue to offer such a vital service to our community.

NATIONAL BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION AWARD RECIPIENT SANDRA BEACH

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Sandra Beach on receiving the Making a Difference Award by the National Breast Cancer Foundation at the 2012 Patron's Awards.
- (2) Thanks Sandra for her continued commitment to helping those with breast cancer and encourages others to take up the fight against the terrible disease.

PREMIER'S MULTICULTURAL MEDIA AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

Congratulates the following members of the Lebanese and Arabic communities in Australia for their awards at the recent Premier's Multicultural Media Awards:

- (1) Mr Antoine Kazzi, editor of El Telegraph and member of the Parliamentary Lebanese Consultative Committee, for the best feature of the year on the 2012 September Muslim riots.
- (2) Ms Naomi Tsvirko for Write about Me, a moving tribute that tells the story of Mrs Tsvirko's grandmother during the Lebanese Civil War.
- (3) Hani El Turk, of El Telegraph, for his moving story about the illegal practice of female circumcision in New South Wales.
- (4) Anwar Harb editor in chief of An Nahar for "Lifetime Services" to the industry.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

ILLAWARRA/SOUTH COAST REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [10.07 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) commends the Minister for the Illawarra for his recent speech to the Illawarra Business Chamber;
- (2) notes the considerable achievements of the Government in the Illawarra since coming to office in March 2011; and
- (3) condemns the former Government for failing the people of the Illawarra across a range of Government services and programs.

The Illawarra region has the third largest regional economy in New South Wales: it is worth in excess of \$16 billion in goods and services. The New South Wales Government recently released the Illawarra/South Coast Regional Action Plan. This plan outlines key actions the Government will focus on over the next two years to improve opportunities and the quality of life for people of the Illawarra and South Coast. The plan aligns with New South Wales 2021—the State's 10-year plan to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, strengthen our local environment and communities and restore accountability to government.

The plan goes hand in hand with other long-term strategies that the Government has developed, including the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and the State Infrastructure Strategy. The Illawarra community was asked to provide direct input into the development of the plans through meetings with Cabinet Ministers, an online forum and written submissions. I enjoyed participating in that process at the University of Wollongong. The key priorities identified for the Illawarra and South Coast through this process included revitalising the economy by attracting new industry, supporting business and creating jobs; providing accessible, efficient and integrated regional transport; delivering infrastructure to support population needs; improving health and community services, particularly for vulnerable communities; and safeguarding the natural environment.

The Illawarra/South Coast Regional Action Plan contains more than 90 actions, which are categorised under the five key priorities identified for the region: establishing a tier 3 datacentre in Wollongong; funding support for the Wollongong Gran Fondo and Multisport Festival, including the Grand Prix Criterium Series, in 2013; developing a regional transport plan; building an elective surgical centre with seven theatres, 60 new general beds and six new intensive care unit beds; producing an aged care health services plan for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region; and providing funding towards lead-in infrastructure for the provision of wastewater services in the West Dapto area.

I must address the lies and misleading comments by members of the Opposition in relation to Port Kembla. I commend the Treasurer for his work to free up infrastructure by leasing an asset and not selling it like those opposite did with prisons and power and so much of the State. To this day members of the Opposition have not ruled out selling the port if they are returned to the Treasury. They have refused to rule that out in this place. They have also refused to rule out breaking the lease in the event that they return to government. We saw members of the Opposition vote against that \$100 million contribution in this place, yet time after time in local media they offer suggestions about how to spend the money.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong will have her opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr GARETH WARD: How did members opposite have the temerity and audacity to vote against the very money they now wish to seek to apportion? What is more amusing is that the money has not yet been accrued. Even though the transaction bills have gone through the Parliament no tender has been agreed to. As I said yesterday, it may be a novelty for Labor but one cannot spend money that one does not have. The Port Kembla lease will also free up funds for other infrastructure projects such as the Berry bypass. Not only will \$100 million come out of the port transaction but also there will be an additional \$160 million for roads in the Illawarra, which will save lives. I am proud that the Government will deliver those vital funds for the Princes Highway.

Works are underway in the Illawarra in areas such as Gerringong in my electorate, with the largest single investment in the history of the Princes Highway. In addition, the \$160 million that has been arranged from the port transactions will mean that the \$510 million Berry bypass project will be able to proceed. I am also delighted that the Government has allocated \$100,000 for the Albion Park Rail bypass study. Labor did

nothing about that during its 16 years in office but it now attempts to lecture this Government on roads. I also commend the Minister for Local Government for the local government infrastructure renewal scheme. Through that scheme millions of dollars have been allocated to local roads, local projects and local schemes, reducing the local government infrastructure backlog. I am pleased that the program is working well.

I acknowledge my friend and colleague the member for Shellharbour, who is in the Chamber. Even though we disagree about the name of the station, communities across our area will be delighted that a new train station will come to Shell Cove-Flinders, and that they will have access to public transport. That is vital for our region and I am pleased that the Minister for Transport has allocated \$39 million to construct that facility. We also have seen upgrades at Albion Park, Dapto and Gerringong and the introduction of quiet carriages for Illawarra trains. In this place I listened to the Minister talk about those carriages for the Central Coast and I raised the matter for the Illawarra. I am delighted that they are now there. We also have an additional 7,000 seats on weekend train services in our region and I am pleased about that as well.

This Government listens to the community. The Minister for the Illawarra has established an Illawarra Community Advisory Panel, which the hardworking member for Shellharbour and I have attended. I have not seen the member for Wollongong at the meetings but I am sure that in the future she will be able to make it to one of them. I commend the Minister for putting that group together. The Government's data centre reform program has been warmly accepted by the business community across New South Wales. The Government is seeking to engage with the private sector in meaningful ways. There are more than 130 data centres with various levels of reliability and energy efficiency.

As we become more reliant on information, communication and technology [ICT] for the delivery of services these data centres will not be able to meet future data centre capacity, energy, cooling and technical demands. The data centre reform project provides the capacity to consolidate these data centres into two purpose-built and highly energy efficient facilities. I note that one of those facilities has recently been launched in the Illawarra. I am proud to represent my part of the Illawarra in this place. Members on both sides of this House must work together to ensure that we retain and improve services in our region. Whether it be health care, transport or roads, we must ensure that the needs of our region are put first. That is why I am delighted that this motion was accorded priority in spite of the fact the Labor members voted yesterday to deprioritise the Illawarra.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [10.14 a.m.]: First I place on record my congratulations to all Catholics on the election this morning of the new pope—Pope Francis. Unfortunately I now have to correct the member for Kiama on more than a few things. After accusing members of the Opposition of telling lies the member for Kiama finished his contribution by saying how great it would be if we all worked together. Most of the things that the member for Kiama has sought to take credit for were budgeted for and announced by the Labor Government, including the \$86 million upgrade of Wollongong Hospital.

I consider this motion seeking to commend the Government and the Minister for their contribution to the Illawarra to be an absolute joke. New members such as the member for Kiama think that changing terminology changes what is happening. Let me explain it to him in basic language so that he can understand. He can call a brown cow a blue horse but it is still a brown cow. The privatisation of the port goes against commitments given by the Coalition during the election campaign. On Tuesday 22 February the local Labor election candidates warned that the port would be privatised if a Coalition Government were elected. The then Opposition spokesperson for ports, Andrew Stoner, said that his party had no plans to sell off Port Kembla. He did not say, "But we are going to lease it." The member for Kiama beats his chest and says that \$100 million is up for grabs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kiama will have a further opportunity to contribute to the debate in his reply.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Why is the member for Kiama not asking about the \$400 million? If it were not for the previous Labor Government there would be no car imports at Port Kembla. If not for that, the Government would not have been able to sell or lease the port into private hands for \$500 million as a profitable organisation. Yet the people of the Illawarra are supposed to be satisfied by getting \$100 million from a commodity that delivers hundreds of millions of dollars into the coffers of the Government every year.

The member for Kiama was not around for the previous election so he would not know that the then spokesperson, Chris Hartcher, outraged the business community and the community in general by saying that

should the Coalition get elected its policy would be that no car imports would come through Port Kembla at all. He then changed his mind. On 14 February 2007 the headline in the *Illawarra Mercury* was, "Coalition car woes." The first line of the article read, "In the heat of an election mistakes can, and do, happen." In other words, letting out the intention of the Coalition for the port was a mistake by Chris Hartcher. Labor members said before the 2011 election that the Coalition would give the port over to private interests. The Coalition denied it and yet that is what it has done.

What else has the Government done in relation to its commitment to the people of the Illawarra? We know that it has broken its promise in relation to Port Kembla. We also know that paramedics complain that they do not trust the Government. They are under enormous stress and pressure whilst Government members stand up in this place and try to take credit for supposedly improving health. I inform the House of a problem this Government did not address in Wollongong—trolley block. Fire stations are closing frequently in Wollongong, and fire brigade officers are not at all happy about that. The Government reneged on its commitment to install lifts at the Unanderra railway station after the 2011 election.

During the election campaign the Coalition promised the public service unions they had nothing to fear. When Labor was saying that this Government would sack thousands of public servants the Coalition said, "No, that's not true." Labor was accused of spreading fear, lies and smears. This Government also axed the Illawarra Advantage Fund, which provided assistance to more than 100 different businesses in the Illawarra. For the first time surgical nurses undertook industrial action against this Government. Currently trains have the worst on-time running record in four years, yet Government members pat themselves on the back and congratulate each other every day in this House. The Treasurer mislaid \$1 billion. This Government accuses other people of not being able to count yet this Government falsely accused Labor of leaving a budget black hole.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: There was no \$1 billion black hole. The member for Wollongong should listen to her former Auditor-General, who said so.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama knows that is not a point of order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: One billion dollars was mislaid by this Government. Let me remind Government members that under Nick Greiner's Coalition Government a black hole was left to Labor, yet there is now a state-of-the-art cancer unit. This Government closed the Kiama Hospital, failed to construct the Maldon to Dombarton freight rail link, and as a new government appointed Nick Greiner as the head of Infrastructure NSW.

Mr David Elliott: Good choice. Good decision.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I am talking about the Illawarra region and what is not being done for the Illawarra, and Nick Greiner is now in charge of infrastructure. The previous Labor Government handed over a triple-A credit rating, no black hole—which this Government discovered after the Auditor-General found the missing \$1 billion—a \$17 million state-of-the-art police station at Oak Flats, a free shuttle bus, a \$30 million WIN Stadium grandstand, the Sea Cliff Bridge that the current Government takes credit for, the car imports at Port Kembla that the current Government now profits from, a \$215 million recycled water plant, and \$15 million for a 24-hour aeromedical helicopter that this Government wants to get rid of. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [10.21 a.m.]: I am delighted to make comments in relation to this motion. The Illawarra is a fantastic region. Every year I enjoy visiting the region and it is a region that the O'Farrell Government is very proud to look after. The O'Farrell Government is determined to look after every part of this State. It is determined to look after the Illawarra region, which is a very important part of our State and local economies. Opposition members do not understand why the O'Farrell Government is looking after every electorate in the State rather than politically targeting Coalition electorates.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong has made her contribution to the debate.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Labor members are not used to a government acting in the community's interests, and this Government is very proud to do that. We will do that regardless of the politicking and histrionics indulged in by some members who represent electorates in the Illawarra. It is worthwhile quickly pointing out

what is in the State budget for the Illawarra. Opposition members accuse this Government of doing nothing for the Illawarra, so I will quickly provide some facts. The budget provided \$552 million in recurrent funding for Illawarra schools and \$187 million this year to upgrade the Princes Highway. When Labor was in government a lot was said about upgrading the Princes Highway, but did the Labor Government actually do it? No. The Government has provided a significant amount for that upgrade.

The money has been allocated and the project is underway. Unlike Labor, which only spoke about the Princes Highway upgrade, this Government is delivering it. The budget also has provided \$42.4 million this year for Illawarra health infrastructure, including \$10.9 million to complete the redevelopment of the Illawarra Regional Cancer Centre and \$4 million for the Wollongong Hospital car park, and 36 more nurses for the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. This year's budget has also provided funds for 40 more car parking spaces at the Kiama train station, \$442,000 towards provision of a fire station in Bundeena, Sydney Water delivering sewer extensions to accelerate the release of 1,000 properties in West Dapto, and commuter car parks and upgrades at Waterfall, Gerringong, Albion Park, Oak Flats, Dapto, Kiama and Wollongong. That is just a quick snapshot of what the O'Farrell Government is doing for the Illawarra.

During this debate the member for Kiama referred to the importance of adopting a team approach. He is willing to put down his political badges to look after his community, yet Opposition members are not. There are three members who represent Illawarra electorates in the Chamber, and two of them are not talking to each other. I make that point because I know they are arguing about privatisation of Port Kembla—at least most of the time they are. I love Labor's version of consistency. Labor members began by repeatedly saying they did not want the port to be privatised and did not want the port transaction. Having said, "We really, really, really don't want that transaction to go ahead", they now say, "By the way, if it does go ahead, can I have some money?" I love the Labor brand of consistency—it is spectacular. My good mate the member for Keira wrote and stated, "I'm letting you know I'm against it, against it, against it, but by the way, if it does go ahead, can we have money for planning for the F6?"

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! If the member for Keira listens instead of interjecting, he may hear the Treasurer announce something.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As any local member would, the member for Keira is putting up his hand because there is \$100 million in the pipeline for new infrastructure for the Illawarra. The member for Keira seems to be getting on board and the member for Shellharbour also is saying—à la *Jerry Maguire*—"Show me the money." It is spectacular inconsistency. Labor members say, "We are against the port transaction—against it, against it, against it—but give me some money." The Government is very proud to be looking after the Illawarra. We are very proud to be undertaking a transaction that will deliver \$100 million for more infrastructure on top of what the Government is already providing, and the O'Farrell Government will continue in that vein.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [10.25 a.m.]: What a predictable motion from the member for Kiama. If I had been forced to defend the non-performance of the Minister for the Illawarra last week, as the member for Kiama has been, I would have moved a similar motion myself. Last week the Minister for the Illawarra stepped into the Illawarra region for the first time in months. His visits are very rare. He popped in to address the Illawarra Business Chamber executive luncheon. This was his second invitation to address the chamber. He could not make the first one soon after the Government's election because he was stuck in Sydney mangling the entitlements of workers. He was forced to give the job of deputising for him to the member for Kiama.

The Minister's Illawarra Business Chamber speech last Thursday was nothing short of embarrassing. It was the usual Government tick-a-box speech. It was nothing at all special. The audience was not impressed with it; nor was the media reaction. If the member for Kiama were completely honest he would admit that he also was less than impressed with the Minister's speech. I was so embarrassed for the Liberal Party that I issued a media release following the Illawarra Business Chamber event calling on the Premier to give the current Minister the flick. He should be replaced by the member for Kiama. Everybody thinks so. But, given this dispirited and predictable motion, I might have to rethink my support for the member for Kiama. I also note that, while the member for Kiama is present in the Chamber in an attempt to get brownie points with the Minister, he certainly did not rise to his defence in the Illawarra media.

Last week the *Kiama Independent-Lake Times* quoted the member for Kiama saying that he did not wish to be drawn into a debate on the performance of the Minister for the Illawarra. That is hardly a vote of confidence in the Minister. Last week the stakeholders in the Illawarra expected some very clear answers from

the Minister on the future of Port Kembla and how the \$100 million from the port's leasing, or sale, would be used for infrastructure projects in the region. We expected to be told the priorities of the Government for the infrastructure projects. We expected information on whether the Government would prefer one big project or a series of smaller projects. We expected information on precisely how the Government would consider the many views of the Illawarra regional stakeholders on the priority of infrastructure projects.

For example, would the Government task Regional Development Australia Illawarra with a lead role in coordinating the views of stakeholders and making recommendations to the Government on the priority of infrastructure projects? Those issues should have been addressed last week by the Minister. The member for Kiama, instead of trying to be a political smart Alec in the House, should have tried to provide some answers to those questions himself. People in the Illawarra are absolutely sick of political pointscoring. They are not a bit interested in the juvenile political game of finger pointing. The people elected this Government to fix things, as it promised to do at the March 2011 election. Government members made promises to the people in my electorate; my role is to hold the Government to account for those promises.

The Government promised increased services in education and health. So far it is cutting education and health services. The Government promised new infrastructure in my electorate. So far it has failed to deliver that infrastructure in a timely manner. For example, it has delayed construction of the new Flinders station by 12 months. A review of the environmental factors, promised by the Minister for Transport and the member for Kiama in an April 2012 media release, has only just been released to commence the public consultation process. Similarly, improvements to the Dapto station, also promised by the Minister and the member for Kiama in the same press release of last April, have been delayed by another 12 months. The Oak Flats station car park has also been delayed by another 12 months.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [10.29 a.m.]: I support my colleagues' comments on this motion. I must congratulate the Government on a couple of things it has done in the Illawarra because I want everyone to understand just how fantastic this Government is. I will start with something that concerns us all—predominantly those on the Opposition side—and that is education. Congratulations to the Government on announcing in 2010 that 60 new specialist literacy and numeracy teachers would be provided and delivering, in 2013, two of them. That is a fantastic effort—well done! In relation to health, I congratulate those on the Government side for announcing in the lead-up to the 2011 election that Bulli Hospital would be a priority and then in December 2012 announcing an Illawarra Regional Action Plan and forgetting to mention Bulli Hospital. I congratulate the Government on announcing a regional relocation grant that pays people \$7,000 to move from one end of Windang bridge to the other. That is fantastic economic policy and a credit to the New South Wales Nationals! We all have issues to push around the beautiful budget committee table, and heaven forbid the Treasurer saw the regional relocation grant coming. I love The Nationals—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I remind the member for Keira to stay within the leave of the motion.

Mr RYAN PARK: I love The Nationals because they see stupid policy and then take it to the next level. It is fantastic. People can move from one side of Mullet Creek to the other and get paid the handsome sum of \$7,000. They can also cross Windang bridge and get \$7,000. That is fantastic economic policy, and I congratulate the Government on it.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: I ask you to bring the member for Keira back to the leave of the motion. He is attacking The Nationals, which is totally irrelevant to the motion we are debating.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Keira will return to the leave of the motion.

Mr RYAN PARK: I will not attack The Nationals, who have just pulled their candidate out of Throsby.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: That is totally irrelevant to the debate. I ask you to bring the member for Keira back to the leave of the motion. He is now casting aspersions on a member of the community who has withdrawn from a preselection process for family reasons. I ask the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr RYAN PARK: I withdraw the comment.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Tamworth and the member for Murray-Darling will resume their seats. The member's time has expired.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [10.33 a.m.]: I am happy to join my colleague the member for Kiama in speaking in this debate. It is most important to acknowledge that Opposition members did not want this debate to occur; they did not want to bring Illawarra issues before this House. They had the opportunity yesterday to vote for the motion to reorder business. Members representing the electorates of Shellharbour, Wollongong and Keira had the opportunity to support the reordering of this motion but they said no, they did not want to do that. They are happy to support their colleagues from Hunter electorates who reorder motions at every opportunity, but—

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: I am taking a leaf out of the member for Tamworth's book—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Ms Noreen Hay: I suggest that the member for Penrith should be drawn back to the leave of the motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Penrith has the call.

Mr STUART AYRES: This motion is about commending the Government on the great work it is doing in the Illawarra. The first opportunity to do that was yesterday when the member for Kiama sought to have this motion reordered.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: Mr Deputy-Speaker, you were very quick to draw the member for Keira back to the leave of the motion. I ask that you continue in the same vein and draw the member for Penrith back to the leave of the motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: Given that the member for Penrith has been rudely interrupted, I ask that you restart the clocks.

Mr Ryan Park: What about me?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Penrith is being relevant. He is debating a motion about the Illawarra and what transpired yesterday in deciding when debate on the motion would take place.

Mr STUART AYRES: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Keira, who said "What about me?" I think that says a lot about the Labor Party. The people of the Illawarra finally have a Minister who is acknowledging local issues. They finally have a number of representatives like the member for Kiama—

Ms Anna Watson: What's his name? What's the Minister's name?

Mr STUART AYRES: The Minister's name is the Hon. Greg Pearce. The people of the Illawarra finally have a Minister and members of Parliament who are representing their interests. Because Government members are delivering for their community, Opposition members decide they do not want to debate the issues. If the port is leased, what do members opposite think happens to the jobs? Do they just vanish because the workers are no longer union members? The jobs will still be there; the port will continue to generate economic activity for the Illawarra. Here is a tip for members opposite: The money from the lease will be reinjected into the Illawarra. It is a win-win; it is not that difficult. I am speaking, as the member for a western Sydney electorate, because we recognise the need for economic reform across the State. We recognise that areas outside central business districts need less red tape and more government investment in better services. The people of western Sydney share the pain of those in the Illawarra and in Newcastle.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour have had an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr STUART AYRES: This Government recognises that we must decentralise economic activity. It also realises that we do not have the solutions to everything. We should encourage the private sector to play a greater role in the New South Wales economy, break down barriers and find better ways to use public assets. That is what the people want, and we have an opportunity to do it in the Illawarra. We take the value of those public assets, keep the economic activity in New South Wales and reallocate that value to other areas and projects in the Illawarra, such as the Princes Highway. Investment in the Princes Highway is one of the most significant road investments in this State. We are making that investment by reallocating money from other assets in the Illawarra. That is what Government members are doing. If those opposite got on board they might win something sometime.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [10.37 a.m.], in reply: I thank, of course, the Treasurer and member for Manly, the member for Penrith, the member for Wollongong, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Keira for participating in this debate. However, I need to respond to a number of points that were made. The member for Wollongong continues to mislead people about the port transaction. She says that it is a privatisation when, clearly, it is a lease. We are realising the capital value of those assets by reinvesting that money in the Illawarra.

Ms Anna Watson: My son will be 130 years old.

Mr GARETH WARD: I love that the member for Shellharbour interjects. Of course, those opposite voted against debating this motion today. They did not want to prioritise the Illawarra's issues. Of course, then they voted against the port lease, which realises the money. After saying no, what did they then do? They wrote to the Government saying, "This is how we can spend it." Here are the letters that indicate their breathtaking hypocrisy on this issue. How can they even show their faces in this Chamber, trying to tell us how to spend money that they did not want? It is all here in black and white for everyone to see.

The member for Wollongong talked about trolley block. I shall enlighten her. The improved emergency department's elective surgery performance results have just been announced. They include the following: Bulli elective surgery, 100 per cent on-time performance; Shellharbour elective surgery, 99 per cent on-time performance; Shoalhaven elective surgery, 94 per cent on-time performance, which is a 5 per cent improvement on the same time in the previous year; and Wollongong emergency department median waiting times have improved by two minutes in triage category 3 and by 10 minutes in triage category 4. The member for Wollongong gave us a lecture about Nick Greiner and 1988. The more she talks about the past, the more she proclaims her embarrassment about the present and shows that she has nothing to say about the future.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: The member for Kiama is inciting interjections. He should be ashamed of himself.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Wollongong will resume her seat.

Ms Noreen Hay: Speak through the Chair.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I place the member for Wollongong on two calls to order. The member for Wollongong, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Keira have made their contributions. They will listen to the reply in silence.

Mr GARETH WARD: Thank you very much. Of course, I need to talk about the contribution of the member for Shellharbour because she misled me about the article in the *Kiama Independent Lake Times* on 11 March. At no stage did I express my lack of confidence in the Minister for the Illawarra. I have complete confidence in him, but not, of course, in the former colleague of those opposite, Eric Roozendaal, who came to the Illawarra only once for a forum when the then shadow Treasurer goaded him into it. How did Eric drive down to the Illawarra? Who helped him with that? Is he a friend of any member on that side of the House? He is a friend of the member for Cabramatta, who is nodding. He is a mate of the member for Wollongong, who is about to defend him as well.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: The member for Kiama is not addressing the motion before the House.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I ask the member for Wollongong to listen to what is being said. The member for Kiama is responding to comments made by the member for Shellharbour.

Ms Noreen Hay: Not during the debate.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Does the member for Wollongong want to take a point of order?

Ms Noreen Hay: No, I am just making a point.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong will resume her seat. The member for Kiama is responding.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Wollongong is trying to use up my speaking time. The Shell Cove train station was promised by those opposite in 2001. The member for Shellharbour talks about lack of delivery. We will deliver by 2014 the station that those opposite promised in 2001. New South Wales Labor: the little red engine that couldn't. The member for Keira mentioned Regional Relocation Grants. He is a good bloke and a good friend, but can he tell me—

Mr Mark Coure: Don't mislead the House.

Mr GARETH WARD: Yes, I should not mislead the House. How many people moved from Warilla across the bridge? I commend the motion to the House. [*Time expired.*]

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 57

Mr Anderson	Mr Flowers	Mr Sidoti
Mr Annesley	Mr Fraser	Mrs Skinner
Mr Aplin	Mr Gee	Mr Smith
Mr Ayres	Ms Gibbons	Mr Souris
Mr Baird	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Speakman
Mr Barilaro	Mr Hartcher	Mr Spence
Mr Bassett	Mr Hazzard	Mr Stokes
Mr Baumann	Mr Holstein	Mr Stoner
Ms Berejikian	Mr Issa	Mr Toole
Mr Bromhead	Mr Kean	Mr Torbay
Mr Casuscelli	Dr Lee	Ms Upton
Mr Conolly	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Ward
Mr Cornwell	Mr O'Dea	Mr Webber
Mr Coure	Mr Owen	Mr R. C. Williams
Mrs Davies	Mr Page	Mrs Williams
Mr Dominello	Mr Patterson	
Mr Doyle	Mr Perrottet	
Mr Edwards	Mr Provest	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Elliott	Mr Rowell	Mr Maguire
Mr Evans	Mrs Sage	Mr J. D. Williams

Noes, 19

Mr Barr	Dr McDonald	Ms Tebbutt
Ms Burney	Ms Mihailuk	Ms Watson
Mr Daley	Mr Park	Mr Zangari
Mr Furolo	Mr Parker	
Ms Hay	Mrs Perry	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hoenig	Mr Piper	Mr Amery
Ms Hornery	Mr Rees	Mr Lalich

Pairs

Ms Goward	Ms Burton
Mr Humphries	Mr Robertson

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CAR PARKS PTY LTD

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [10.54 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes Australian National Car Parks have issued more than 60,000 fines to motorists throughout Australia;
- (2) notes the Victorian Supreme Court has declared that fines issued by Australian National Car Parks in Victoria are unlawful; and
- (3) calls on the Government to consider action against the practices of Australian National Car Parks in issuing fines.

I will address the House about the ongoing issue of Australian National Car Parks Pty Ltd. I note at the outset that since I moved this motion some six months ago the Government has introduced legislation to prevent further private information being provided to Australian National Car Parks Pty Ltd. That legislation was the Road Transport (General) Amendment (Private Car Parks) Act 2012, which essentially prevents the Roads and Maritime Services from being obliged or compelled to provide details about registered motorists or in any way identify an individual for the purposes of recovery of car park fees and fines. As I have stated previously, as much as that legislation was welcomed in this House, it did not address the concerns of hundreds of thousands of individuals who had already received these so-called fines dating back to 2009.

The Government has failed to address the central legal question that is in dispute: Is it or is it not lawful for a private company to issue a fine? Last year the Minister for Fair Trading advised that if a private car park operator in New South Wales issues a payment notice that does not comply with Australian consumer law NSW Fair Trading will take appropriate compliance action in accordance with the law. The position I advocate, along with many members of this House and the public, is that it should be unlawful. That position was endorsed by the Victorian Supreme Court when it decided last year that the fines issued by Australian National Car Parks Pty Ltd were, in fact, unlawful. That is not to say that a private company cannot make a demand for payment in instances where it is owed money. That is, of course, distinct from a fine. What made the matter worse for individuals was that, as they received notification that they were supposedly fined, they received notification from Roads and Maritime Services that their private details were being provided to Australian National Car Parks Pty Ltd.

As I mentioned previously, NSW Fair Trading has been involved in trying to assist people with their fines and I can advise the House from my own experience that Fair Trading has helped many people have their fines cancelled. I commend the staff at NSW Fair Trading for the work they have done in assisting people throughout New South Wales with this matter. Legal Aid New South Wales has also put together a comprehensive guide to dealing with fines issued by private car park operators. In addition to the outstanding question of the legality of non-governmental fines, there have been a number of issues raised about improper behaviour on the part of private car park operators. Members of the House may take the opportunity today to relay the concerns of their constituents about this issue. Many constituents came to my office raising concerns that their first notification that they had supposedly been fined was when they received letters from debt collectors and solicitors.

Many constituents were quite distressed because they had not received the original notification, and they came to my office for assistance; others sought assistance from many other members of this House. They had so many different stories to tell. Some individuals had received only the Roads and Maritime Services notification and not the actual fine itself, or a debt notice as it should be called. One woman, who was pregnant at the time, was absolutely confident that there was no way possible that she could have been at the car park at the time advised in the letter that she received from a solicitor on behalf of Australian National Car Parks.

Constituents have advised my office about all sorts of other unsavoury practices, including the use of small signage, particularly in areas with large English-as-a-second-language and elderly populations. I raise that matter because I have also been informed about car park inspectors who have issued fines while people walk to purchase a ticket; that is, they have got out of their car intent on buying a ticket, but have been fined before they could do so. I understand Fair Trading has undertaken a number of inspections in an attempt to address the issue of small signage and the behaviour of car park inspectors. Of course the behaviour of inspectors is difficult to verify, but I bring this to the attention of the House as it is part of a wider trend.

No member of this House would question that private car parks are legitimate businesses. However I would question any business model that does not make it clear to people that they are required to pay fees, and

does not make it easy for them to pay. There has to be a better way for private car park operators to make clear the responsibility of their patrons to pay access fees. Again I remind members that car park operators are not government agencies and they are not entitled to issue fines. I call on the Government to further explore this matter and address the legality of companies issuing fines. In the Victorian case of *Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria v Parking Patrols Vic Pty Ltd* it was ruled that it was unlawful for the company to issue fines, that the company could only claim forward debt. I ask members to support this motion and urge the Government to consider action against Australian National Car Parks and other private companies that issue fines.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [11.01 a.m.]: I am always amazed when I hear a speech delivered by the shadow Minister for Fair Trading, probably one of the 20 Labor members of Parliament who have not worked in the private sector during their life; all of a sudden she is an expert on commercial law and can stand in this place and tell us all about our businesses.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order: I have worked in the private sector.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: I take great offence at the suggestion made by the member for Baulkham Hills. I have worked in the private sector.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I don't know that Kentucky Fried Chicken counts.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order: There is no need for the member to speak in such a manner.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Baulkham Hills has the call.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: My experience with car parks in this State is probably not as extensive as that of the member for Bankstown because, unlike a lot of Labor members of Parliament, I share the practice of the new Pope in catching a bus to work. But I have discussed this matter with the Minister for Fair Trading and appreciate that the matter is pertinent to a number of motorists, particularly around Sydney. I am surprised, following a number of court decisions, that Australian National Car Parks and other New South Wales car park operators have been able to ascertain the details of vehicle owners who are alleged to have parked in breach of their contracted terms. I am surprised that the member for Bankstown, having moved a motion that simply discloses that 60,000 fines have been issued to motorists throughout Australia, seems to think that there is something untoward about a private sector operator seeking payment for services rendered.

The fact is that in 2012 Australian National Car Parks commenced issuing payment notices to a proportion of those car owners. The majority of those notices related to incidents occurring in 2010 and 2011. This placed many motorists at a disadvantage. In response to comments made by the member in speaking to her motion, I want members to know that the Minister is aware that motorists were disadvantaged as the events took place some time ago. Many of the recipients of those notices went to Fair Trading for advice and assistance, and on various occasions Fair Trading satisfactorily negotiated with Australian National Car Parks for the fines to be waived. So action has been taken. The imputation of the member for Bankstown was that the Government somehow had been negligent in dealing with this matter, or that Fair Trading had been negligent. That is incorrect.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: That is not true.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The member should listen, because she may indeed learn something and stop embarrassing herself. To assist consumers further, Fair Trading also developed a fact sheet covering frequently asked questions; this was made available on the Fair Trading website and through Facebook. To address preliminary discovery, and to prevent the private details of New South Wales residents being disclosed to private car park operators, the Government introduced the Road Transport (General) Amendment (Private Car Parks) Act 2012. This legislation ensures that personal information kept by Roads and Maritime Services will be protected from private car park operators who seek to use this information for the recovery of private car park fees.

I now turn to the broader issue. The Minister has asked me to assure the House that paid car park operators across the nation are presently under active surveillance by Australian consumer law regulators. This

work is being led by Consumer Affairs Victoria. As part of this project, Fair Trading engaged with a number of New South Wales-based businesses to ensure that they are fully aware of their ongoing obligations under Australian consumer law. It is worth pointing out that Australian National Car Parks has obligations under the Australian consumer law, as do all traders in New South Wales. On the issue of the Victorian Supreme Court ruling, I point out to the member for Bankstown that she has raised this issue before, and it has been addressed. I emphasise that that was a Victorian Supreme Court ruling.

I clarify one more time that the Victorian court ruling that deemed that the issuing of fines is unlawful cannot be linked to private car park operators in New South Wales, which is a different jurisdiction. The reason for this is simple: car park operators in Victoria were found to have breached the Victorian Fair Trading Act by engaging in misleading and deceptive conduct. The conduct in question concerned the issuing of documents of a similar design and layout to parking tickets issued by government authorities. That is not the case in New South Wales—a different jurisdiction—where private car park operators issue payment notices that have been found to comply with Australian consumer law. It is not appropriate to use the Victorian example as a standard for dealing with the New South Wales situation. I urge members to vote against the motion. I suggest to the member for Bankstown that before she brings similar trouble-making motions to this House she go back to Legal Institutions 101.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [11.08 a.m.]: I had expected the member for Baulkham Hills to improve and do better than attack the member for Bankstown for bringing this motion forward. His stance was absolutely absurd. I support the member for Bankstown and her motion. Australian National Car Parks Pty Ltd is a private company that provides car park management services to private businesses and public institutions. According to the company's website, Australian National Car Parks is one of Australia's foremost specialist car park management companies. I can continue to labour the point on the identity of Australian National Car Parks but my point is simple: Australian National Car Parks is a private company that provides services to clients. Those services, amongst others, are to provide car parking management to their clients.

Yet what has left a nasty taste in the mouth of many car park patrons is that in their payment notices and reminder notices Australian National Car Parks portrays itself in a manner that regularly gives the impression that Australian National Car Parks is a public body vested by the Crown to collect fines for a breach of public law. A constant criticism I hear when residents come to my electorate office complaining about Australian National Car Parks is that they did not know they had broken the law. It is disheartening to have people come to my office to complain about car parking arrangements at the Fairfield Forum and how they did not know they were breaking the law. Many people in my electorate come from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The forum's car park is poorly signposted, the signs have very small print and the ticket machines are inadequate. These people do not know why they received a fine.

It is deception for Australian National Car Parks to present itself in a manner that makes it look like the recipient of an Australian National Car Parks infringement notice has offended the Crown by breaking a law. Australian National Car Parks has to give car park patrons notice of their obligations to pay a contractual penalty if they breach a condition of the contract a patron enters into when parking at a car park managed by Australian National Car Parks—for example, at the aforementioned Fairfield Forum. This motion urges the O'Farrell Government to consider action against Australian National Car Parks. In Victoria, the State body, Consumer Affairs Victoria took a car parking operator—Ace Parking Pty Ltd—to court for, amongst other things, issuing fines to consumers without legal authority.

The Supreme Court of Victoria agreed and Ace Parking Pty Ltd was served with an injunction to restrain from further contravening conduct. The court found that the terminology on the Ace parking tickets contravened the State's Fair Trading Act because the tickets misled consumers about their rights—as is the case in New South Wales with Australian National Car Parks. The court also found that the requests for payments issued by Ace Parking Pty Ltd mimicked fines issued by government agencies and councils. It is time the O'Farrell Government took similar action against Australian National Car Parks. Too many residents in Fairfield, Bankstown and across New South Wales have been made to believe that they have broken the law after receiving a payment notice from Australian National Car Parks. I therefore commend the motion.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [11.12 a.m.]: I join my friend the member for Baulkham Hills in opposing the motion. NSW Fair Trading acts to ensure that car park operators clearly communicate parking fees and conditions at the point of entry to car parks. Fair Trading has previously raised concerns with Australian National Car Parks about the manner in which it was operating a number of shopping centre car parks, of which Fairfield is one. In 2007, following discussions with Fair Trading, the company altered the

payment notices it used and increased the number of signs throughout its car parks. In 2010 the company further improved signage and its customer complaints handling system as a result of Fair Trading's involvement.

During 2010 and 2011 Fair Trading officers inspected more than 90 car parks in metropolitan and regional locations, checking on signage at entry and exit points, hourly and daily rates, and terms and conditions on display. Operators whose terms and conditions were found to be unclear were advised to improve their signage and business operations. As a result of these discussions and inspections, complaints to Fair Trading about car park operators decreased significantly. The majority of complaints received by Fair Trading in 2012 and early 2013 have related to payment notices dating back to incidents that occurred in 2010 and 2011. Those notices were issued as a result of the release of information under court orders.

It is important to note that Fair Trading currently has a designated officer who handles all complaints regarding Australian National Car Parks. When NSW Fair Trading receives a complaint, attempts are made to resolve the matter through intervention and negotiation between the parties, which often results in the resolution of the complaints. Of late, as my friend the member for Bankstown noted, she has referred many matters to Fair Trading—perhaps on a daily basis—and I am sure that she would agree that Fair Trading has a very high success rate in resolving these complaints satisfactorily. I would go so far as to say that the vast majority of the matters referred by the member for Bankstown have resulted in the fines being waived. I am sure that when the member for Bankstown writes to those constituents she is fulsome in her praise of the Minister for Fair Trading—one of the greatest Ministers we have had in that portfolio.

I am informed that Australian National Car Parks has altered the way in which it approaches motorists for payment, offering a discount on the amount due. While there is nothing unlawful about the practice of discounting payment requests, it highlights the fact that the charge levied in the first place is disproportionate to the cost of the alleged breach of contract. I urge anyone who has concerns about car park operators issuing payment notices to contact the operator in the first instance. If that does not resolve the issue, people can save themselves some time by avoiding the member for Bankstown and going straight to Fair Trading, which will attempt to resolve any concerns through mediation. I can assure the House that Fair Trading is continuing to monitor these issues and will take action where appropriate.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [11.16 p.m.]: I speak on the matter of private companies such as Australian National Car Parks issuing fines to people who breach the conditions of entry to a car park. The member for Baulkham Hills indicated that he has no problem with that. We are not attacking small businesses; we are attacking the way they issue these fines. Every day in my office I sign at least three or four letters to Australian National Car Parks asking them to waive fines. Admittedly, the company does waive some of the fines but certainly not every one of them. What normal person would presume that Aldi stores and some McDonald's restaurants would have ticket machines in their car parks?

Mr David Elliott: They go there.

Mr NICK LALICH: But people do not know that the car park has ticket machines and when they leave the car park they find they have received a fine. I received a penalty notice from Australian National Car Parks quoting a car model and registration number for a car I have never owned. When I wrote a letter to the company indicating it was not my vehicle the company did not even write back saying they were sorry for the problem it caused me. I commend the Minister for Fair Trading for the 2012 amendment bill that removed the loophole to prevent Roads and Maritime Services from giving out names and addresses.

Baulkham Hills may be totally different but my area has a multicultural community and people do not read signs easily because they do not understand the language. When a huge number of people come into my office complaining about the way these fines have been issued, that they do not understand the language on the signs and that the signs are not clear, I have to take some action. It is time the Minister for Fair Trading took further action to stop the massive number of fines Australian National Car Parks imposes—I think the fine is about \$80, just for staying in a car park for longer than the designated time.

The member for Baulkham Hills may have a point when he says that it does not happen in his area, but his attitude is that if it does not happen in Baulkham Hills it does not happen anywhere. Labor members are not knocking small business; we support small business. If the member for Baulkham Hills came to my electorate where multiculturalism exists he would see that massive numbers of these fines are issued every day. It is time that the Minister did something. A loophole has been closed in one instance, but the fines must be reduced and

the way they are issued must be resolved. Perhaps the way in which Australian National Car Parks issues fines is appropriate for Baulkham Hills, but it is totally inappropriate for my area. I call upon the Minister to follow on with the great initiative he showed last year in the car park amendment bill.

Mr David Elliott: It was great. Congratulate him on that.

Mr NICK LALICH: I do congratulate him on it; I do not oppose everything that has been said. But I ask the Minister to go that step further, possibly similar to the approach taken in Victoria where the matter went to the High Court, and take action to say that the way the fines are issued is illegal. Perhaps placing boom gates at the car park entrance will help. In my area, and in Bankstown and Fairfield some people do not have perfect English. Those areas are not like Baulkham Hills where people have the finances to fight these things in court. I commend the Minister for his great action in the 2012 amendment bill, but I ask him to go further and stop these fines being issued in their current form.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I call the member for Redfern.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [11.20 a.m.]: If the Labor Party submission has its way I will lose Redfern, which would be disappointing for me.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): It will be one less car park you will have to worry about.

Mr RON HOENIG: The trouble in Redfern is that there are no car parks. That is my constituents' biggest problem. I will make a brief contribution to this debate because some confusion has arisen as a result of unresolved problems with the operation of private car parks. Only a government authority through the imposition of penalties can issue fines. I am first to concede that nearly all motorists generally know when they are parking contrary to a sign or notice on the street. However, if one parks in a private car park and exceeds one's time in that car park one might be liable for a fee as part of a contractual obligation. The issue about which Opposition members complain is that the companies involved dress up the notices in the form of a fine.

Only governments can issue fines. Fines are issued as a part of a judicial process for failure. To avoid a lot of court proceedings, the State Debt Recovery Office operates in a particular way to recover fines. That operation saves the prosecutions that used to exist in the courts of petty session in which magistrates used to impose fines. It created a self-enforcing system, but issuing penalties is still in effect a judicial determination. No private operator should do that. Legal Aid Commission NSW released a paper detailing another current failing—that is, private operators making demands on the Roads and Maritime Services for the release of details contained in its registry.

Those details include the names and addresses of car owners. The Roads and Maritime Services has genuinely endeavoured to resist it, but it has failed because it has been ordered to produce that material. When the Parliament decides that laws exist and when the Executive Government decides to implement those laws and impose penalties for failure it is done in a democratic and judicial way for breaches of a law enacted by the State. If the contractual arrangements of private car park operators are breached by people overstaying their time the operators can seek remedy by an action in damages. Of course, it is difficult for operators to recover damages for \$66 or \$80 by going through the court recovery process; it would not be in their commercial interest to do that.

As a result private car park operators simply get debt collectors to chase people down, but the worst part is that they describe their notices as fines. Private car park operators have no power to issue fines unless this Parliament gives them that power through legislation. The current situation creates confusion and allows operators to hold themselves up as a government instrument. NSW Fair Trading intervenes when things occur, such as a car park being improperly signposted, but some pretty tight regulation is needed. The way things operate in the public sector these days means that even government and council car parks will eventually be outsourced. Now is the time to resolve this issue by appropriate legislation for the future.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [11.24 a.m.], by leave; I thank members for granting me leave to make a contribution.

Mr John Williams: As long as you are kind to the Government.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: It is tough to be kind to the Government sometimes. I thank Government members for allowing me to make a brief contribution.

Mr Guy Zangari: And the Opposition.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: And the Opposition, that is right. I am thanking everybody today. Australian National Car Parks not only operates in my electorate but is also headquartered there. It is an organisation that has generated a great deal of concern. The first point to address is parking management, which is a major problem in many communities, and in my community it is a difficult challenge. By spending many years on local council and speaking to local businesses I understand that managing car parking is a major problem that many private businesses find incredibly difficult. That situation has caused the establishment of businesses such as the one the subject of this debate today. As we have heard, the major problem seems to be that historically these businesses seem to have been more about debt collecting than parking management.

Everyone admits that there have been problems. There have been overzealous and aggressive letters from lawyers. People have been aggressively pursued to pay fines and those fines have been seriously increased. For example, one might receive an \$88 fine and an \$85 handling fee. The use of the word "fine" is important. I acknowledge the member for Heffron, who raised this point. These are not fines; they are liquidated damages for breach of contract. Private car park operators pursue people who they say breached the arrangement they made via contract when they entered the car park and the liquidated damages as a result of that breach are \$88. They also tell people that if they do not reply within a certain time there will be an additional \$85 fee. People feel scared when they receive these notices.

The people who have contacted me about this issue can be divided into three types. There are those who feel as though they have done something wrong, that they have broken the law, and they worry and pay the fine. The other group of people say that it is so much hassle to fight, to write letters and to go back and forth that they may as well just pay the money. In addition, there is a very small group of people who fight it. It is remarkable that the NSW Fair Trading must dedicate an officer to this matter when it has so many other issues to deal with. That is a waste of taxpayer resources. I have discussed this in detail with a range of organisations. Their view and my view is that local government should manage this issue. For example, in my electorate the Woolworths car park was patrolled by a private firm. Council took it over and complies with all the requirements for proper signage and proper photographs, and the State Debt Recovery Office process for appeals. It is very clear, open, accountable and transparent.

I acknowledge the employment that this business generates in my electorate, but I think it even acknowledges that what it has done in the past is inappropriate and needs to change. In my view arrangements that use complex contractual arrangements and liquidated damages scare people. They are difficult to manage. While the motion is not worded how I would have worded it, it is clear that it is a waste of resources to have Fair Trading managing this beast. There should be legislative change to give people certainty and to allow local government with all its transparency, rules and requirements to manage parking in a way that supports local business and does not scare local customers and constituents.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [11.28 a.m.], in reply: I take this opportunity to thank the members for Fairfield, Campbelltown, Cabramatta, Heffron and Balmain for their considered contributions to the debate and I thank them in particular for relating various unsavoury practices of Australian National Car Parks that cause their constituents concern. In particular, Australian National Car Parks deals with so-called breaches of contractual duties by issuing notices that have been described by the member for Balmain as aggressive. I agree with him. The notices include a demand for handling fees and mention potential solicitor fees. This issue, which I have asked the Minister for Fair Trading to address, has still not been addressed.

Clearly the presence in the Chamber of the member for Baulkham Hills is for the purpose of watching the Minister's back. I only have to look around the Chamber to see that the Minister's factional allies are on the case. On many occasions the Minister has provided me with answers to my questions upon notice and stated that his office will investigate this company's practices. On many occasions the Minister has advised the Opposition that should there be any non-compliance with Australian consumer law appropriate compliance action would be taken within the law. I would have thought that the motion I have moved today gives the Minister fresh impetus to investigate some of the practices highlighted by members who contributed to the debate and to formulate the terms of reference of any investigation he would like to undertake.

I am very surprised that the Minister has brought in the member for Baulkham Hills to effectively speak against this motion. The Government instead probably could have said it would consider further action and consider investigating whether any of the practices to which reference has been made during the debate are

causing concern to the wider community. Many Liberal members of this House also have raised concerns about the practices of Australian National Car Parks. I have had a conversation about it with the member for East Hills, who said that he has raised several concerns directly with the Minister for Fair Trading. I am surprised that this Government now does not wish to consider any further investigation or take any further action against some of the practices to which reference has been made.

The member for Heffron raised a very considered point: that the notices appear to be fines. That is a matter I am trying to draw to the attention of very ignorant Government members, particularly the member for Baulkham Hills. There is a perception that the company is issuing fines whereas it is not legally authorised to do so. Notices that individuals are receiving from the company create the perception that it is a government fine. The Minister for Fair Trading has never denied that, and that is why I am surprised to hear the comments that have been made by the member for Baulkham Hills. The Minister has not denied that there exists an issue in relation to the way notices were issued by Australian National Car Parks between 2009 and 2011 in an attempt to obtain payment for supposed damages for some sort of contractual breach. I ask the House to support the motion. I am surprised that the Government chooses to not support a motion that calls for further action to be taken in relation to this company's practices.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 20

Mr Barr	Ms Hornery	Mr Rees
Ms Burney	Dr McDonald	Ms Tebbutt
Mr Daley	Ms Mihailuk	Ms Watson
Mr Furolo	Mr Park	Mr Zangari
Mr Greenwich	Mr Parker	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Hay	Mrs Perry	Mr Amery
Mr Hoenig	Mr Piper	Mr Lalich

Noes, 58

Mr Anderson	Mr Fraser	Mrs Sage
Mr Annesley	Mr Gee	Mr Sidoti
Mr Aplin	Ms Gibbons	Mrs Skinner
Mr Ayres	Mr Grant	Mr Smith
Mr Baird	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Souris
Mr Bassett	Mr Hartcher	Mr Speakman
Mr Baumann	Mr Hazzard	Mr Spence
Ms Berejikian	Mr Holstein	Mr Stokes
Mr Bromhead	Mr Issa	Mr Stoner
Mr Conolly	Mr Kean	Mr Toole
Mr Constance	Dr Lee	Mr Torbay
Mr Cornwell	Mr Notley-Smith	Ms Upton
Mr Coure	Mr Owen	Mr Ward
Mrs Davies	Mr Page	Mr Webber
Mr Dominello	Ms Parker	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Doyle	Mr Patterson	Mrs Williams
Mr Edwards	Mr Perrottet	
Mr Elliott	Mr Provest	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Evans	Mr Rohan	Mr Maguire
Mr Flowers	Mr Rowell	Mr J. D. Williams

Pairs

Ms Burton	Mr Humphries
Mr Robertson	Mr Roberts

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

WORLDSKILLS AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COMPETITION 2012

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [11.46 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the outstanding results of the following members of the Hunter Region team at the 2012 WorldSkills Australia National Competition recently held in Sydney:
 - (a) Amy Kelly, gold in Retail Baking Pastry;
 - (b) Dylan Ward, silver in Vehicle Painting;
 - (c) Nathan Williams, bronze in Autobody Repair;
 - (d) Mitchell Tamsett, bronze in IT Software Solutions; and
 - (e) Rebecca Atcheson and Ben Brown, bronze in Mechatronics.
- (2) Notes that Matthew Zambrowski also won silver at the 2012 WorldSkills Australia National Refrigeration Competition held earlier in Melbourne.
- (3) Calls on the Minister for Education to provide ongoing and enhanced funding to ensure the status and standards of vocational skills and training so as to provide opportunities for students to showcase their talents.

I am dedicating this speech today to Steve Hornery, the former WorldSkills manager in New South Wales. Why is it so difficult to entice young people into trades and vocational skills? Debate rages about how we can transform the perception of skills and vocational training so that they are recognised as the valuable and worthwhile pursuits we know they are. I am sure members would agree that change will occur when our young trades and vocational skills people are revered in the same way we revere our young athletes. Hope is not lost. Did members know that our young trades and vocational craftsmen and craftswomen can also go for gold? How, they may ask? Through WorldSkills. Mr Deputy-Speaker, have you ever wanted to flaunt your skills? Have you ever wanted to represent your country? Have you ever been dedicated, passionate and young? Are you 23 or under and enrolled in TAFE? Well, three out of four is not bad.

Established in 1981, WorldSkills Australia is a national and not-for-profit organisation providing young Australians aged 23 and under with the opportunity to gain new skills, compete against their peers in their chosen trade and fast track their skills and career development. WorldSkills achieves its goals of celebrating skills excellence through competitions held on regional, national and international levels, with the WorldSkills Australia National Competition being the premier event for the competitors to test themselves across a vast range of industries. I know that members are waiting with bated breath to find out how New South Wales fared at the WorldSkills Australia National 2012 Competition. I am thrilled to announce that our great State proved itself once again to be a clear leader in skills excellence, with New South Wales winning the 2012 VETiS Shield for best-performed State. WorldSkills State manager, Adam Lucas, noted that

New South Wales was the best performing state both in open and VETiS categories.

Reiterating the value of Worldskills competitions, he said that Worldskills promotes skills excellence through participants competing with their peers throughout Australia and also provides the opportunity for advancement through international pathways. It gives me great pleasure to update the House on the status of some of our very own home-grown best-of-the-best talented young tradespeople. I am proud to report the exceptional skills and results of the Hunter regional team at Worldskills Australia 2012. Amy Kelly from the TAFE Hunter Institute, Hamilton, won gold in Retail Baking Pastry; Dylan Ward from the Hunter Institute Glendale won silver in Vehicle Painting; Nathan Williams, also from Glendale, won bronze in Autobody Repair; Mitchell Tamsett from the Hunter Institute won bronze in IT Software Solutions; and Rebecca Aitcheson and Ben Brown from Newcastle both won bronze in Mechatronics. This is a fantastic result for the Hunter region team and shows great performance for New South Wales. Undoubtedly it helped us claim this year's title of best performed State.

I thank all participants for doing such a great job at last year's event in Sydney. Staff, teachers and volunteers also deserve commendation and thanks. These young Australians are genuine role models in our community. Their hard work, dedication and passion for excellence are a tribute to their achievements and success in life. As I said earlier, we all agree that this training is vital to the workforce and economy of this country. We must continue to engage young people in vocational training and learning trade skills. Through

initiatives such as Worldskills, vocational education and training continues to be regarded as an attractive option for young people in this State. Worldskills would not be possible without the support of TAFE NSW as an official sponsor and the main training organisation for participants from this State.

TAFE NSW is not just where future Worldskills participants are created; it is where the essential work of building this State's workforce is being achieved. When I began my contribution I said I wanted to dedicate this speech to my brother, Steve Hornery. He was a Worldskills manager up until three years ago when he died suddenly from cancer within six weeks after being diagnosed. My brother was passionate about Worldskills. He started his life from very humble beginnings—I am not being modest about that. He was a brickie's labourer and then an apprentice before he was 16 years old. He received his clerk of works qualification and started teaching at TAFE. He was passionate about designing and creating. He then became a Worldskills manager. All the Hornerys were well versed in what happened at Worldskills competitions because we were all involved.

Mum was chief cook and bottle washer, my sisters were organisers and I was the public relations person—though I did not do a particularly good job, but I lobbied for more funding and gave many speeches about Worldskills. We will continue our support in honour of my brother. I know he is listening to this speech. We are all very proud of him. He was the hardest worker I have met and I am very proud of him. I implore this Government to continue to support Worldskills Australia. I urge those opposite to show their support by making a true commitment to vocational education and training by being fair dinkum about providing adequate funding for Worldskills and its teachers so that we can continue our path to trades and skills excellence.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I am sure the brother of the member for Wallsend would be very proud of her. I am sure he looks down on her every Thursday morning and listens to her contributions.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [11.53 a.m.]: Last year the Minister for Education welcomed competitors from around Australia to the Worldskills Australia national competition, which was held in Sydney. For those who are not familiar with this event, Worldskills is an international organisation that promotes vocational excellence—the Olympics for vocational education. The Worldskills Australia national competition is the largest and most prestigious skills and trades show in Australia. The New South Wales Government was proud to welcome the 500 contestants to Sydney. This event provided a wonderful opportunity for vocational education students, including apprentices and trainees, to showcase their skills and compete for a chance to represent Australia at the Worldskills international competition in Germany in 2013.

Students competed in more than 50 categories from traditional trades such as bricklaying to more contemporary professions such as computer programming. The New South Wales team was represented by more than 150 competitors trained by TAFE NSW and other registered training organisations. Of course, the Government wished the strong New South Wales team the very best and looked forward to its success against top competitors from around Australia. Members of the public were encouraged to support the competitors and attend the competition, which was held at a venue at Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush. Organisers expected up to 80,000 visitors through the gates during the three days of competition. The Australian Worldskills competition was last held in Sydney in 2008. The member for Wallsend spoke very passionately about her close association with Worldskills, demonstrating the Hunter's strong tradition in vocational training. We are fortunate to have fantastic TAFE facilities, led tremendously by Phil Cox, who runs TAFE in the Hunter. I commend him for his work in promoting trades and skills in our region. He is a strong advocate for TAFE and for his students—we are immensely lucky to have him.

I acknowledge the comments of the member for Wallsend about her brother. It is important that the House acknowledges the work of people in this field. In our region, in the Cessnock electorate in Cameron Park, lives a former winner of the Victorian Apprentice of the Year and former Australian Apprentice of the Year awards, Kevin Baker, a 28-year-old father of two, who is a candidate in the upcoming Federal election for the seat of Charlton. I wish him well in that endeavour. Kevin certainly brings his great experience in trades and skills as part of the great Hunter connection. I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion. I am happy on behalf of this side of the House to support it.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [11.57 a.m.]: I too welcome this motion moved by the member for Wallsend. I applaud her background work and that of her family in Worldskills in the Hunter region, and the work of others in the rest of New South Wales and Australia. I acknowledge and congratulate Amy, Dylan, Nathan, Mitchell, Rebecca and Matthew on their awards at the Australian Worldskills competition. We must

ensure that we do not overlook the diversity of skills in which these people from the Hunter have excelled: retail pastry baking, vehicle painting, auto body repair, information technology software solutions, mechatronics and refrigeration.

The diverse range of trades is one of the fantastic and wonderful things about our TAFE system in New South Wales and, indeed, across Australia. Some people refer to TAFE as a fallback or backup plan. Frankly, I find that insulting. For many people TAFE vocational education and training is their primary goal, their life's focus, their dream and passion. It is not by accident that some young people do incredibly well. They achieve excellence because of their love of their work and their drive for life. I am a bit concerned for the member for Dubbo, who has had a staple go through his finger. I am glad to have that recorded in *Hansard*.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The first aid kit is being brought in.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I note that paragraph (3) of the motion calls on the Minister to provide ongoing and enhanced funding to ensure the status and standards of vocational education. I commend the Minister for Education for the decision to provide extra resources at Kurri Kurri TAFE that will allow students to work in the heavy vehicle industry, which is screaming out for skilled workers. Kurri Kurri TAFE is the State's leading trainer of heavy vehicle automotive skills and provides the mining industry with skilled workers. The mining industry in the Hunter drives this State and its electricity provision—although Parliament had some problems with that earlier today. It is disappointing that some TAFE courses have closed in the Cessnock area and particularly in the Hunter, which is the State's second-biggest tourism economy. Eighty-nine per cent of visitors to the Hunter cite the vineyards as the reason for their visit and yet the hospitality course at Cessnock TAFE has been closed.

The industry has been in decline over the past couple of years but there has also been a failure to engage willingly with the community and encourage and ensure student participation. There is a fair bit of ebb and flow with TAFE. I acknowledge the skills of these young people, and the awards afford them the recognition they deserve. Five hundred competitors attended the WorldSkills Australian titles in Sydney last year. If there were a funding stream of \$8 a head it would cost approximately \$4,000, which is equivalent to the Deputy Premier's pay rise. So maybe the Deputy Premier could chip in and fund WorldSkills to the tune of \$8 per attendee. I commend the motion by the member for Wallsend and I congratulate everybody who is involved with WorldSkills Australia.

Mr TIM OWEN (Newcastle) [12.01 p.m.]: I will make a short contribution to this debate with regard to WorldSkills. I acknowledge the member for Wallsend and her brother and family's work in this area. I have three sons who are all in trades: One is a tradesman and the other two are apprentices. I am familiar with the trades and I agree with the member for Cessnock that TAFE equips these young men and women with skills of the highest order. I admire the skills that my young boys bring to the table in this context. Turning to WorldSkills, as a number of members have said, on 2 July 2013 the Leipzig Trade Fair will open its doors to more than 1,000 competitors, 2,000 experts, 3,000 volunteers and 200,000 visitors for the 42nd WorldSkills International Competition. In Leipzig the world's most skilled young people from 61 countries and regions, including Australia, will compete in 43 skill areas for the prestigious title of world champion.

Following the WorldSkills national competition held in Sydney, the Australia team—known as the Skillaroos—was announced. Australia will be represented by 32 young professionals from 29 skill areas. In support of what the member for Wallsend has said, New South Wales has 16 competitors in the team, revealing the State's strong vocational education tradition in the training sector. New South Wales competitors make up 50 per cent of the national team, which is fantastic for New South Wales and the Hunter. As other members have stated, Australia is just one of 64 WorldSkills International member countries and regions. Every two years members participate in the world's largest skills competition, WorldSkills. It is run over four days and includes events such as a welcome function, familiarisation, the competition, and the opening and closing ceremonies. Competitors have had to advance from regional and national levels to prove their commitment and skills in their chosen field.

The international competition is the ultimate test for these young apprentices from all over the world. Members of the Australian team will be ambassadors for their skill, local region, State and country through their behaviour on location in Germany. From traditional trades such as plumbing and bricklaying through to floristry, fashion and web design, these young apprentices from Australia and all over the world will be vying for the title of the world's best in each of their categories. I acknowledge each member who has spoken to the motion this morning. The Hunter is a fantastic area for building these skills sets. I note the new WesTrac facility

that has been opened at Tomago. It is one of the largest training facilities for apprentices and will supply skilled workers to the mining sector over the coming decades. I urge anybody who has not visited the facility to do so; I acknowledge it is fantastic. There are always issues regarding the location of the mining industry but the significant payback are the thousands of apprentices who will go through that facility, thereby upskilling the population of the Hunter Valley. I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the House.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [12.05 p.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Charlestown, Cessnock and Newcastle for their contributions to the debate. I thank the Deputy-Speaker and other members for their kind comments about Steve Horner. I pay tribute to Hilton, Brett, Geoff, Adam, Phil Cox and Kay Sharp for their kindness and support of those people whom I know have been actively involved with WorldSkills in the Hunter and are my brother's friends. I thank the member for Charlestown for his comments. The metaphor that WorldSkills is the Olympics for vocational education is appropriate, and I agree with the member that the Hunter is a strong contender and punches above its weight.

As the member for Cessnock stated, we must never underestimate those who choose the TAFE path. Unfortunately, at times people underestimate TAFE as an educational option. Other countries, particularly in Asia, look to TAFE as a role model to upskill their communities and citizens. They realise that the quality of workmanship in Australia is high and that if they want quality builders, bricklayers and jewellers they must measure their institutions against our own. Asia's association with Australia and TAFE is increasing because those countries are smart enough to recognise the skills and abilities of the teachers and mentors in Australia—and we are happy to share that skills set.

The member for Cessnock mentioned Kurri Kurri TAFE. It deserves acknowledgement as the leading trainer in heavy automotive skills. I too am disappointed that some TAFE skills courses have closed, specifically the important hospitality course. It is disappointing news, and we need to turn that situation around. The member for Cessnock is correct: We need a good funding stream for WorldSkills and for TAFE. We are hearing about too many courses in New South Wales closing or becoming unaffordable. People attend TAFE because it is affordable. I believe education should be free, and I always have.

The member for Newcastle said that his three sons were in trades and that the highly skilled vocations should be acknowledged. I agree with him. This Parliament must promote the 42nd WorldSkills International Competition in July and support the 32 Skillaroos who are representing Australia. They will be great ambassadors. Past ambassadors represented Australia in a way that made us proud. The Hunter is a fantastic region for trainees in the vocational skills area. I am confident that the May budget will deliver funding for WorldSkills and adequate funding for TAFE and a variety of courses not only in the Hunter but throughout New South Wales. I look forward to meeting and promoting tradespersons in New South Wales in the future.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE FUNDING

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [12.09 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) congratulates the Government and the Federal Liberal-Nationals Coalition on reaching agreement to fund the upgrade of the Pacific Highway on an 80:20 basis;
- (2) condemns the Federal Government for breaching the existing State-Federal agreement of 80:20 for funding the Pacific Highway and imposing a 50:50 split;
- (3) condemns the Federal Member for Lyne for failing to maintain the 80:20 funding arrangement for the Pacific Highway; and
- (4) condemns the Opposition for its lack of support for the Pacific Highway upgrade funding.

What great news it is the Federal Coalition has agreed that on coming to government it will fund the upgrade of the Pacific Highway on an 80:20 funding arrangement. That was the arrangement in place when Labor was in office in New South Wales. In fact, during the 16 years of Labor when this State was run into the ground, the

funding arrangement was actually 87:13, the following year 86:14, and it remained at 86:14 until 2011, when we contributed extra funding of nearly \$600 million to bring the Pacific Highway upgrade funding arrangement to the 80:20 split.

The Pacific Highway has more deaths than any other highway in Australia. It is the highway that has caused more harm to families than any other highway. Yet under Labor it was the forgotten highway. It was when the Coalition came to government during the early 1990s that the upgrade of the Pacific Highway started. So we must thank former New South Wales Coalition governments under Greiner and other leaders for starting the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. Some members in this place might not recall what it was like on the Pacific Highway when I was in the Police Force and was getting called out at all hours to go to fatal and serious accidents, and had to look for parts of bodies or for people who were missing on the Pacific Highway. The Federal Government is insisting on a 50:50 split, breaching the agreement evidenced by correspondence from Campbell, which states specifically:

I refer to the agreement of an 80:20 split.

It was also supported by correspondence from Albanese agreeing that it should be an 80:20 split.

Mr Clayton Barr: He supports Kevin Rudd.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Of course they support Kevin Rudd. Though 80:20 had been the historical split, the Federal member for Lyne—that Labor Party puppet and supporter of Labor—is supporting a 50:50 split. What are the consequences for New South Wales if the Federal Government does not pay 80 per cent and the State Government 20 per cent for upgrading the Pacific Highway? If the split is 50:50, that will mean there will be less money to spend in schools, less money to spend in health, and less money to spend in other needy areas of New South Wales. I concede that the Pacific Highway is not the only highway and funding—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Opposition members will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr John Williams: They don't know where the Pacific Highway is, so how can they contribute?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! If Opposition members listen to the member for Myall Lakes they will know where it is.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The Federal member for Lyne supports a 50:50 split. What a disgrace it is that he would support this illegitimate Federal Government's proposal for a 50:50 split, taking money from other needy areas in New South Wales.

Mr Troy Grant: He has sold out that community.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: He has sold out. There is no doubt that he sold out his community, and he will find out on Clean Up Australia Day, 14 September, what the local community have to say about him. He is a disgrace. He has never worked in a real job; he was a political adviser before he became a member of Parliament. The New South Wales Opposition supports Federal Labor and a 50:50 split. In contrast, the Federal Coalition is willing to fund the Pacific Highway upgrade 80:20. State Labor members are too concerned about what is happening in the Independent Commission Against Corruption and what is happening to their former grubby Ministers to be concerned about New South Wales and the people of this State. It is an absolute disgrace that they are not supporting this Government on this funding arrangement. They should be cheering that the Federal Coalition, which will come to government later this year, will fund the Pacific Highway upgrade on an 80:20 split.

Mr Deputy-Speaker, I know how important this matter is to your electorate on the North Coast. I know how important it is to the electorate of the member for Tweed. I know that the member for Port Macquarie supports this motion, and I realise how important this funding arrangement is to her electorate. In my electorate, from last year's and this year's budget \$168 million has been spent on the completion of the Bulahdelah section of the Pacific Highway upgrade. That will result in fewer deaths and serious injuries, and a saving in travelling time for motorists. Further north, so much more needs to be done. I give credit where credit is due. The Federal Coalition is willing to fund the upgrade 80:20. Where is the money to come from? It is that useless, second-rate

proposal of a link from Parramatta to Epping that is not on the Australian agenda or that of New South Wales. All we are doing is taking \$2.1 billion from there and allocating it to the North Coast—job done. The money is there for this upgrade, and it is being moved to the North Coast, where it is needed.

Effectively, all we have done is move to the north a lot of accidents that used to happen on the southern sections of this highway. That is why it is so important that we get this Pacific Highway upgrade work done. I give credit where credit is due. The Federal Coalition is willing to fund the upgrade 80:20. Where is the money to come from? It is that useless, second-rate proposal of a link from Parramatta to Epping that is not on the Australian agenda or that of New South Wales. All we are doing is taking \$2.1 billion from there and allocating it to the North Coast—job done. The money is there for this upgrade, and it is being moved to the North Coast, where it is needed.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Government members also will have an opportunity to make a contribution to the debate. The member with the call will be heard in silence.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.16 p.m.]: I start this afternoon's address, particularly following the comments just made by the member for Myall Lakes, by sharing with the House a quote from 16 October 2007:

My Government preference remains for the duplication to be completed by 2016, in line with our 2004 commitment [and] ... is willing to provide our share of the additional funds needed ... if the NSW Government will match our funding commitment ...

That was John Howard. The NRMA chair and president Wendy Machin, a former Nationals Minister, said this on 27 February 2012:

It was the Howard Government that set the 50:50 funding split for the Pacific Highway from 2006 and the NRMA has supported this approach since day one.

While in opposition, the current NSW [Liberal] Government frequently called on the NSW Labor Government to match Federal funding for the Pacific Highway dollar-for-dollar and we supported this call too.

To now suggest that funding should suddenly be reverted to an 80:20 model would ensure further long delays in finally upgrading this dangerous highway.

I go on to quote a statement by one of the Coalition's own, Andrew Fraser, on 21 October 2009:

I pay credit to the ... [Labor] Government ... for increasing the funding ... The Pacific Highway is a State road that effectively causes the loss of one life a week.

The State Government must increase its commitment ... As ... Mr Albanese pointed out ... the Federal Government is actually carrying the State ...

Let us see what my friend in the other place the Hon. Duncan Gay, the Minister for Roads and Ports, and a fellow Nationals member, said back in October 2007. Members on the other side of the House like to quote things so I will quote a few things back. The Minister said:

I would hope this time he [the then Roads Minister Eric Roozendaal] would have been a statesman and say, "Yes I will match that money and save the lives of people in NSW that have to use this highway".

The Nationals members are starting to see some problems. There are the saltwater Nats and the freshwater Nats, I understand that, but we are starting to see a little bit of a mix. Let us consider some numbers in relation to past funding, in 1996-97 to 2007-08. During that time the Coalition was in government federally and Labor was the Government in New South Wales. The Howard Coalition Government spent \$1.3 billion on the Pacific Highway during that time while the New South Wales Labor Government spent \$2.5 billion—slightly different from the methodology espoused on the other side of the House.

Let us consider the current projected funding from 2008-09 to 2016-17. The Federal Labor Government funding is \$7.9 billion and the New South Wales Coalition Government—this is going to hurt members opposite—is \$2.5 billion. It is not smart to talk about Pacific Highway funding, regardless of whether you are a saltwater or a freshwater Nat. It is a difficult subject to talk about so The Nationals are up to a bit of mischief. Only a Labor Government—not the saltwater or the freshwater Nats—has made the investment that the community expects in the Pacific Highway. That is a problem for both the saltwater and the freshwater Nats—but probably more so the saltwater variety. The reality is that a Labor Government has allocated adequate funding to the Pacific Highway—and will continue to do so in line with Anthony Albanese's commitment.

No-one wants to see any more loss of life or injury on that road, but we cannot rewrite history in this place when it comes to delivering for the Pacific Highway. It is a touchy subject, I understand that. It is a difficult subject for our friends in The Nationals to talk about. But it is really awful when our friends in The Nationals come in here and pretend that they have been delivering for the highway when the facts are very, very different. I will give the numbers one more time: The Howard Government put in \$1.3 billion and the New South Wales Labor Government put in \$2.5 billion; current funding is \$7.9 billion by Federal Labor and \$2.5 billion by the New South Wales Coalition. That is a problem for The Nationals.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [12.23 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to support my colleague the member for Myall Lakes on the issue of Pacific Highway funding—an issue that is very close to the hearts of The Nationals members up and down the coast. At one stage it was also important to Federal member Mr Rob Oakeshott, but unfortunately his support has waned on this issue. That is extremely disappointing. Hopefully—to use my colleague's great analogy that 14 September is Clean Up Australia Day—we will see a change soon. While I am speaking about the Federal election, I congratulate The Nationals candidate for Lyne, Dr David Gillespie. He is out there supporting the community and lobbying hard to ensure that we get increased Federal funding for the Pacific Highway. He has lived in the area as long as I have and understands why the Pacific Highway needs to be fixed as a matter of urgency.

It has been said time and again in this House that far too many lives have been lost on the Pacific Highway. But, sadly, we are still waiting to see highway duplication extend all the way to the Queensland border, and we continue to see lives lost on that stretch of road. I have a daughter living on the Gold Coast, where she attends university. When she leaves her home on the Gold Coast and travels down the Pacific Highway—which is a deathtrap—to Port Macquarie and then returns home again I, like many mothers whose children attend universities further up the North Coast, sit and wait anxiously, hoping that she survives the trip. That is very sad.

Things are changing and I acknowledge that we now have a dual carriageway all the way up the Pacific Highway, other than just the Bulahdelah bypass, which is now nearing completion. When I moved to Port Macquarie about 17 years ago we had to drive over the hill at Bulahdelah. People always planned their trip so they did not have to drive at night because it was such a deathtrap. At that time it used to take about six hours to reach the highway. Now, thankfully, we have a dual carriageway and it is only about a four-hour trip. It is interesting that members opposite continue to bleat about percentages and claim that we have not put in our fair share, but they do not support the 80:20 split.

Mr Ryan Park: And you didn't support it.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: You are not supporting the 80:20 split; you are pushing for a 50:50 split. I am a little bit confused about the position of Federal Labor. Last week I attended the community day for the Kempsey bypass. That bypass—which cost \$618 million—was funded 100 per cent by the Federal Government, and we welcomed that funding. It was a fantastic day. It is estimated that about 8,000 people walked over the fantastic bridge—which, at 2.3 kilometres, will be the longest bridge in Australia. There seems to be a lot of confusion in Federal Labor about how the Pacific Highway should be funded. I and all The Nationals members on the North Coast support my colleague the member for Myall Lakes. I congratulate him on moving this motion.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [12.27 p.m.]: I thank the member for Myall Lakes for bringing this motion to the House. I appreciate it every time The Nationals members move motions about the Pacific Highway in this place, but it is both insulting and a compliment: It is insulting to the community and it is a compliment to us as it highlights The Nationals' failings and inadequacies. It is pretty clear that communities on the North Coast and the mid North Coast are annoyed, frustrated and cranky with the New South Wales Nationals.

Prior to the election the New South Wales Nationals made a clear statement that only the New South Wales Coalition was committed to completing this road by 2016. At no stage during the campaign did it say, "The Coalition with the assistance of the Federal Government" or, "The Coalition if the funding split is right" or, "The Coalition if it can negotiate." None of those members ever said that. It was forgotten in all of their propaganda. If any member can bring me promotional material contrary to what I have just said I would welcome it, I will withdraw my statement and make an apology in this House. The material does not exist. Members of The Nationals went to the election making a commitment to complete the road wholly and solely and with no assistance from or conditions or requirements on anyone else. It is also important to recognise that these types of motions politicise deaths on our roads.

There are deaths on all of our roads. There are deaths in suburban streets, on State roads, regional roads and national highways. It is disgusting and abhorrent that in this place we seek to use deaths on our roads as a means to make political statements. If members want to make a political statement by arguing about who funded what, let us do that. If they want to argue about who said what, what the records show, what the documents show, Labor said this, The Nationals said that, please do so. But let us not come into this House and use deaths on our roads as a means, a cause or a justification for roads funding. If members opposite want to do that, let us start doing that for every single death on every single road in New South Wales. That is impossible. We must recognise that deaths are an unfortunate by-product of travelling on our roads. We also must recognise that deaths are happening on every road and they are a part of road use in New South Wales, Australia and the world.

Mrs Leslie Williams: The people on the North Coast will not want to hear that.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: What the people on the North Coast want to hear from this Coalition Government is exactly what the Leader of The Nationals, Andrew \$4,000-pay-rise, fly-all-over-the-world Stoner said about the Pacific Highway: that there is no more important piece of infrastructure in New South Wales. Guess what, Deputy Premier? It turns out the Coalition Government has named dozens of them, including the North West Rail Link, WestConnex and second harbour crossings. There is no more important piece of infrastructure in New South Wales than the Pacific Highway, unless you are a Liberal. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [12.31 p.m.]: The contribution of the member for Cessnock should be published on the North Coast. For him to stand in this House and say that road deaths are a part of driving in New South Wales and improving the Pacific Highway will not reduce road deaths is absolute lunacy. When he looks for funding in his electorate to improve a section of road I look forward to him coming to us and telling us not to worry about the funding because road deaths are part and parcel of driving around New South Wales.

In 1996 then Minister for Roads Carl Scully told us that the upgrade of the Pacific Highway would be completed within 10 years. When we look at the Federal Labor Government and its intended reduction in funding for the Pacific Highway we see that it is quite happy for deaths to continue on the North Coast. Federal Government members fail to acknowledge that people are killed on the Pacific Highway on the North Coast, many of whom come from their electorates, because they will not provide funding on the basis of an 80:20 split, which was the case when members opposite were in government. In the past I have presented to this House correspondence from the Federal Government to then Minister for Roads Michael Daly guaranteeing an 80:20 split. As soon as the Government changed, Mr Albanese decided to play games and say that it would be 50:50 funding. That is appalling. I feel sure that Mr Albanese would know families in his electorate who have lost people on the Pacific Highway because of the state of the road.

In the upgraded sections there are few deaths, if any. I think prior to Christmas someone was killed at Kew when the car ran off the road because the driver fell asleep, but head-on collisions in those sections are basically zero. Yet day in and day out in my electorate and in the electorates of the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Port Macquarie our blood runs cold when we hear an ambulance. We ask ourselves if it is someone we know. I could name a dozen people whom I knew well who have died on the Pacific Highway; it is deplorable for the member for Cessnock to make the comments he made in relation to funding. We never heard any Labor member whingeing about the 80:20 funding split when they were in government. In fact, it was all roses because they wanted to claim credit for it. I remember that when Mr Daly opened a section in my electorate known as the Bonville bypass he did not even invite me along. It was pathetic. He wanted to claim credit for it.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Cessnock has had an opportunity to contribute to the debate. I ask him to sit silently and listen to the contribution of the member for Coffs Harbour. If he continues to interject I will have no hesitation in asking him to leave the Chamber. This is his final warning.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: We also have the hypocrisy of the member for Lyne, whose electorate had large sections the Pacific Highway upgraded to dual carriageway before he even became the State member for that area. On numerous occasions he has claimed upgrades to sections of the road in the electorates of the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Oxley as his doing. This is a hypocritical debate on behalf of the member for Lyne and the Labor Party in New South Wales. We need to maintain 80:20 funding on this project into the future to ensure that the deaths stop.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [12.35 p.m.]: This four-point motion by the member for Myall Lakes has got politics written all over it. In a way I have to support the comment of the member for Cessnock. Unfortunately, he has heard only some of the debates in this House in which fatal accidents on the highway have been dragged into the issue of 80:20 or 20:80 funding splits and who has provided the most funding on the Pacific Highway. As a motorist I have travelled virtually every highway in this State. Most motorists when they drive from Queensland to Sydney say to me that the road is getting better all the time. We should recognise that fact. The story of the Pacific Highway is a positive story of continual improvement over many years but we get mealy-mouthed types of debates in this place about the member for Lyne.

This motion is about what the member for Lyne said or failed to do and the means by which those opposite seek to condemn the Federal Government and the State Opposition. It is all grubby politics about a positive infrastructure project in this State. One might say that these motions are never initiated by Labor. As the shadow Minister has already indicated, that is because people driving from Sydney to Queensland on the Pacific Highway are more likely to be driving on concrete or bitumen funded by either a Federal or State Labor Government than any other government. Those are the facts, if members opposite want to play politics. If Government members do not believe me, they should examine the figures.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order: As the member for Mount Druitt is so familiar with that road, I would like him to inform the House when he last drove on it.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: That is a debating point. As it happens, I have driven along the Pacific Highway recently. The member for Coffs Harbour may recall that a few years ago, he hosted a bowls game that I attended.

Mr Andrew Fraser: How many years is it since you have driven on that highway?

Mr RICHARD AMERY: That was a few years ago, but I frequently drive on the Pacific Highway, and so do members of my family and friends who all say that the drive is getting quicker each time they take it. The point I make is that the Pacific Highway is not a story about the 80:20 funding split between which State Government and the Federal Government, or a 20:80 split. It really is not a story about which government has provided the most funding, although the shadow Minister clearly indicated that funding has been provided overwhelmingly by Federal and State Labor governments. It is not a story about the member for Lyne, as paragraph (3) of the motion suggests.

This motion is just another grubby campaign by The Nationals on the North Coast and an attempt to play politics. As the member for Cessnock rightly stated, if a fatal accident occurs on the Pacific Highway, a Federal or State Labor government gets the blame. This motion is an appalling and grubby approach to a massive infrastructure project for a road that most motorists agree is getting better all the time. If Government members want to play politics, they should first do something that they obviously do not do much of, and that is read. They should read a bit of statistical information and see how funding has been allocated by Federal and State Labor governments. The score is: Federal and State Labor: 1, Coalition: 0. [*Time expired.*]

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [12.39 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Coffs Harbour for their contributions to the debate, and I note the contributions to the debate from the member for Keira, the member for Cessnock and the member for Mount Druitt. As the saying goes, "There's lies, damned lies, and Labor", and that has been borne out by what we just heard from the member for Keira followed by the member for Cessnock and the member for Mount Druitt. Labor had 16 years to do what they said would be done in 10 years. It was not done in 16 years. The crux of the motion, which those opposite have missed, is stated in paragraph (1):

- (1) congratulates the Government and the Federal Liberal-Nationals Coalition on reaching agreement to fund the upgrade of the Pacific Highway on an 80:20 basis.

That part of the motion is about the agreement. The other paragraphs of the motion condemn the State Labor Opposition for not agreeing to the funding arrangement. Labor should be in favour of the agreement because it is an 80:20 funding split, and not with 80 per cent of the funding coming from the State Government. The Federal Government will provide 80 per cent of the funding. Opposition members should be supporting the

extra funding. An additional \$2.1 billion will be given to New South Wales for upgrading the Pacific Highway, yet what do Labor members do? They have turned this debate into the politics of who funded what and how many fatalities have occurred. There is absolutely no doubt in the world that nothing would have been done to upgrade the Pacific Highway but for Coalition members being game enough to come forward and say, "There are deaths occurring on the Pacific Highway and this road has to be fixed."

Snivelling Labor members are more concerned about reputations after they go through the revolving door of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. They are so concerned about their political reputations that they are forgetting that the funding arrangement represents increased revenue for New South Wales to upgrade the Pacific Highway. There is no denying that people die on that highway and that money has to be spent to save lives. The Opposition also missed the point that the current New South Wales Government has allocated more funding to upgrading the Pacific Highway than Labor did in its last five years in government. The money that the former Labor Government spent was spent over 16 years. Did the former Labor Government spend money on upgrading the Pacific Highway? No, it did not. Instead it spent \$500 million on the Rozelle Metro without delivering an inch of infrastructure and \$100 million on the Tillega Dam without turning a sod.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! Members on both sides of the Chamber will tone down their comments and allow the member for Myall Lakes to conclude his speech.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The Federal Coalition sees the sense in funding the Pacific Highway upgrade on the basis of the previous arrangement of an 80:20 funding split, with the New South Wales Government contributing 20 per cent under that arrangement—which is 4 per cent more than the former Labor Government arranged—and the Federal Government contributing 80 per cent. Where is the funding coming from? Funding had been allocated to the Parramatta to Epping rail extension, but it will be reallocated to fixing the Pacific Highway. Regional Development Australia and the Federal Government agreed that the Parramatta to Epping rail line project was not as important as the North West Rail Link, WestConnex and the Pacific Highway upgrade, and agreed that the funding should be allocated to upgrading the Pacific Highway. We should shout out our support for the Federal Coalition's concurrence in the 80:20 split. [*Time expired.*]

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 60

Mr Anderson	Mr Flowers	Mrs Sage
Mr Annesley	Mr Fraser	Mr Sidoti
Mr Aplin	Mr Gee	Mrs Skinner
Mr Ayres	Mr George	Mr Smith
Mr Baird	Ms Gibbons	Mr Souris
Mr Bassett	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Speakman
Mr Baumann	Mr Holstein	Mr Spence
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Issa	Mr Stokes
Mr Bromhead	Mr Kean	Mr Stoner
Mr Brookes	Dr Lee	Mr Toole
Mr Casuscelli	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Torbay
Mr Conolly	Mr O'Dea	Ms Upton
Mr Constance	Mr Owen	Mr Ward
Mr Cornwell	Mr Page	Mr Webber
Mr Coure	Ms Parker	Mr R. C. Williams
Mrs Davies	Mr Patterson	Mrs Williams
Mr Dominello	Mr Perrottet	
Mr Doyle	Mr Piper	
Mr Edwards	Mr Provest	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Elliott	Mr Rohan	Mr Maguire
Mr Evans	Mr Rowell	Mr J. D. Williams

Noes, 20

Mr Barr	Ms Hornery	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Dr McDonald	Ms Tebbutt
Mr Daley	Ms Mihailuk	Ms Watson
Mr Furolo	Mr Park	Mr Zangari
Mr Greenwich	Mr Parker	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Hay	Mrs Perry	Mr Amery
Mr Hoenig	Mr Rees	Mr Lalich

Pair

Ms Hodgkinson

Ms Burton

Question resolved in the affirmative.**Motion agreed to.****EDUCATION FUNDING****Ms NOREEN HAY** (Wollongong) [12.55 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) condemns the Premier and the Minister for Education for their plan to cut \$317 million in school funding consisting of \$250 million from public schools and \$67 million from Catholic and Independent schools;
- (2) acknowledges that the scale of these funding cuts puts at risk the talks between State and Federal Ministers for Education regarding the implementation of the Gonski review;
- (3) demands the Government stop these cuts, stop politicking with school funding and immediately abandon its plan to cut \$317 million from New South Wales schools; and
- (4) notes that these cuts will adversely impact on schools' ability to support children with special needs, intensive reading recovery programs, curriculum support and teacher training.

We are about to debate a motion of which I gave notice in September 2012. Rather than the motion not being relevant right now, it is even more relevant when one considers the Government's intention to cut further into the education budget, directly affecting the quality of education standards for our children that are being threatened by the O'Farrell Government. Once again I speak out in this place against the outrageous cuts being made by the O'Farrell Coalition Government. The O'Farrell Government's education funding cuts are the biggest attack on education in more than 20 years. Members on this side of the House strongly oppose these cuts and will continue to campaign to have them overturned. We will continue to campaign for strong quality education for the children in our schools and for strong quality investment in our teachers.

The O'Farrell cuts to education mean \$1.7 billion will be cut from public schools, Catholic schools, independent schools and TAFE colleges. We have seen how TAFE is struggling at the moment and we have seen arts students and others taking the unprecedented step of demonstrating out the front of TAFE colleges demanding that their courses be retained and funded. The cuts to education also mean that 1,800 teachers and support staff will be sacked. The promises made by the current Government during the lead-up to the election were that teachers had nothing to fear and unions had nothing to fear, but, true to form, they all had something to fear. In its desperate need to win government, the Coalition was not prepared to reveal its intentions for public servants across this State.

TAFE fees will also increase by 9.5 per cent. The options for those people on vocational courses are almost nil. Those arts students, who, in the main, are mature-age students, are suffering from the consequences of the failure to fund the courses they have been undertaking, some of them for some time. TAFE Fine Arts students will be charged commercial fees—so much for the commitment of this Government. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government thinks that only those with significant funds should be entitled to support and assistance through courses such as TAFE Fine Arts.

Mr Jai Rowell: You're making this up.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I met with a host of TAFE Fine Arts students who were demonstrating for the first time to try to retain their courses. Do not accuse me of making something up. The joint group training scheme also will be axed. When Government members hear something they do not like about their Government's actions they respond by accusing us of telling lies—as they have been doing all morning in this place. I assure those opposite that the TAFE Fine Arts students who no longer can undertake their course are ordinary people, many of whom are mature-aged, who relied on the courses to get vocational qualifications. These cuts will impact on students and schools, particularly in my electorate of Wollongong, across the Illawarra and New South Wales. Class sizes, school fees and assistance for disadvantaged students or those with special needs will be affected. Teachers will lose the support that enables them to be more effective in the classroom. Quality curriculum support and professional development also will be affected. Sacking 800 TAFE teachers—

Pursuant to standing order business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Report: Administration of the 2011 NSW Election and Related Matters

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.01 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure as the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to speak to the committee's report on the Administration of the 2011 New South Wales election. I am sure members of this House will recall that that election took place on 26 March 2011. I am sure also that most members believe it was a great day. State elections are major events and the hallmark of our representative democracy in New South Wales is that they are conducted freely and fairly. Accordingly, Parliament requested in November 2011 that this committee inquire into and report upon the conduct of the 2011 election with respect to the electoral laws, their administration and related practices. I am sure this House would join me in commending the New South Wales Electoral Commissioner, Mr Colin Barry, and his staff for their professionalism and diligence in administering what the committee found to be a successful and well-run election.

From my experience in the electorate I represent, it did not matter which party was represented. All candidates, including me, found that the election was run in a well-mannered and timely fashion. The general levels of satisfaction with the commission's performance in promoting awareness and maximising voter participation, election day services at polling places, information and support to candidates and parties, and the counting of votes and providing results are testimony to its good work. The commission's achievements are particularly significant when considering the substantial legislative changes made by the last Parliament to the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. Those legislative changes provided for electoral innovations, such as iVote and SmartRoll, reforms to the provisions governing political donations, and an expansion of the existing scheme of public funding for election campaigns.

Such improvements are indicative of the fact that New South Wales is a leader in responding to the needs of voters and candidates and in the transparency and integrity of election campaigns. Of course, significant changes also present certain challenges. This report addresses those challenges through recommendations aimed at, for example, mitigating the risks of multiple voting and voter impersonation, strengthening the verifiability of iVote and enabling eligible voters to use the system more widely, preventing legitimate electoral material from being interfered with at polling places on election day, and making voter information in accessible formats more widely available. Accessibility is a significant theme of this report and a number of recommendations are made in order to provide improved services to voters with a disability, electors in rural or remote locations, and voters in declared institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes.

The committee hopes that this report's recommendations, its report on administrative funding for minor parties, and its forthcoming review of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 will uphold and enhance the high standard of electoral administration in New South Wales. On behalf of the committee I extend my sincere thanks to each individual and organisation for their submissions to the inquiry and evidence at the public hearings. Needless to say, information gathered during the course of the inquiry was invaluable in formulating the report's final recommendations. I convey also the committee's appreciation to the Electoral Commissioner and his staff for their input and guidance, and the willingness of the commissioner to be freely available to provide ongoing advice to the committee.

I thank my committee colleagues, namely the member for Kiama, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Liverpool, the member for Wagga Wagga, the Hon. Robert Borsak, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, the Hon. Peter Primrose and the Hon. Amanda Fazio for the enthusiasm and insight they brought to the inquiry. In particular, I thank the Hon. Trevor Khan MLC, who chaired the committee for much of the inquiry's duration and continues to be a valuable voice on the committee and to me. I thank also the secretariat staff for their assistance and patience in the conduct of the inquiry and in the preparation of the committee's final report. The work of the committee is far from done. I look forward to tabling reports on the review of the Electoral Acts and on the 2012 local government elections in the coming months. I commend the report to the House.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION

Report: Report on the First General Meeting with the Convenor of the Child Death Review Team

Report: Report on the First Meeting with the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Report: Report on the 12th General Meeting with the Inspector of the Police Integrity Commission

Report: Report on the 17th General Meeting with the NSW Ombudsman

Report: Report on the 13th General Meeting with the Police Integrity Commission

Motion by Mr Lee Evans agreed to:

That in accordance with Standing Order 306 (7) the reports of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission, being Orders of the Day (Committee Reports) Nos 2 to 6, be considered together.

Question—That the House take note of the reports—proposed.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [1.09 p.m.]: It is my great pleasure to speak about the committee's work. As deputy chair of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission I am pleased to have this opportunity to comment on five of the committee's annual report reviews tabled in December 2012, namely, the Report on the 17th General Meeting with the NSW Ombudsman, the Report on the First General Meeting with the Convenor of the Child Death Review Team, the Report on the First Meeting with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Report on the 13th General Meeting with the Police Integrity Commission and the Report on the 12th General Meeting with the Inspector of the Police Integrity Commission. The committee is a current joint statutory committee established on 4 December 1990 and re-established on 22 June 2011. The committee has the statutory authority to oversight the statutory bodies I have just mentioned. The committee monitors and reviews the work undertaken by these bodies through reviews of annual reports and other publications, as well as through general meetings.

The committee's role, under part 4A of the Ombudsman Act 1974, includes the monitoring and review of the exercise of the New South Wales Ombudsman's legislative functions. Over the past year, the committee reviewed the past two annual reports of the New South Wales Ombudsman and discussed several matters of interest to the committee at the June 2012 general meeting with the Ombudsman's office. The committee heard from the Ombudsman that although there has been a substantial growth in the responsibilities of his office over the past two years, the allocated budget has not kept pace. The committee recognises the fiscal restraint exercised by the Office of the Ombudsman during the reporting period.

Other important issues discussed during the general meeting included the Ombudsman's investigations into asbestos in schools and taser use by the NSW Police. The committee looks forward to the Ombudsman's finalisation of these investigations. The committee was particularly interested in the use by the Ombudsman's office of software supplied by the NSW Police and discussed this issue in detail, as well as examining various licensing agreements. The committee thanks the Ombudsman and the Deputy Ombudsman for their time during the general meetings and commends them for the achievements of their office in circumstances of limited resources.

The committee's oversight of the New South Wales Ombudsman also includes oversight of his role as the convenor of the Child Death Review Team. The meeting in June 2012 was the first occasion that the committee has met with the Ombudsman in this capacity. This function was transferred to the Ombudsman's office in February 2011. The committee heard that since assuming responsibility for the Child Death Review Team the Ombudsman has faced considerable challenges in proper resourcing as well as issues relating to technological platforms, data collection and data integrity. However, progress is being made towards addressing these concerns. The general meeting provided the committee and the Ombudsman with an opportunity to discuss concerns about cross-jurisdictional reporting of child deaths.

It is clear that there are discrepancies in the way that deaths of children who die in a different State to their home State are reported, and this affects the overall analysis that is underpinned by this data. This is a complicated issue of serious concern to the committee and the committee is keen to see it resolved. The Ombudsman is also in the process of conducting a project examining sudden unexpected death in infancy, which is expected to be finalised in 2013. The committee thanks the Ombudsman for his time during the general meeting and commends him for the achievements of the Child Death Review Team in circumstances of limited resources. The committee has oversight of the Information Commission and the Privacy Commission as specified in the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009 and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The committee met with the information and privacy commissioners in May 2012, the first general meeting since the merging of the Information Commission and the Privacy Commission in January 2011. The commissioners outlined to the committee their ideas about the strategic direction for the new agency and the objectives they aim to achieve. For example, one of the key projects the Information and Privacy Commission is currently undertaking is improving information sharing between government agencies in New South Wales. Another key challenge discussed with the committee was the fact that while technology can greatly assist data storage and analysis, it also presents issues relating to information security and privacy of personal information. Concerns such as identity theft and cyber bullying alongside the growth of social media were discussed, as well as the implications of privacy and information guidelines for the use of closed-circuit television cameras. The committee thanks the commissioners for their frank and comprehensive discussion about the important work of the Information and Privacy Commission.

In the past there have been issues of concern to the committee with respect to the relationship between the Police Integrity Commission and its oversight body, the Inspector of the Police Integrity Commission. As this general meeting was undertaken at a time when the commissioner of the Police Integrity Commission and the Inspector of the Police Integrity Commission were both newly appointed, it represented an important opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues in regard to this relationship. The committee is satisfied that the new relationship has a positive basis and looks forward to appropriate ongoing cooperation between the parties.

Task Force Emblems has been a topical issue and the committee took the opportunity to discuss the status of this investigation in some detail with the commissioner. The committee thanked the commissioner and his executive officers for their time during the general meeting and their frank and informative discussion and commended them for the achievements of their office. As this was the first meeting of the committee with the new inspector of the Police Integrity Commission, it provided the committee and the inspector with an opportunity to discuss resourcing and plans for the future as well as finalising a discussion with respect to the previous working relationship between the inspectorate and the Police Integrity Commission.

A key task before the inspector is the review of the Task Force Emblems matter and the circumstances around this were discussed in some detail during the general meeting. The committee has since heard that the inspector has finalised his work with Task Force Emblems and looks forward with interest to hearing updates from the Ombudsman in relation to his work on the Task Force Emblems matter. The committee thanked the inspector for his time during the general meetings. I thank those members of the committee staff who have worked on the five annual review reports including Clara Hawker, Jacqui Isles, Emma Matthews and Rachel Simpson. I also thank the members of the committee for their contributions: Mr Kevin Anderson, Mr Paul Lynch and Mr Ryan Park, and members in the other place the Hon. Adam Searle, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell and the Chair, the Hon. Catherine Cusack, who provided a collegiate approach through her leadership of the committee. I commend the reports to the House.

Question—That the House take note of the reports—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Reports noted.

**COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION AND THE
CRIME COMMISSION**

Report: Report on the Use of Anti-personnel Spray and Batons by Police Integrity Commission Officers

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [1.17 p.m.]: As Deputy Chair of the Joint Statutory Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission, I would like to make some remarks about the committee's recently tabled report on the inquiry into the use of anti-personnel spray and batons by Police Integrity Commission officers. Following a referral from the Premier, this inquiry was established by resolution of the committee on 24 October 2012 to report on whether legislation is needed to enable Police Integrity Commission officers to use anti-personnel spray and batons, to bring practices into line with those of the NSW Police Force.

During the inquiry the committee heard evidence of the administrative difficulties that Police Integrity Commission investigators faced in relation to accessing equipment that is operationally necessary for the commission's important work. Given that the principal function of the Police Integrity Commission is to detect, investigate and prevent police corruption and other serious police misconduct, the committee was concerned to hear of cumbersome administrative burdens which were a hindrance to the commission's statutory functions. The work of the Police Integrity Commission is essential for the good governance of New South Wales and, from time to time, it is dangerous work. Risk management is an essential aspect of the work of the commission and the committee heard evidence during this inquiry that risk management features prominently in all operational work undertaken by the commission.

However, the committee also understands that in order to ensure the commission's investigators have access to appropriate firearms and weapons, managing risk has resulted in serious ongoing administrative inconvenience. In fact, this inquiry found that the administrative requirements put in place to mitigate risk around the issue of weapons to investigators have led to circumstances that increase risk—that is, the risk of compromising the identity of officers undertaking undercover operations. The committee heard that, in response to this heightened risk, special procedures have been implemented to protect the commission's investigators—an extraordinary situation where the risk management system had itself become risk-managed.

In order to minimise the administrative burdens that currently exist, the Police Integrity Commission recommended to the committee that its investigators be provided with access to anti-personnel spray, batons and magazines for semiautomatic pistol ammunition, and that this access be provided in a manner that does not involve licensing and permits. The committee supports this recommendation. The committee called for a clear legislative statement on the provision of appropriate firearms and weapons, as outlined in the following recommendation:

That section 124 of the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996 be amended to clearly provide "approved former police officers" and other appropriately trained investigators of the Commission with the authority to possess and use firearms and weapons in a manner consistent with NSW Police Force officers, by including in section 124 (2) a list of approved weapons.

The committee's report also recommended that when officers of the commission are required to provide personal details to the NSW Police Force in relation to licensing and permits for firearms and weapons, consideration be given to permitting those applications to be provided on an unidentified basis. As an interim measure, the committee recommended that the Weapons Prohibition Regulation and the Firearms Regulation be amended to provide commission investigators with an exemption under the Weapons Prohibition Act and the Firearms Act with respect to anti-personnel spray, batons and magazines for semiautomatic pistol ammunition.

The committee hopes that its recommendations for a simplified regulatory process will assist the Police Integrity Commission to discharge its important duties in a more expeditious and effective manner. I would like to thank those members of the committee staff who worked on the report and the inquiry, including Jacqui Isles, Emma Matthews and Rachel Simpson. I thank also the members of the committee for their contributions, Mr Kevin Anderson, the Hon. Paul Lynch and Mr Ryan Park, and the members in the other place, the Hon. Adam Searle, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell and the chair, the Hon. Catherine Cusack, who provides a collegiate approach to leadership of the committee. I commend the report to the House.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 30/55**

Debate called on and adjourned on motion by Ms Tania Mihailuk and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 31/55**

Debated called on and adjourned on motion by Ms Tania Mihailuk and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE**Report: Amendments to the Sessional Orders Regarding Community Recognition Notices and Related Matters**

Question, by leave—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report: Legislation Review Digest 32/55**

Debate called on and adjourned on motion by Ms Tania Mihailuk and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr John Barilaro) left the chair at 1.24 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I advise the House that the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations will answer questions relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Fair Trading, who is absent from the Chamber today. Further, the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services will answer questions relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women, who is today in Goulburn, which is celebrating its 150th birthday today.

LIFELINE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER: A very special welcome today to Reverend Keith Garner, Superintendent of Wesley Mission; Mr Ivan Reichelt, who attended the first meeting to establish Lifeline more than 50 years ago and who, at 96, still volunteers for Lifeline; and my very dear friend Mr John Brogden, Chairman of Lifeline Australia. On behalf of all members I extend our congratulations to Lifeline as it celebrates its fiftieth anniversary on Saturday 16 March, and I thank and congratulate all Lifeline volunteers on the tremendous work they undertake in our communities.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.]

BARANGAROO ASBESTOS REMOVAL

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Environment, and Minister for Heritage. Given the Barangaroo public walkway was left open for a week before the Minister finally had it closed due to asbestos risks, what is the Minister doing to ensure that members of the public who walked through the site were not exposed to asbestos?

Ms ROBYN PARKER: I will give the Leader of the Opposition the facts so that he understands exactly what is going on. Last year the Environment Protection Authority commissioned an independent public health expert, Professor Tim Driscoll from the University of Sydney, to review the management that is taking place of soil containing bonded asbestos at Barangaroo. He submitted his report to the Environment Protection Authority on 12 March. One of his recommendations was to close the pedestrian pathway adjacent to the northern zone until all material potentially contaminated with asbestos has been remediated on site or transported off site.

Professor Driscoll indicated that while the potential for exposure to asbestos fibres is likely to be extremely low, the Environment Protection Authority and the Barangaroo Development Authority have agreed that it would be prudent to re-route the northern pathway, and the new route is now available for the public. The Environment Protection Authority accepts all of Dr Driscoll's recommendations. It will work with the Barangaroo Development Authority and its contractors to implement Dr Driscoll's recommendations in an appropriate manner to ensure that Barangaroo has the most stringent conditions in Australia for remediating asbestos-contaminated soils. On Wednesday 13 March Dr Driscoll discussed his findings with the Building Designers Association, Lend Lease, Baulderstone, Unions NSW and the onsite work health and safety committees. The Environment Protection Authority has released its report.

The role of the Environment Protection Authority in relation to the management of the soil containing asbestos is to ensure that the handling and re-use of the material at the Barangaroo site does not harm the environment or human health. WorkCover is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate procedures are in place for workers' safety, including the handling and use of asbestos. WorkCover has also reviewed the asbestos management plans for the Barangaroo development. The potential for respirable asbestos fibres from soil on the Barangaroo site is considered very low because the asbestos is predominantly bonded.

However, as part of prudent work health and safety management, the site workers handling the excavated soils are using protective equipment and wearing protective clothing as an appropriate workplace precaution. That means that there are indicators on the workers' clothing and around the perimeter. Currently, the excavation is about eight metres below street level. As required by the development consent, detailed perimeter monitoring has been undertaken by an independent occupational hygienist over the past 18 months. In addition, as I said, personal monitoring has been undertaken. The point that members opposite need to understand is that so far all atmospheric and personal monitoring results have been below the detection limit.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: What was that, Robyn?

Ms ROBYN PARKER: Personal monitoring has been undertaken and all atmospheric and personal monitoring results have been below the detection limit. The community's wellbeing and safety is paramount. Air monitoring results along the site boundary have confirmed that other public access around the Barangaroo development can remain open to the public. In other words, work is going on in the northern area and no airborne asbestos has been identified on the perimeter or on the workers' clothing. The Environment Protection Authority has commissioned an independent report, taken the findings on board, discussed it with relevant authorities and taken the appropriate action.

JOBS CREATION

Mr ANDREW ROHAN: My question is directed to the Premier. Is the Government on track to deliver its election commitment of 100,000 new jobs?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: We made a great start when we beat those opposite at the last State election. I thank the member for Smithfield for his question and, particularly as he is a western Sydney member, his interest in job creation. In Opposition we set an ambitious target—some suggest it was a heroic target—to create 100,000 new jobs.

Mr Nick Lalich: You never achieved it though.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Real and honest jobs, I say to the member for Cabramatta. Remember honest? That is something he does not understand.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Premier wishes to cast aspersions on the member for Cabramatta, he can move a substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that is the case. There is no point of order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Speaking of jobs, which one is the member for Heffron after? The Government set a heroic target to create 100,000 new jobs in its first term.

Ms Linda Burney: What was your target to cut jobs?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: You won't get it. Today I am delighted to report to the House that not even two years having elapsed since the election we have almost delivered. The February labour force figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that 22,000 full-time jobs were created in New South Wales. That outstanding result brings the number of new jobs created by this Government since the election to 98,600.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: For members opposite, we committed to 100,000 new jobs and we have delivered 98,600. We are only 1,400 or 1.4 per cent shy of our commitment and we are not even halfway through the term. Since the March 2011 election more jobs have been created in New South Wales than any other State. I had to check that, because I assumed that the resource-rich, boom State of Western Australia would have had more jobs created. Every time I see him at the Council of Australian Governments Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett tells me that a thousand people a week arrive in Perth. But since March 2011 we have created more jobs in New South Wales than any other State, including Western Australia. Despite the diminishing numbers of those opposite we have managed to grow employment across the State.

Put another way: If we add up all the jobs created since March 2011 in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, we find that not only have we created more, we also have created 50 per cent more than their combined total. Today's figures show that more people are looking for work, with the participation rate having risen from 63.4 per cent to 63.8 per cent. It is certainly better work than those opposite. During the last 10 years of Labor Government, New South Wales had the lowest employment growth of any State. For the last five years under Labor the unemployment rate on average was higher than the national average. Under our Government the unemployment rate has now been below the national average for 12 months. As the Treasurer reminds me, it is not monthly figures that are important; it is the trend that will be my friend.

The trend is going in the right direction. Our unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent is the second lowest of all States, behind Western Australia, and still lower than the national rate. Despite undeniably tough economic times, New South Wales is steadily clawing back from record lows of Labor's term of government. Businesses are taking advantage of the Jobs Action Plan, which gives employers a \$400,000 payroll tax rebate for each new person they employ. Our Government is helping to build a diversified and resilient economy, and we are now beginning to see the results. We are creating jobs right across New South Wales. Last week I was delighted to join the member for Penrith at Penrith Panthers along with an Australian Victoria Cross recipient Ben Roberts-Smith, at a new sports centre.

Mr Guy Zangari: We saw you at the pokies.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The member for Fairfield interjects, but he will not repeat his interjection. He will not say publicly what he just said about the clubs movement. I have been to a few clubs in his electorate and I am surprised he would denigrate the clubs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fairfield will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: However, I will make sure that club members are reminded before the next election. I was delighted to be in the company of the member for Penrith to not only announce Australia's first indoor skydiving centre—a place where even Opposition members can jump without parachutes—but also a great new sports tourism complex. [*Extension of time granted.*]

The tourism facility will provide more than 200 jobs during construction and it will create 20 additional jobs in western Sydney. It is just one of many projects across the State. I attended the turning of the first sod at Richmond Road in the company of the member for Londonderry, the member for Hawkesbury and the member for Riverstone. The project will produce 10,000 new homes and employment opportunities for 12,000 people. Recently I opened the new Hardies factory at Ingleburn that will create 240 manufacturing jobs in western

Sydney. New housing construction is recovering from the record lows to which it descended during the term of the former Labor Government. There is major work happening on the South West Rail Link, the North West Rail Link, the Princes Highway and the Pacific Highway. All of that is part of this Government's \$61.8 billion infrastructure program, which is supporting employment and creating new jobs across the State. The recovery is not confined to construction.

Yesterday the Minister for Tourism reported that the tourism industry is amazed at the inbound visitor numbers going through the roof and what that will mean for our hotels, restaurants, cabs and shops upon which people depend for their livelihoods. We face, and will continue to face, difficult economic circumstances, but there is no doubt that the State's economy is recovering and that confidence is returning. Why would there not be confidence? Finally the people of New South Wales have a State government that is focused on the people's needs, not a government that is focused on its own needs, not a government doing dirty deeds done dirt cheap, and not a government that replicates what everyone saw on television on Monday night. I note that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to expel a few people from his party, but he did nothing when he was in the Labor Cabinet and when front-page stories appeared about those individuals. He did not ask a question. He did not initiate an inquiry. He did nothing to clean up Labor when he had the chance.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has completed his answer.

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS LEGISLATION

Mr NATHAN REES: My question is directed to the Attorney General.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members about the standing orders in relation to the use of props.

Mr NATHAN REES: Given that the Finks challenge to the Queensland bikie laws now has been rejected and he has no excuse not to use his own bikie laws, when will he finally make an application to outlaw bikie gangs in New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order so that the Attorney General may be heard.

Mr GREG SMITH: I thank the member for Toongabbie for his question. A number of other developments have occurred that he obviously is not aware of, because he has not been watching. For example, recently the Prime Minister, during her tour of western Sydney, said that she would call for a national program against bikies and a national law.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Maroubra to order. The member for Maroubra will cease interjecting.

Mr GREG SMITH: This is something that the Commonwealth denied at various meetings of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice that I attended. The only thing the Commonwealth was interested in was giving powers to the States in relation to unexplained wealth. When we asked the Commonwealth for a national law on bikie gangs the response was, "We can't do it under the Constitution", and the Commonwealth did not want the States to assign State powers. This Government has corrected the errors that the former Labor Government made in its legislation.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not an opportunity for the member for Toongabbie to argue.

Mr GREG SMITH: The former Labor Government rushed legislation into this Parliament and insisted on its being debated within approximately five hours without any adjournment of debate. The former Labor Government then had to amend that legislation within six weeks. Labor said that the legislation was urgent because the former Labor Government wanted to make an urgent application. Eighteen months later, when the former Labor Government brought the application before the High Court, it failed because of errors. The Coalition Government corrected the errors and found other aspects that needed improvement. Late last year the Coalition Government introduced amendments but indicated that they would not be put to a vote at that stage, at the request of the Commission of Police, Andrew Scipione, who is a very fine man, as I am sure the member for Toongabbie would agree.

Mr Nathan Rees: Hear, hear!

Mr GREG SMITH: We delayed passing the amending bill to see what the result was in the Finks case in the High Court. Today the High Court unanimously rejected the application by the Finks on appeal. We will study the judgement and we will be talking with the Commonwealth within the next six weeks at both the Standing Committee on Law and Justice and the Council of Australian Governments.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr GREG SMITH: The New South Wales Government is cooperating with the governments of other States and Territories. We are working together and will continue to do so. We have done so much in the area of policing and powers, such as the consorting powers and strengthening laws against bkie gangs and gangs of outlaws involved in shootings, but we are being frustrated by the Commonwealth's failure to properly police the borders while the country is being flooded with illegal weapons. Recently 350 police officers were involved in arresting bkie leaders and seizing machine guns, hand grenades, drugs and money, et cetera. This Government has done so much compared with so little done by Labor.

JOBS GROWTH

Mr THOMAS GEORGE: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government supporting jobs growth in New South Wales?

Mr ANDREW STONER: That is a very good question from the outstanding member for Lismore. As the Premier told the House, just last month 22,000 new jobs were created in our great State, and that is fantastic economic news for all the good people of New South Wales. I am happy to inform the House that this Government is playing its part to support jobs growth in our State. Over the past year the Department of Trade and Investment has facilitated projects that will create \$1.3 billion in new investment for the State and 5,730 new jobs. That includes one of Australia's largest defence contractors, Thales Australia, which is investing \$10 million in its new Australian headquarters at Homebush Bay—a project that will secure approximately 500 jobs. Synnex Australia is investing \$45 million in the construction of a new logistics centre in Lidcombe, which will result in approximately 150 jobs being created during construction and 100 new jobs being created over three years on completion.

United States based Rackspace, which is a global leader in cloud computing, has invested in a multimillion dollar data centre at Erskine Park, and that will create 50 new jobs. In the Orange electorate the Government is assisting with the upgrade and extension of the runway at the Orange airport to enable Newcrest Mining to increase its fly-in, fly-out operations based out of Orange and to train interstate employees at the Orange TAFE mining simulator. I know that after 16 years of Labor our State's economy went downhill fast. It sank right to the bottom of the league table.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toongabbie will come to order.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Labor members hate to hear the good economic news that New South Wales is on the rise.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Toongabbie to order.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Because Opposition members hate it, I will tell them more. The mining activity out of the Orange airport has spin-offs such as additional airport capacity, increased new aviation businesses, and increased business and tourist visitation to the region. Two hundred jobs initially will be created out of this project. In the Kiama electorate the Government is supporting the expansion of the Jamberoo Action Park through the Illawarra Regional Innovation and Investment Fund.

Mr Ryan Park: Now the Nats are supporting it.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Is the member for Keira complaining about the creation of more than 50 new jobs?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Recently I joined the members for Newcastle, Charlestown, Swansea and Port Stephens in Newcastle to announce that Aspen Medical will establish a new international centre for resource health in the Hunter, delivering up to 250 direct jobs. On the topic of health, let me congratulate the Minister for Health, the best one this State has seen for a long time. She is investing record funds in health infrastructure, creating jobs right across the State, including in regional New South Wales. We are also implementing our State's strategy for business migration. Despite what the Federal Government is doing about 457 visas, we are attracting high-value migrants and investment to the State of New South Wales. We understand that the next decade represents a critical period of change for the New South Wales economy, the nation's most diverse and strongest economy—known as the engine room of the national economy.

We have to meet those challenges and take those opportunities. We are working with industry to do exactly that, through industry-led taskforces which are developing 10-year plans for key sectors. In December we responded to five industry action plans for manufacturing, professional services, international education and research and the digital economy. We have some exciting policies in those areas moving forward. The final plan, for creative industries, was released for public comment just this week. We are pursuing initiatives such as the new program Innovate NSW. We are working with the Committee for Sydney on a global talent hunt. We are not going to rest on our laurels about this massive job creation that the Premier talked about. We are meeting the challenges for the future and taking opportunities. As we committed to the people of New South Wales before the 2011 State election, we are intent on making New South Wales number one again.

SYDNEY CBD TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Mr RYAN PARK: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Given that previous Roads and Maritime Services modelling has indicated that putting light rail down George Street would increase traffic congestion by up to 30 per cent across the rest of the central business district, why is the Government now saying there will be only an 8 per cent increase in traffic congestion?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I hate to say this but that question demonstrates why the member for Keira was the failed deputy director general of the Ministry of Transport. It also beggars belief that the Labor Party, after saying it does not support light rail and then supports light rail, is now saying it does not support light rail. It also demonstrates that members opposite did not understand the factors that went into causing congestion in the central business district and why we have the congestion we have today. For 16 long years they ignored the problem and did nothing. I am also very disappointed because recently we on this side of the House put out a strategic plan for light rail. That plan detailed why light rail is important for the future of not just the central business district but also the south-east of Sydney. I suspected those opposite opposed light rail but I am now pleased they have put that opposition on the record. I wonder what the member for Marrickville thinks about opposing light rail. What do other members feel about opposing light rail?

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. We are speaking about congestion in and around the central business district.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being entirely relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: A number of members opposite are on the record asking me to do more about light rail. Now the member for Keira is saying the opposite. I am pleased to say that the light rail project is part of an integrated approach to changing the way we deal with congestion. Light rail will revolutionise the way we commute around the central business district and take about 200 buses out of that area. I put on the record that, while those opposite slashed 1,500 weekly bus services, we have put back about 2,000 since we came to government.

We are doing a number of other things to lessen congestion in the central business district. We know that when the North West Rail Link is completed an additional 200 buses will be taken out of the central business district as well. If any Opposition members caught a bus to the central business district, which they must not, and I do—okay, the member for Maroubra does. He should be supporting light rail. Does he support light rail? Only about two weeks ago we introduced a diversion along the Cahill Expressway for 60 buses, and that has had an enormous impact. Commuters are telling me they are saving at least 10 to 15 minutes in travel times of a morning. I am interested to know what the member for Maroubra thinks about the light rail project, because his constituents are begging me to get on with it and build it.

Mr Michael Daley: Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member taking a point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: Rumour has it that you are going to get rid of 150 bus services to Maroubra. I am not happy about that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. If he tries that again he will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to have on the record officially that the Labor Party does not support the light rail project. Many members opposite are shaking their heads, because so many important community organisations and, most importantly, our commuters just want us to get on with the job and build the project.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Now we have their true colours on the record. I want them to explain to their communities why they do not support this project, why they cannot acknowledge the capacity and reliability of light rail versus buses. For example, a bus's reliability in the central business district is between 19 per cent and 30 per cent; light rail reliability is about 95 per cent. I could talk about this issue for a long time, and I do hope members opposite ask that my time be extended. They are clueless—clueless in government and even more clueless in opposition. I am still trying to find a single positive thing that the member for Keira or the Leader of the Opposition did when they looked after transport in this State.

LIFELINE CRISIS SUPPORT SERVICE FUNDING

Mr ROB STOKES: My question is to the Premier. How is the Government assisting Lifeline to help prevent suicide?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Pittwater for his question. As you did, Madam Speaker, I acknowledge his predecessor in the gallery. We all know that John is a man of great integrity: a man who served this State well and who has been an inspiration to thousands of people across this country who suffers from mental illness. As everyone should be aware, John is now Chairman of Lifeline. He is joined today by Reverend Keith Garner, whom I welcome, the Superintendent of Wesley Mission, and a very special guest Mr Ivan Reichelt, who, as the Speaker has indicated, attended Lifeline's initial establishment meeting all those years ago and at the age of 96 he is still a volunteer for Lifeline. Ivan, I thank you for your service. I am told by the Minister for Health, who represented me at Government House last night, that the Governor has already thanked you. The Minister for Health is absolutely convinced now that the secret to long life is standing around with a glass of wine in your hand.

Ms Noreen Hay: She does that anyway.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wollongong should not take offence.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: No, we are talking about the Minister for Health. It was the Minister for Health not the member for Kogarah I was talking about. This year Lifeline celebrates its fiftieth anniversary—that is 50 years of saving lives, not just in this State but across the nation. It was a Sunday night in early 1960, just after midnight, when the telephone rang at the home of the then superintendent of Wesley Mission, Reverend Alan Walker. The loneliness and desperation of the suicidal man, later found dead by Darlinghurst police, along with many similar experiences, convinced Reverend Walker to take action to prevent suicide.

Determined not to let isolation and a lack of support be the cause of more deaths, he began to plan for a 24-hour crisis support line, which would operate from the Wesley Mission in Sydney's central business district. Over the following years Lifeline was created—a specialised 24-hour telephone crisis support service with trained volunteers ready to listen to and help those in need at their moment of crisis. At 5.00 p.m. on 16 March 1963 the first call was taken by a volunteer called Eric Adams. The call was from a distressed young woman. In that first week 350 calls were answered, countless lives were saved and Lifeline immediately began living up to its name. It now operates from 15 centres in New South Wales and 41 centres nationally, located in every State and Territory.

In January alone Lifeline answered 55,000 calls from Australians in crisis, of which 28,000 came from New South Wales. In 2012 it responded to 541,000 calls on its 13 11 14 service. By 2016, regrettably, it is expected that Lifeline will answer a million calls a year. Throughout Lifeline's network there are 12,000 staff and volunteers with 3,500 trained as telephone crisis supporters. This makes Lifeline Australia's largest community-based suicide prevention organisation. Last year Lifeline launched an online service called Crisis Support Chat, which now responds to over 2,000 requests a month. I am very proud to say that the New South Wales Liberals-Nationals Government has boosted support for Lifeline. We are providing \$2 million annually in recurrent funding to support its work. That is the first time a New South Wales Government has ever provided recurrent annual funding. It is a partnership combined with other work the Government is doing in this area, spearheaded by the Minister for Mental Health, that is delivering real outcomes for people suffering from mental illness. We lead the nation when it comes to reforming and delivering mental health services.

Suicide continues to be one of the great challenges facing society. Sadly, at over 550 deaths each year, New South Wales has the highest number of suicides in Australia. So it is important that we do everything possible to drive down that number. It would be wonderful if one day we could achieve Lifeline's vision of an Australia free of suicide. It is an admirable goal. It would be terrific if one day we did not need Lifeline. I know I speak for every member of this House when I say thank you to the staff and volunteers at Lifeline for the great work they do across our communities. They are, quite literally, life savers. We owe them a debt of gratitude. After 50 years Lifeline continues to go from strength to strength, and with volunteers such as Ivan Rechelt why would it not? Last week the Women of the Year awards were held and the recipient for my electorate was Wendy Carver, who runs Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury. She is just one of the many coordinators across 15 centres in New South Wales who do a magnificent job for people in crisis at all times of the day.

HOSPITAL WAITING TIMES

Ms NOREEN HAY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. When the Minister said that people should be rejoicing and congratulating her on her management of the health system, was she referring to the case of Carol Fowler and her 12-year-old granddaughter, who were forced to wait six hours to be seen by a doctor at Wollongong Hospital?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. Government members will come to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for the question. The people I was referring to are the thousands across New South Wales who, in their greater number, are being treated in our hospitals faster than ever before. The Bureau of Health Information report that was released today demonstrates just that. I am really surprised that members opposite are not congratulating the Government and all those working in the system on the tremendous improvements that have been made.

Mr Gareth Ward: Improvements at Wollongong Hospital triage 2 and 3.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Not only at Wollongong Hospital but across the State. I was at Wollongong Hospital recently welcoming the fantastic new nurses, who told me that for the first time that hospital has no nurse vacancies. We have increased the nursing workforce by 3,000 since we came to office so that patients can be seen faster. Record numbers of patients are being seen on time. We are well within our benchmarks for emergency and elective surgery patients at Wollongong and throughout the health system. I thank our wonderful doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who work at Wollongong, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven and all the hospitals in the Illawarra and throughout New South Wales. They are doing a marvellous job and beating all benchmarks and records—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question is: What does the Minister have to say to Carol Fowler and her 12-year-old granddaughter and the fact they waited six hours in emergency?

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that was the question. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am saying that I am very proud and rejoicing on behalf of the thousands of patients seen across our hospital system in greater numbers and in faster times. I have received many letters from those patients. I am happy to read them on to the record, particularly those that say things have improved

dramatically since the O'Farrell-Stoner Government came to office. Those opposite can rabbit on as much as they like; the reality is that the report of the independent Bureau of Health Information, which Labor established, shows that we have never had it so good.

HEALTH SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Mr TIM OWEN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, and is a nice segue from the previous question.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr TIM OWEN: Will the Minister please advise how patients are benefitting from our Government's management of the health system?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: For those in the gallery, that shows the difference with a positive approach to thank our hospitals, nurses and doctors. I was so proud to be at Government House celebrating Lifeline's achievement. I was proud also this morning to be with the member for Wyong to meet with the Central Coast Burns Survivor Support Group. Those wonderful people are working with our hospitals and those who care for people in our health system. The member for Newcastle refers to the Bureau of Health Information report I mentioned in my previous answer. I shall share some of the great news in this report. The report refers to the figures for the last quarter to December. Record numbers of patients were treated, for example, in emergency departments, with 43,000 extra patients and 2,000 extra elective surgeries just in that quarter alone. What was the wait time in emergency departments and for elective surgery? The bureau points out—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: The Minister asked me how long was the wait time. I was just going to help her and tell her it is 224 days.

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order?

Dr Andrew McDonald: Standing Order 129, relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It is called leading with your chin. This morning the shadow Minister said on radio that the latest quarterly figures are an improvement. Hello!

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not the time for the member for Macquarie Fields to debate this issue.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: But the only problem is that elsewhere he said, "This is not a cause for congratulations or rejoicing. These figures show that people are waiting too long."

Dr Andrew McDonald: Correct, 224 days.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: He cannot have it both ways.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It is an improvement. I shall continue to outline the statistics. Urgent elective surgery is the most urgent category: patients are supposed to be seen in 30 days. Under Labor 93 per cent of patients were seen on time. According to this report, 96 per cent were seen on time under the Coalition. Semi-urgent patients are supposed to be seen in 90 days—under Labor it was 90 per cent on time; under us, 92 per cent. For non-urgent elective surgeries, 92 per cent were the last Labor figures, the same as for us. For emergency department non-urgent patients under Labor the median time before treatment started was 32 minutes; under us, 27 minutes—again an improvement.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is my last warning to the member for Macquarie Fields. If he continues to interject he will find himself out of the Chamber.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Semi-urgent patients were seen in 34 minutes under Labor, 29 minutes under us—an improvement. Under Labor urgent patients were seen in 23 minutes and by us in 21 minutes. And so it continues with improvements across the board. The President of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Medical Association issued a press release today that states:

Improved elective surgery and emergency department performance shows public hospital doctors, nurses and other hospital staff are doing an outstanding job despite significant increases in demand.

That is absolutely right. Professor Brian Owler is correct. I welcome this report from the independent Bureau of Health Information. It provides an accurate assessment of how wonderfully well our medical staff are working in our hospitals. I am afraid there is no great credit to the Opposition in running down the fantastic work of our doctors. One of the hospitals that the shadow Minister highlighted in his comments earlier today was Westmead. I have spoken about Westmead Hospital's emergency department in this Chamber previously. I was out there with the member for Parramatta when we announced the \$5 million upgrade to the emergency department because of the wonderful work done by Dr Matthew Vukasovic.

The statistics for the emergency department at Westmead Hospital are available: category one is 100 per cent: it has been that way for some time. With regard to category two emergencies, under Labor the delay was nine minutes, under the O'Farrell Government that has been reduced to eight minutes, an improvement of one minute; category three, it was 45 minutes under Labor and it is now 31 minutes under the Coalition, an improvement of 14 minutes; category four was 73 minutes under Labor and it is now 46 minutes under the Coalition, an improvement of 27 minutes—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Macquarie Fields of my previous ruling; I have given him numerous warnings about the consequences of his conduct.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: —and category five, 88 minutes under Labor and 48 minutes under us, an improvement of 40 minutes. I do not know how the shadow Minister, himself a doctor, cannot stand up here—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Macquarie Fields to remove himself from the Chamber until the end of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Macquarie Fields left the Chamber at 3.00 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. There are too many private conversations coming from both sides of this Chamber. I remind members that if they wish to have private conversations they should do so outside the Chamber. If the member for Baulkham Hills thinks something is funny perhaps he should leave the Chamber.

LAKE MACQUARIE HEALTH SERVICES

Mr GREG PIPER: My question is for the Minister for Health. In view of Hunter New England Health's position that there is insufficient demand for a health care facility with inpatient capability in southern Lake Macquarie, what actions will the Minister take to address the community's need for primary and community health services?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his sensible and measured question. I point out that I have visited Lake Macquarie on a number of occasions and spoken with the member and his community about matters such as this. I have read their submissions. I thank him for his reasonable approach to this issue. A review by the local area health service of current and projected service demand shows that the services most needed in the Morisset area are primary general practitioner type health care services rather than those provided by an acute inpatient hospital. That is acknowledged in the member's question. I remind the House that Morisset has a general practitioner super clinic, the Southern Lake Macquarie General Practitioner Super Clinic. The clinic offers a range of services including: bulk billing, Monday to Friday on demand after-hours services, a mini emergency treatment room and a range of chronic disease management and preventative care programs, such as smoking cessation, immunisation and wound clinics.

The Morisset working party is a collaboration between the local district health services, the council and the Southlake Integrated Healthcare Committee. It was formed to assess future demand for health services in the area and to develop strategies to address identified gaps in services. It was convened as a 12-month project and it will conclude in May 2013. I look forward to the report that will follow the conclusion of their deliberations.

I am advised that Hunter New England Health's focus will be on collaborating with the working party to agree on a way forward that will build on existing services such as ambulatory care services, which include providing child and family nursing services, a regular immunization clinic, a new parents group and an early parenting group and child and adolescent mental health services in the form of an outreach clinic.

Home-based community services provided in Morisset include Healthy at Home, community physiotherapy services, Hospital in the Home and ComPacks—managed packages of care following discharge from hospital. Community nursing services are offered seven days a week and palliative care specialist nursing is offered seven days a week. Occupational therapy and home modifications are also available. Community dementia nurses are available. The Hunter Aged Care Assessment Team provides comprehensive assessment to clients aged 70 years or over or 50 years or over if they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. I am pleased to advise the member that we will be building on those multidisciplinary community services through the working party that has been established. I will continue to work with the member on this important matter.

ELECTION COSTINGS PROCESS

Mr DARREN WEBBER: My question is directed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government delivering accountability in the costing of election commitments?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question and the incredible work he does on the Central Coast for his community. The member is determined to make a difference. This is another opportunity to come forward in the House to explain how the O'Farrell Government is driving the economy, improving services and building the infrastructure that this State desperately needs. That is exactly what this Government does. Two years ago the people of New South Wales voted for change. Did they get that change? They got change with the O'Farrell-Stoner Government because that is what they deserved after 16 years of those opposite running the State. What did the people want? They wanted a stable Government. Speaking of stable government, apparently there are once again some rumblings in Canberra concerning leadership of the Labor Party. Just sit back with popcorn and watch *Sky News*. Who knows what is going to happen down there.

The community wanted a stable government in New South Wales, a government that put the public interest first—and that is exactly what they have got. The people wanted a government that determined infrastructure based on need and not on postcodes, a government that manages expenses, one that would not leave it to future governments to pay for its lack of management. And they wanted a Government that actually put jobs into the economy. I was glad to hear the Premier announce that New South Wales has the strongest jobs growth of any State in the country. This Government said that it needed a process to cost election policies and it had to be the strongest in the nation. For those who do not remember—and I encourage the member for Sydney to listen carefully so he can understand the detail—a bill was introduced to Parliament and the Premier debated the former Premier, the member for Heffron at the time.

Mr Barry O'Farrell: The less ambitious member for Heffron.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Yes. Mr O'Farrell asked the Premier at the time, "Will you accept the bill that you have in Parliament for independent election policies?" Did Labor answer that question? Ms Keneally said, "Absolutely." Labor said it would but what happened in Parliament? It voted against it. It says one thing and does another. Labor then attempted to introduce its own process by advertising for a parliamentary budget officer. But six weeks prior to the election it was still looking to fill the position. It did not have anyone in that position. When Labor eventually put its policies forward to be costed only half of its policies were presented. It was a complete and utter farce. That low level of government was exactly what the public saw day in and day out in this Chamber. This Government will introduce a bill this afternoon that ensures the New South Wales Parliamentary budget office is ahead of that of every other jurisdiction in the nation. This Government believes it is important to be accountable.

No other State or Territory has legislation such as this. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government believes that when any candidate during an election campaign makes a promise to their community that community should know that the policy has been costed, it is affordable and can be delivered to the community. That is a simple proposition. The Federal Labor Treasurer, my good mate Swanny, has a proposal for election costings—they will be released 30 days after the election. I do not wish to be critical but I would say that is genius. The community will learn 30 days after the election when the decision has already been made that members will be held accountable for their promises. Not in this State. The week before the election the parliamentary budget officer will put out the election costings for this State.

It will operate for nine months. That is important because it will provide time to do the costings and present to the people of New South Wales a credible alternative. It is important because already policies are being announced by those opposite. They have said that they will unwind the WorkCover reforms. They should tell the people of this State how they will fund that \$4 billion deficit. They have said they are going to turn back the police death and disability reform. How many police will have to go to provide the billions needed to fund that? And they have said that they will allow wages to grow unchecked; they do not like the current wages policy, and they will allow wages to go unchecked. Where will they get the \$2 billion to fund that? We are proud to be accountable. [*Extension of time granted.*]

We make the commitment today that the Government will comply with the Parliamentary Budget Office. We will submit all our costings to that office; and we look forward to those opposite doing exactly the same. I have an expectation of the Leader of the Opposition—whoever that is on the other side. The poor old member for Heffron; why will they not let him ask a question about his shadow portfolio?

Mr Chris Hartcher: Please.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Minister has been waiting for it. I will tell the House why they will not let the member for Heffron ask a question: It is because the Leader of the Opposition is paranoid. He is very worried.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: I have taken the bait. My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer's response is absolutely irrelevant to the question asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer has only just started to stray from the question. I will allow him some latitude. I am sure he will return to the leave of the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Doesn't he look good! He looks strong and tall. I note, in terms of the roundabout on the other side, that the shadow Minister for Citizenship has been put in the back row. What has the Opposition got against citizenship? Why is he in the back row?

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: The Treasurer has strayed far from the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I did say that the Treasurer had strayed slightly. I am sure he will return to the leave of the question; he has only 17 seconds remaining.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: While the State election is two years away, I assure the House that this Government will have the highest standards on election costings. We will comply with this arrangement. It is important that those opposite do likewise so that everyone in this State knows that policies are affordable.

Question time concluded at 3.12 p.m.

TROPICAL CYCLONE SANDRA

Ministerial Statement

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [3.12 p.m.]: This year of course has been characterised by floods and fires in parts of New South Wales. I advise the House that currently Tropical Cyclone Sandra, category 1, is situated over the far northern Tasman Sea and is moving south. The system is expected to strengthen as it approaches Lord Howe Island, and category 2 impacts are possible across the island during this afternoon and evening. Damaging surf, heavy swells and abnormally high tides are expected to develop about Lord Howe Island today and persist into Friday. Seas and swells are forecast to reach six to eight metres, with maximum waves of up to 16 metres possible.

Gales with damaging wind gusts to about 100 kilometres an hour are expected to develop on Lord Howe Island during this afternoon and persist until Friday evening. Destructive wind gusts up to 150 kilometres an hour are possible from late this afternoon until the early hours of Friday. The strongest winds are expected to impact between 6 o'clock this afternoon and 3 o'clock tomorrow morning. Areas of heavy rain, which may lead to flash flooding, are possible over Lord Howe Island during Thursday and Friday. Between 50 and 100 millimetres of rainfall is expected from this afternoon until 3 o'clock tomorrow morning. From early tomorrow the cyclone will weaken as it continues to move towards the south-east, and winds may gradually ease. Winds of up to 90 kilometres an hour are expected to continue until midday tomorrow.

The NSW State Emergency Service advises me that the cyclone is expected to affect Lord Howe Island earlier than expected. The State Emergency Service and Lord Howe Island Board have undertaken property protection for infrastructure and buildings on the island, and the school has been closed. Current highest recorded wind speeds of 75 kilometres an hour have been recorded at Lord Howe Island—that was in a report at 1.30 p.m. today. A task force of 20 personnel is scheduled to depart by chartered aircraft at 8.30 on Saturday morning 16 March to travel to Lord Howe Island to assist local resources. A second task force is being coordinated to be available on a standby basis if required. A Rapid Impact Assessment will be undertaken at first light on Friday 15 March. As I have said, we have started the year with fire and flood; we now have an impending major storm affecting one of our communities. Thank God for the NSW State Emergency Service and other emergency services, the preparation they do between crises and the great contribution that volunteers make to their efforts.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.14 p.m.]: In relation to the sitting days in the week leading to Easter, I move:

That standing and sessions be suspended to provide that:

- (1) on Monday 25 March 2013 the routine of business is to be as set out in the sessional order for Tuesdays;
- (2) on Tuesday 26 March 2013 the routine of business is to be as set out in the sessional order for Wednesdays; and
- (3) on Wednesday 27 March 2013 the routine of business is to be as set out in the sessional order for Thursdays.

I remind members that in that week the House will be sitting on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and not Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Membership

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.15 p.m.]: In regard to parliamentary committees membership, the Opposition has requested certain changes, and the following motion will permit those changes to take place. I move:

- (1)
 - (a) Andrew Dominic McDonald be appointed to the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission in place of Ryan John Park, discharged;
 - (b) Ryan John Park be appointed to the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety in place of Robert Anthony Furolo, discharged;
 - (c) Linda Jean Burney be appointed to the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Andrew Dominic McDonald, discharged; and
 - (d) a message be sent informing the Legislative Council.
- (2) Robert Anthony Furolo be appointed to the State and Regional Development Committee in place of Linda Jean Burney, discharged.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Message forwarded sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**Government Response to Report**

The Clerk announced receipt of the Government Response to Report 5/55, entitled, "Report on the examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audits September 2010-February 2011", received out of session and authorised to be printed on 31 January 2013.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND REGULATION**Government Response to Report**

The Clerk announced receipt of the Government Response to Report 1/55, entitled, "Inquiry into the regulation of domestic wastewater", received out of session and authorised to be printed on 4 March 2013.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Government Response to Report**

The Clerk announced receipt of the Government Response to Report 1/55, entitled, "Review of the 2009-2010 annual report and the 2010-2011 annual report of the Commission for Children and Young People and the 2009 reports of the Child Death Review Team", received 13 March 2013.

PETITIONS

The Speaker announced that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons was lodged for presentation:

Mona Vale Hospital

Petition opposing the proposed downgrading of Mona Vale Hospital and requesting adequate funding for the hospital and an assessment of its suitability as the site of the new Northern Beaches level 5 hospital, received from **Mr Rob Stokes**.

Discussion on petition set down as an order of the day for a future day.

The Clerk announced that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:

Sydney Electorate Public High School

Petition requesting the establishment of a public high school in the Sydney electorate, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Education Funding

Petition calling on the Government to stop cuts to education, TAFE and school funding, received from **Mr Richard Amery**.

Inner-City Social Housing

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner-city public housing stock, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Duck Hunting

Petition requesting retention of the longstanding ban on duck hunting, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Container Deposit Levy

Petition requesting the Government introduce a container deposit levy to reduce litter and increase recycling rates of drink containers, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

The Clerk announced that the following Ministers had lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian—Punchbowl Railway Station Easy Access Upgrade—lodged 21 February 2013 (Mr Robert Furolo)

The Hon. Michael Gallacher—Wellington Police Station—lodged 19 February 2013 (Mr Andrew Gee)

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mike Baird, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [3.21 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The objective of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill 2013 is to reform the role of the Parliamentary Budget Office and improve its effectiveness in costing election commitments. A joint select committee was appointed in June 2011 to inquire into the purpose and the role of the Parliamentary Budget Office and whether the terms of the current Act, the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010, are appropriate. The committee identified a number of areas for reform. The Government has accepted most of the inquiry's recommendations, and this bill implements those changes and makes some additional amendments. The inquiry recommended mandatory costing of election commitments.

This bill mandates that the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition submit all election policies that are likely to impact on the current and relevant forward budget estimates for costing by the Parliamentary Budget Office. The mandatory submission is to ensure that the electorate has accurate, timely and independent information on the cost of election commitments prior to voting. As part of this process, the parliamentary leaders will be required to confirm in writing that all their policies that have a budget impact have been submitted to the Parliamentary Budget Office.

The inquiry recommended that the sole function of the Parliamentary Budget Officer be to prepare election policy costings. The bill provides for the appointment of a Parliamentary Budget Officer every four years, as recommended by the inquiry. The officer's appointment will commence on 1 September in the year prior to a State election and end within three months following the election. This period of appointment will allow the Parliamentary Budget Officer sufficient time to discharge his or her duties regarding election costings, to subsequently table the officer's report in Parliament and to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to answer questions on the report.

This Government is committed to improving the operation and accountability of the Parliamentary Budget Office and the bill contains a number of amendments to facilitate this. As recommended by the inquiry, the Parliamentary Budget Officer will be required to develop an operational plan as soon as practicable after the establishment of the office. The scope of the operational plan includes the objectives of the Parliamentary Budget Office, strategies to achieve those objectives and a schedule of the proposed activities. Also, as recommended by the inquiry, the Parliamentary Budget Officer will be required to furnish a report on the activities of the Parliamentary Budget Office rather than an annual report for the period that it operated.

As a minimum requirement the report is expected to include the following information: the operational and resourcing cost of the Parliamentary Budget Office; the number of costings and budget impact statements completed; issues encountered in undertaking the costings process; and recommendations on operational arrangements and activities of the Parliamentary Budget Officer in respect of future general elections. Currently the Act requires two separate committees to review the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report. The inquiry recommended a single joint committee be appointed to perform this role.

To streamline the review of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report and activities, under this bill the Parliamentary Budget Officer will be accountable to the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislative

Assembly. It is considered that this Committee has the necessary expertise to effectively monitor and review the officer's activities and ensure the independence and integrity of the costing process. At the beginning of each Parliament the committee will consider and review the report on the activities of the Parliamentary Budget Office during the previous election period.

The inquiry also recommended that the Parliamentary Budget Officer should be permitted to release more than one budget impact statement during the pre-election period. Currently, under section 23 (5) (b) of the Act, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is required to release a budget impact statement for each political party five days before the election. The current Act includes no arrangements for the Parliamentary Budget Officer to respond to late policy announcements. To address this shortcoming, section 23 (7) of the bill allows the Parliamentary Budget Officer the discretion to release revised budget impact statements in response to any late policy announcements. The inquiry recommended amending the Act to provide greater clarity regarding the content of budget impact statements. The bill specifies a core set of indicators of budget impact for inclusion in the Parliamentary Budget Office budget impact statement.

These indicators are consistent with how the budget is monitored and presented currently by NSW Treasury. The bill leaves in place existing arrangements that ensure the confidentiality of material submitted to the Parliamentary Budget Office for costing. This Government supports a more effective, efficient and accountable Parliamentary Budget Office. I am proud that this is the strongest independent election costings unit in the country. We believe it needs to be there, we argued for it in opposition and today we are very proud to deliver it. That is why I am proud to introduce this bill. The bill addresses the issues that were identified by the joint select committee and it provides a robust way forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Michael Daley and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

CRIMES (SENTENCING PROCEDURE) AMENDMENT (PROVISIONAL SENTENCING FOR CHILDREN) BILL 2013

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 26 February 2013.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [3.27 p.m.]: In the absence of the shadow Attorney General and member for Liverpool, who is on leave, I lead for the Opposition on the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Provisional Sentencing for Children) Bill 2013. Most of what I will say was crafted by the member for Liverpool but I will inform the House when I add my own comments. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The object of the bill is to enable the provisional sentencing of children who are convicted of murder. Provisional sentencing involves imposing a sentence on a person convicted of an offence and then, at a much later point in time, reducing the sentence and changing it.

Provisional sentencing is quite different from the normal processes of the criminal justice system and, among other things, is opposed to the principle of finality. Its proponents justify it in limited circumstances for children because of the profoundly difficult nature of the task of sentencing young people for very serious offences. The origins of this bill are to be found in a quite horrific and tragic case of *R v SLD* (2002) NSWSC 758. I add that that case was considered by the Court of Criminal Appeal at NSWCCA 310 on 31 October 2003. I also indicate to the House that Attorney General Greg Smith appeared for the Crown as junior counsel in both the Court of Criminal Appeal and before the Chief Judge at Common Law, Justice Wood.

This was a case in which a boy then aged 13 years and 10 months committed murder by stabbing through the heart a three-year-old girl whom he hardly knew. He entered the house at night and abducted her. No clear motive was established but the young boy had a long history of antisocial behaviour. His life until then was described, with considerable understatement by the sentencing judge, the Chief Judge at Common Law, as bleak. At sentencing there was an extensive hearing into the background and mental state of SLD. However, he was of such an age and state of development that no final proper diagnosis could be given. He was still developing intellectually and emotionally.

Justice Wood noted the difficulty of his task and raised the possibility of an alternative sentencing approach. He referred to the English system, where offenders could be sentenced to be detained pursuant to Her Majesty's pleasure. He also referred to the murder of James Bulger. The final paragraph of His Honour's

judgement referred his comments to the Criminal Law Review Division to consider possible amendments to the law and special cases such as this. His Honour specifically defined the range of cases as those involving juveniles convicted of offences attracting a possible maximum sentence of 25 years or more who are younger than 15 at the time of the offence and where the information available at the time of sentencing does not permit the court to make a proper assessment as to the presence or likely development of a serious personality or psychiatric disorder and/or the propensity for future dangerousness. In such cases he thought it desirable for the court to sentence the offender initially to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure with a provision for review at a later date.

His Honour subsequently became chair of the Sentencing Council, which commissioned research into the issue, resulting in September 2009 in a paper by Beckett, Fernandez and McFarlane entitled, "Provisional sentencing for children". This bill seems to have flowed from that report. The report canvassed a large number of bodies. There was quite a diversity of views, although most supported a scheme of provisional sentencing more limited and restricted than originally proposed in the case of SLD. The report described it as "tempered support". The report concluded that a scheme of provisional sentencing should be available in respect of those children aged between 10 and 14 years who have been convicted of the offence of murder when the information available at the time of sentencing does not permit a proper assessment to be made in relation to the presence or likely development in the offender of a serious personality and psychiatric disorder and, as a consequence, an assessment of their potential or future dangerousness or rehabilitation.

The Sentencing Council reported that in New South Wales 17 homicides were committed by children in the period from 1990 to 2006, compared with 13,041 committed by adults in the same period. The incidence of such cases is thankfully rare. This bill only applies to children who are convicted of murder. This is consistent with the report of the Sentencing Council but narrower than originally suggested by Justice Wood because it offended the principle of finality, amongst other reasons. In the view of the Opposition this seems sensible. For provisional sentencing to be available the offender must be less than 16 years of age when the offence is committed and less than 18 years of age when the provisional sentence is imposed.

The proposed sentence also must include a sentence of imprisonment. It can only occur when the court believes available information does not permit a satisfactory assessment of the offender and the court cannot therefore assess the likelihood of reoffending or the prospect of rehabilitation. If a provisional sentence is imposed the court must conduct a progressive review of the case at least once every two years. Final sentence must be imposed no later than five years after the date of the provisional sentence imposed and one year before the end of the non-parole period for the final sentence.

Importantly, any term of imprisonment imposed under the final sentence is not to exceed the term of imprisonment proposed under the provisional sentence. The last point goes some way to meeting the criticism of provisional sentencing by the then senior children's magistrate in his submission to the Sentencing Council. He was strongly opposed to provisional sentencing. He argued that lengthy deferral of sentencing was a cruel punishment, especially for young people, and that it was possible a young offender could end up being treated more harshly than an adult offender. Providing that the final sentence cannot exceed the provisional one goes some way to reducing the risk of these issues.

It is also interesting that this provision is precisely the opposite of the position argued in 2009 by Attorney General Greg Smith when he was in opposition. He referred specifically to the SLD case, with which he was very familiar, and was quoted as saying that it should be possible to increase sentences of child offenders. When the usual conga line of Government speakers stand up in this House to proclaim the importance of this legislation they may wish to reflect upon how the Attorney General has refreshingly changed his position since 2009. I do not particularly take issue with him for doing so. I bring to the attention of the House another aspect of this legislation about which caution must be exercised.

I have read the 2002 decision of Justice Wood in *Regina v SLD* and the Court of Criminal Appeal judgement by Justices Handley, Sully and Buddin. Appellant counsel Chris Craigie would be well known to members opposite. He is the former Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions and was then the deputy senior public defender. He did not take issue with the head sentence imposed by Justice Wood. In fact, the sentence imposed upon SLD was a non-parole period of 10 years with a total sentence of 20 years. Apart from arguing a legal question of anticipating the future dangerousness of a 13-year-old child, in the appeal it was the head sentence that was subject to argument as being excessive. At the end of the day leave was granted, the appeal was dismissed and the sentence was confirmed. Bearing in mind the nature of the matter, the sentence of 20 years with a non-parole period of 10 years was the appropriate sentence that would necessarily apply to a child of that age. In fact, that is the precise number.

So despite the examination by the Sentencing Council and Justice Wood's concern that there should be an opportunity to revisit the provisional sentence given by the court, which cannot be increased, I am worried that that will translate in practice into an opportunity for sentencing judges who are under pressure and subject to media scrutiny to give sentences well above what they might ordinarily give—such as in the circumstances of Justice Wood—on the basis that the sentence can be revisited at some later stage. For example, say this bill became law and was available within the time frame. I could not imagine that any material could possibly be provided to a court that had given a provisional sentence of a non-parole period of 10 years and a head sentence of 20 years that would cause a reduction in the sentence of SLD. That is because 10 years is about the lowest sentence a court could give having regard to the objective seriousness of the offence.

When a court sentences a young offender the law requires a court to take into consideration the youth of the offender. The fact that an offender is 13, 15, 16 or even 18 or 19 is factored into the sentence. There is nothing wrong with the bill that prevents future assessment from being made of a 13-year-old child, but the issue that should be considered by the Attorney General, who is well acquainted with the cases having appeared for the Crown in the Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeal before he became senior counsel, is that it should not in any way encourage judges to impose sentences greater than they would have otherwise imposed because of this particular sentence. How will that message be transmitted to the judiciary? It is not the intention of the Attorney General for that to happen. It is a protection mechanism for children, but sometimes in practice things do not turn out the way the Legislature intends. The circumstances are not black and white. With the rider of having the Attorney General consider in reply what I have said in respect of this matter, the Opposition will not oppose the bill.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Daryl Maguire and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Barry O'Farrell, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [3.41 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 is a further step in the series of measures that the Government is taking to improve confidence in public administration in New South Wales. The reforms in this bill have been requested by each of the integrity and law enforcement agencies that are affected. They will strengthen our integrity and law enforcement agencies, and remove obstacles and red tape that inhibit the efficient discharge of their functions. The bill will amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 and other legislation to enable certain information, including criminal intelligence, to be requested, disclosed and used for vetting applicants for positions with the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the New South Wales Crime Commission, the NSW Police Force, and the Police Integrity Commission.

This bill will facilitate our integrity and law enforcement agencies to effectively screen prospective employees for their suitability. It will also apply to vetting applicants for positions with the inspectors of each of these three commissions. Two further reforms will ensure that the Ombudsman has access to information held by public sector organisations, which he requires to perform his functions. The bill also will exempt appropriately trained officers of the Police Integrity Commission from the requirement to have licences or permits for certain firearms and weapons while performing Police Integrity Commission duties. This will eliminate unnecessary paperwork for appropriately trained officers at the Police Integrity Commission who need access to a range of firearms and weapons to perform their investigation and surveillance duties.

Finally, the bill will enable judges or former judges of the District Court of New South Wales to be appointed as Chairperson of the Management Committee for the New South Wales Crime Commission. It is

proposed to amend the legislation governing the four agencies that investigate crime and corruption in New South Wales—namely the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Police Integrity Commission, the Crime Commission, and the NSW Police Force—to authorise the use of personal information held by Government agencies, and in particular the criminal information database maintained by the NSW Police Force, the Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and the Roads and Maritime Services Licenses Register, in the process of determining the suitability of an applicant for employment, or a prospective consultant.

The screening process includes reviewing the criminal history of and criminal intelligence about not only an applicant, who gives his or her consent to a security check as part of the application process, but also associates of the applicant. As the applicant may not be aware of the criminal history of his or her associates, it is important that the agencies do not merely rely on the applicant to disclose this information about his or her associates, and it is not sufficient to rely on the applicant obtaining consent from these associates, who may or may not have been identified as such by the applicant.

The agencies need to be confident that their prospective employees are not at risk of coercion, exploitation or improper influence by family members or associates, who may seek to take advantage of the employee's access to highly sensitive information and resources. The Government is committed to providing these agencies with the necessary powers to ensure they maintain the highest integrity. In two years the Attorney General will appoint a former judge or similarly well-qualified person to review the practices and procedures adopted by agencies using vetting information. A review report will be submitted to the Attorney General and the relevant Minister who may make recommendations in relation to the collection, use and disclosure of vetting information, and related practices and procedures in the future.

Amendments proposed to the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996 in this bill will provide the same exemption for appropriately trained officers of the Police Integrity Commission in relation to the use of firearms and other police equipment as is currently in place for officers of the Police Integrity Commission who are "approved former police officers" and "seconded police officers" from other jurisdictions. In a report published in December 2012 the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission reviewed and supported a request from the Police Integrity Commission that investigators be provided with access to antipersonnel spray, batons and magazines for semiautomatic pistol ammunition in a manner that does not require appropriately trained officers to obtain licences or permits. Those amendments will reduce paperwork and delays for the Police Integrity Commission. This bill also contains two proposals to assist the Ombudsman to access information from public service agencies.

The first will authorise public sector agencies to provide personal information to the Ombudsman in response to a preliminary inquiry without having to comply with certain information protection principles, giving statutory effect to a current temporary direction by the Privacy Commissioner. The second will enable records relating to young offenders that have made under the Young Offenders Act 1997 to be disclosed to and kept by the Ombudsman. A further amendment in the bill relates to the appointment of an independent chair of the New South Wales Crime Commission Management Committee under the Crime Commission Act 2012. The primary role of the management committee is to make references for investigations conducted by the Crime Commission. The new position of an independent chairperson of this committee was based on a recommendation of the report into the Crime Commission, with the purpose of the independent chair being to provide greater independence, oversight and scrutiny to the management committee decisions.

The report recommended that the role be performed "by a retired or former judge of an Australian court". This recommendation was adopted in the Crime Commission Act 2012 but was restricted to a former judge of the Supreme Court, a former judge of the Federal Court, or a former justice of the High Court of Australia. Mr David Patten subsequently was appointed to the role of chair. Mr Patten had been a District Court judge and an Acting Supreme Court judge. To make it abundantly clear that the appointment of Mr Patten is valid, the Crime Commission Act 2012 is being amended retrospectively to add a former judge of the District Court of New South Wales to the eligibility criteria. The Government is committed to improving accountability and ethical standards in public administration. The reforms in the bill will strengthen and support our integrity and law enforcement agencies. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Ron Hoenig and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

ELECTION FUNDING, EXPENDITURE AND DISCLOSURES AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING) BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Barry O'Farrell, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [3.48 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment (Administrative Funding) Bill 2013 implements the recommendations made by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters late last year following its inquiry into administrative funding for minor parties in New South Wales. Part 6A of the current Act establishes an Administration Fund to be managed by the Election Funding Authority. The fund is designed to assist with the costs of managing the day-to-day activities of political parties and independent elected members. It does not cover costs associated with election campaigns. Under the current Act parties and independent elected members are entitled to receive a single annual payment from an Administration Fund to cover their actual administrative and operating expenses. The maximum amount that can be claimed per year is the lesser of \$80,000 per elected member or \$2 million dollars.

Over the past four years the Act has been amended substantially to improve transparency in relation to election campaign funding. In 2010 caps were imposed on the value of political donations that parties and elected members can receive from particular donors. The most recent amendments to campaign funding in the Act saw the realisation of my Government's commitment to ban political donations from corporations and other entities—and end the decisions for donations culture that had developed under the former Labor Government. There is no doubt that reforms to the Act over the years have increased the record-keeping and compliance burden faced by parties and members to meet growing public expectations of transparency in this area. The Administration Fund was established as part of the 2010 amendments to the Act to help offset the cost of complying with the new rules, and to make up for the loss of revenue available to parties and independent members to meet their administrative expenses as a result of caps on political donations.

Last year I referred matters relating to the administrative funding of smaller parties to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for inquiry and report. The reference was made following concerns raised by the Legislative Council Select Committee on the Provisions of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011 that donations reforms may be having a disproportionate financial impact on smaller political parties. The joint standing committee heard evidence from a range of stakeholders, including representatives of the smaller parties. The committee heard evidence that smaller parties can no longer rely solely on volunteers, but must employ staff with professional skills in order to meet their disclosure and administrative obligations under the Act. The committee observed that as a result of amendments to the Act there is "an increased administrative burden on minor parties, resulting in higher administrative costs". Overall, the committee concluded, "There has been a particular impact on minor parties with respect to the administrative costs related to complying with the Act".

The committee issued its report in November 2012. Its recommendations are primarily aimed at improving the timeliness and frequency of payments from the Administration Fund so that independent members and parties are not disadvantaged by undue delays. It also recommends an increase in the maximum annual amounts available from the Administration Fund. Instead of applying the existing flat rate per endorsed member or independent member, adjusted for inflation, the committee recommends that the maximum amount of funding should be determined on a sliding scale according to the number of elected members endorsed by the party.

The committee's recommended funding formula was: \$200,000 for the first elected member of a party and \$200,000 for Independent elected members; \$150,000 for the second elected member of a party; \$100,000 for the third elected member of a party; and \$83,000 for each elected member thereafter, up to a cap of 25 elected members. The committee suggests that these amounts should apply to the upcoming round of claims for administrative expenditure, which relate to expenses incurred in the 2012 calendar year. The committee also recommends that parties and independent members be reimbursed from the administration fund on a quarterly basis and within one month of lodging their claim for payment with the authority. This bill seeks to implement the recommendations of the committee with respect to the Administration Fund.

The department has consulted with the Election Funding Authority in relation to the amendments proposed by the committee. During consultation the authority raised concerns with respect to the proposed one-month deadline for the processing and payment of administrative funding claims. To address the authority's concerns the bill imposes a six-week deadline on the authority with respect to the payment of claims for administrative funding. Minor parties and independent members contribute to the quality and diversity of our democracy, and their long-term viability should be supported in the best interests of that democracy. The Government looks forward to the views of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters on how the Act might be further improved when it reports on its review of the State's electoral legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Ron Hoenig and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

CRIMES (SENTENCING PROCEDURE) AMENDMENT (PROVISIONAL SENTENCING FOR CHILDREN) BILL 2013

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [3.53 p.m.]: I contribute to debate on the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Provisional Sentencing for Children) Bill 2013. The object of the bill is to enable the provisional sentencing of children who are convicted of murder. In the case of *R v SLD*, in 2002 Justice Wood noted the limitations of normal sentencing principles when assessing the terms of a sentence for a child convicted of murder. He indicated that alternative sentencing options may be appropriate in such circumstances. Following Justice Wood's decision, in September 2009 the Sentencing Council released a research report, "Provisional sentencing for children". The report deals with sentencing of children between the ages of 10 and 14 who have committed serious crime. The report recommended that there would be a provisional sentencing scheme for children convicted of murder. This bill implements the recommendations of the NSW Sentencing Council. Clause 1 of the bill sets out the name—also called the short title—of the proposed Act. Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act on the date of assent to the proposed Act. Schedule 1[1] to the bill inserts a new section 60B into the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act to provide:

- (1) A court that imposes a sentence on an offender for the offence of murder may impose a sentence for that offence as a provisional sentence if:
 - (a) the offender was less than 16 years of age when the offence was committed, and
 - (b) the offender is less than 18 years of age when the provisional sentence is imposed, and
 - (c) the sentence proposed to be imposed for the offence is or includes a term of imprisonment, and
 - (d) the court is of the opinion that it is not appropriate to impose an ordinary sentence on the offender because the information presently available does not permit a satisfactory assessment of whether the offender has or is likely to develop a serious personality or psychiatric disorder, or a serious cognitive impairment, such that the court cannot satisfactorily assess either or both of the following matters:
 - (i) whether the offender is likely to re-offend,
 - (ii) the offender's prospects of rehabilitation.

A court may have regard to a case plan or proposed case plan for the offender in deciding whether it is appropriate to impose a provisional sentence. A provisional sentence is subject to periodic review and redetermination: that is, the provisional sentence is not the final sentence of the offender. A court that imposes a provisional sentence is to conduct progress reviews of the offender's case at least once every two years for the purpose of deciding whether it is appropriate to impose a final sentence on the offender. Any term of imprisonment imposed under the final sentence is not to exceed the term of imprisonment imposed under the provisional sentence.

The bill deals with a small and exceptional group of offenders, that is, children who have committed murder. It will only apply to offenders who were under the age of 16 at the time of their offence and who are under 18 at the time of sentencing. The bill acknowledges that courts may not have all the relevant information they need to properly assess a child's future dangerousness and prospects of rehabilitation at the time of

sentence. The member for Heffron referred to the dreadful Bulger case in England, where a young fellow was murdered by two offenders aged 10. Although these cases are rare we must have legislation in place in case they occur. Imagine the mental state of a child who is committing murder at the tender age of 10. It is hard to believe. It curdles my blood to think of a 10-year-old committing murder but, obviously, we have to deal with these matters in our society.

The bill will allow courts to sentence an offender provisionally, in the absence of relevant information, and then keep tabs on the offender's conduct and rehabilitation in custody. Under the proposed scheme courts can impose a provisional sentence that can be reduced, but not increased, on review. This gives some certainty to the child offender, who will know that his or her final sentence may be the same as provisional sentence but will not exceed it. In deciding whether to impose a provisional sentence a court may refer to the case plan that has been developed for the offender, usually by Juvenile Justice. Therefore, the court will have information about how the offender will be managed in custody and whether its concerns about the offender's rehabilitation prospects are likely to be addressed. Courts will also have two reports by Juvenile Justice and Corrective Services when they conduct progress reviews. These reports allow the court to check on what care and treatment has been provided to the offender, and on the offender's development while in custody.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes a consequential amendment that ensures both provisional and final sentences imposed under the new scheme can be appealed as a sentence under the Criminal Appeal Act 1912. Issues considered by the Legislation Review Committee regarding trespasses on personal rights and liberties as outlined in section 8A of the Legislation Review Act included the effect of being in custody on a court's assessment of matters relevant to sentencing. Notwithstanding that the bill appears to encourage rehabilitation of child offenders, the committee noted that an offender who received a provisional sentence will be in custody when the court is carrying out progress reviews to determine whether to impose a final sentence.

The committee was concerned about any possible effects of detention on the matters that the court will assess as part of its progress reviews under sections 60E and 60F. In respect of delays in final sentencing, schedule 1 [1] to the bill inserts new section 60H into the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999. When a court has imposed a provisional sentence on an offender it must impose a final sentence within the time frames set out in that section. The Legislation Review Committee noted that under new section 60H an offender may have to wait up to five years from the date of his or her provisional sentence for his or her final sentence to be imposed. The committee was concerned that this could interfere with the process of rehabilitation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.01 p.m.]: I contribute to the debate on the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Provisional Sentencing for Children) Bill 2013, a fairly significant piece of legislation. I intend to go through the bill piece by piece. The bill provides for a new scheme for the provisional sentencing of children who are convicted of murder. As members from both sides of the House indicated earlier, murder is one of the most horrific crimes in our wider community, particularly when committed by young children. It has dire consequences for all concerned. I hope that the provisions of this bill are used minimally in the community. Unfortunately, because of the way our community has evolved it is important to have in place proper sentencing procedures.

The bill allows a court to sentence a person aged under 18 years who has been convicted of murder to imprisonment on a provisional basis if the offender was under 16 years of age at the time of the offence and the court cannot satisfactorily assess the offender's prospects of rehabilitation or likelihood of reoffending because it is not clear at the time of the sentence whether the offender has or is likely to develop a serious psychological or psychiatric disorder, or cognitive impairment. A provisional sentence must be reviewed at least every two years after it is imposed to determine whether it is appropriate to impose a final sentence on the offender. A report on the offender's psychiatric, cognitive and psychological development must be considered as part of each review.

A final sentence must be imposed within five years of the date on which the provisional sentence was imposed, and at least one year before the end of the non-parole period for the provisional sentence. A final sentence cannot exceed the length of the provisional sentence. Both provisional sentences and final sentences are subject to appeal under the Criminal Appeal Act 1912. If a provisional sentence is appealed against a court may substitute a new provisional sentence or a final sentence. I shall now address various points within the bill. When determining the appropriate sentence for an offender a court must consider the prospects of rehabilitation.

I commend the Attorney General for that. Many pieces of legislation he has introduced contain the strong desire for rehabilitation. The Attorney General is always looking for the betterment of the community,

particularly in youth. However, this can be difficult when sentencing a child as the ongoing development of the young offender's mind may make it impossible for a court to properly assess these matters at the time of sentencing. This difficulty is particularly acute when sentencing a child for the serious crime of murder, which usually carries a lengthy term of imprisonment. As the offender's mind will still be developing rapidly, the court may not be able to assess whether the offender will develop a serious personality or psychiatric disorder, or cognitive impairment in the future. Consequently, this will make it difficult to assess the likelihood that the offender will engage in rehabilitation and their propensity for future offending.

This bill recognises these difficulties and provides courts with the option of imposing a provisional sentence where there is insufficient information to make a proper assessment of these matters. The offender's progress must then be reviewed on a periodic basis before a final sentence is imposed. The provisional sentencing regime will help courts to make a more informed decision when sentencing children convicted of murder. The additional time provided during the review period will enable the court to better reflect the offender's future dangerousness and prospects of rehabilitation in the final sentence imposed. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government has introduced these reforms in response to a report commissioned by the Sentencing Council of New South Wales.

The report concluded that a scheme of provisional sentencing should be available for children convicted of murder where the information available at the time of sentencing does not permit a proper assessment to be made in relation to an offender's potential for future dangerousness or rehabilitation. The council commissioned the report following the decision of the Honourable Justice James Wood in *R v SLD*. In that matter Justice Wood confirmed the requirement for sentencing courts to consider the risk that an offender poses to the community, but noted the difficulty that task poses when dealing with a juvenile convicted of murder.

The court was forced to sentence that young offender on the basis of what was known at the time of sentence, despite the uncertainty that existed about his development. Justice Wood considered that his only alternative in the circumstances of that matter was to impose a long head sentence and a much shorter non-parole period. This bill addresses the concerns raised by Justice Wood by giving courts faced with these particularly challenging cases an opportunity to further consider the offender's development over a period of years before imposing a final sentence. Such sentences will be limited and can be imposed only in cases where a child has been convicted of murder and the court considers that insufficient information is available at the time of sentence to assess relevant matters going to the likelihood of reoffending and/or the offender's prospects of rehabilitation.

Further, a final sentence must be imposed on the offender within five years of the provisional sentence and at least one year before the expiry of the non-parole period of this provisional sentencing. I believe I have adequately covered the many parts of this bill. As I said, it is another step forward by our Attorney General and his department to align this Government's actions with community expectation. I commend the Attorney General for his vision and his staff for their attention to detail in the bill. It reflects what the community wants. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG SMITH (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [4.10 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members for Heffron, Heathcote and Tweed for their contribution to the debate. In relation to the point raised by the member for Heffron, I appreciate his concern that the provisional sentencing scheme will lead to courts inflating the sentence at the outset in the expectation that it will later be reduced. I note that the courts must follow ordinary sentencing principles, both when imposing a provisional sentence and when imposing a final sentence. Any provisional sentence imposed other than in accordance with ordinary sentencing principles would be open to appeal and can be appealed under the provisions of the bill.

As I stated in my second reading speech, section 60I provides that both provisional sentences and final sentences are subject to appeal under the Criminal Appeal Act. Where there is an appeal against the provisional sentence the court may vary the provisional sentence by substituting either a new provisional sentence or a final sentence. This bill provides an additional tool for judges faced with the difficult task of sentencing children convicted of murder. It allows the final sentencing of these offenders to be deferred until more is known about their future danger to society and their prospects of rehabilitation. This makes for more informed sentencing decisions and in doing so promotes the rehabilitation of those offenders and the protection of the community. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by the Hon. Greg Smith agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (COURT COSTS LEVY) BILL 2013

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 28 February 2013.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [4.13 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Court Costs Levy) Bill 2013 in the absence of, and on behalf of, the shadow Attorney General and member for Liverpool, with words crafted by him. The part of my speech that is not crafted by him I will indicate to the House. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The objects of this bill are:

- (a) to amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to make certain accused persons found guilty of offences in summary proceedings before the Local Court automatically liable to pay a court costs levy. The levy will replace the present system under which the Local Court has the discretion to make an order that an accused person pay court costs if found guilty, and
- (b) to amend the Fines Act 1996 to provide that, for the purpose of that Act, a court costs levy is to be treated as a fine for the purposes of enforcement action, and
- (c) to amend the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 merely to restate the current system that applies to criminal proceedings involving children, under which there is no automatic costs levy but the court has a discretion to make an order that an accused person who has been found guilty of an offence pay court costs.

The impact of the bill will be to add a fine of \$83 to the conviction of most people for offences dealt with in Local Courts. It seems to be strictly a revenue-raising measure driven by Treasury. There is no deterrent or rehabilitative measure associated with the bill. Current section 215 of the Criminal Procedure Act provides that at the end of summary proceedings the court may order that professional costs and court costs be paid by the accused person. Various qualifications are placed on the section. Court costs are defined as filing fees for a court attendance notice or such other amount as the court considers to be fair and reasonable. Section 211A imposes a liability on an accused person convicted of a summary offence to pay a court cost levy that will be prescribed by regulation. Subsection (2) provides exceptions to the payment of the levy. Those exceptions include:

- (2) However, a court costs levy is not payable in relation to any of the following:
 - (a) a conviction resulting in the imposition of a sentence of imprisonment (unless the execution of the sentence is suspended by the court),
 - (b) an order under section 10 (1) (a) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 in relation to an offence that is not punishable by imprisonment,
 - (c) a finding of guilt in relation to a traffic offence (within the meaning of section 210 of this Act) by the Local Court when dealing with the accused person under Division 4 of Part 3 of the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987,
 - (d) a conviction in proceedings before the Drug Court,
 - (e) a conviction that the regulations exempt from liability to pay the levy.
- (3) A convicted person who is under the age of 18 years is not liable to pay the court costs levy if the court directs that the person is exempt from liability to pay the levy in respect of the conviction.

The court retains a discretion to impose the levy and an appeal stays the liability to pay the levy. Interestingly, section 215 (1) (b) and (2), which deal with the awarding of professional costs, are omitted from the bill altogether. The levy will apply to proceedings already commenced if not finally determined. There is provision for ministerial review after 12 months. The Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 is amended by giving Children's Courts the discretion to order costs to be paid. I wish to add to those comments crafted by the shadow Attorney General. This bill appears to be a revenue-raising measure. It does seem to arise from an investigation by Treasury or the Productivity Commission and a decision that the cost of each Local Court matter is \$250.

As the Attorney General would know, that is a cost applied by bankers and is not an actual cost of justice. Each case is different. The cost of each case is influenced by the prosecution, defence, Corrective Services and the length and complexity of the case before the court. I apprehend that Treasury has hunted around for a way to raise funds and the avenue of utilising people convicted of summary offences in the Local Court has presented itself as a mechanism for so doing. I am pleased that the Attorney General will review the bill in 12 months time. The problem with this bill is that it tells the magistrates of the Local Court that the Government does not trust their judicial discretion in determining when costs are properly payable by offenders.

The Attorney General said in his second reading speech that there is inconsistency in the application of discretion by magistrates. As I have stated previously, the productivity commission deemed the cost of each Local Court matter is \$250 per case. The flow-on effect is this: other than the exceptions that the Attorney General has referred to, each conviction in the Local Court will attract an automatic \$83 cost that is regarded as a fine. If an 18-year-old Koori kid is arrested for three counts of possession of cannabis, one count of using offensive language and some other matter that would normally be dealt with by way of a bond, under section 9 or section 12 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act that young kid will automatically have a \$83 court cost attached to each charge.

I can tell the House, from my experiences in the criminal law over almost three decades, that that amount will not be paid by Aboriginal youths; they will have their drivers licences cancelled or their vehicle registration cancelled, and they will then be arrested for driving with a cancelled licence or driving an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, as the fines procedure keeps chasing them. Then there will be some argument or disputation with the police and that will lead to more charges, to be dealt with again hopefully by non-custodial penalties, with the addition to the penalty of whatever are the court costs. I can see this becoming an escalating burden on the State.

It is all very well for people in the Productivity Commission to say that on average a case in the Local Court costs \$250. Those people are accountants; they are not attorneys general, lawyers or judges, and they do not know how the judicial system works. If bean counters are allowed to intrude into the judicial system there is a risk of greater injustice than could occur if legislative amendments were made in accordance with the wishes of some rednecks who want to go over the top. In fact, I would prefer the rednecks to the bean counters. The Attorney General should consider this. Even if this measure does not impact adversely on the poor and dysfunctional in the community, even if it impacts upon a normal person who should be able to afford to pay it, the cost to the State of recovering \$83 from somebody is enormous.

It is fine to say that those who commit an offence should make a contribution for that. I have no argument with that. If they can afford to pay it or are likely to pay, that is fine and they should make a contribution to the State. In summary matters substantial fines used to be imposed so that the State could run the Local Court and the summary proceedings at a profit. We seem to have moved on somewhat from that. So the theory is fine, but it will impact probably the most vulnerable and the indigent. When it does it becomes a greater recurring cost to the State. I ask the Attorney to consider when he replies to the debate—and I ask him not to rely on what is given to him by the department, because I know he has considerable personal knowledge in this area—that it may well be better, with a bill like this that provides for the payment of costs, to allow the judiciary to have even greater discretion in when to apply this provision and when not to apply it.

The complaint by the Productivity Commission—not the Law Reform Commission, the Bar Association, the Law Society, Crown prosecutors, public defenders or magistrates—is that there is a lack of consistency. The legislature normally gains consistency in two ways: the Attorney could, through the Judicial Commission, ask that this be done administratively; or rules could be legislated to provide greater consistency. I am sure it is not the intention of the Attorney General to impact the indigent and other vulnerable people in the community, but that is what this sort of measure does.

I want to mention another matter. This Parliament needs to resist the temptation, which it seems to face almost on a daily basis, of interfering with judicial discretion. Eminent and knowledgeable lawyers preside in the courts of this State. They work extremely hard, in oppressive circumstances these days. They should be trusted. This House always seems to overreact to one of 10,000 cases because it has had some publicity associated with it. The Parliament should exercise restraint before it acts as it normally does and tries to confine judicial discretion in so many areas. Having said that, I advise the House that the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.24 p.m.]: I wish to make a few comments about the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Court Costs Levy) Bill 2013. At present the Local Court

of New South Wales has the power to make an order that the defendant pay court costs, generally in the amount of the filing fee, if the defendant is convicted. At present magistrates have discretion to award costs against a defendant at the end of summary proceedings if the defendant is convicted or an order is made against the defendant. At present such orders are currently being applied inconsistently. The proposed amendment aims to achieve greater consistency in the application of court costs. It also is in line with the rationale behind the existing power to order court costs, that is, that a proportion of the cost of conducting criminal proceedings should be borne by those found guilty of an offence. Persons liable to pay the levy will have a range of alternative payment options available if they are financially disadvantaged.

This bill will amend the Criminal Procedure Act to replace the existing discretion with an automatic statutory court costs levy. This levy would apply to most defendants found guilty in summary proceedings. The levy would apply to most convictions in the Local Court, as well as some orders under section 10 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 where the defendant is found guilty but the court does not proceed to conviction. The levy would align with the current filing fee of \$83. The key is consistency. The Attorney General once more shows that he is very vigilant. This measure reflects our policy of openness and transparency. For most people going to court can be a very stressful experience. It is usually accompanied by fairly large legal fees, court costs and so on. This measure attempts to achieve consistency across the legal system.

It was estimated in the Productivity Commission's 2013 report on government services that the average cost to government of finalising a criminal matter in the Local Court is \$250 per matter. The payment of a levy therefore represents a modest contribution by the offender towards the costs involved in bringing them to justice. We should bear in mind that an offender must be found guilty before this levy can be applied. I think the levy reflects what the wider community wants from their legal system—not what the politicians or lawyers want, but what is wanted by the wider community, the cornerstone of our current judicial system. It is important that offenders take responsibility for the impact of their actions on the community, including the cost of bringing them to justice.

There are certain exceptions to the application of the proposed levy. The levy will not apply, for example, in the Children's Court; nor will it apply to findings of guilt recorded in the Local Court regarding traffic offences involving children where the court has chosen to deal with the defendant under the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act. Furthermore, the levy will not apply to convictions resulting in a sentence of imprisonment, as prisoners will have little opportunity to pay off such debts while in prison and debt accumulation could detrimentally impact upon the rehabilitation of the prisoner. In a similar fashion, the levy will not apply to convictions in the Drug Court of New South Wales where the imposition of further monetary penalties on this group of offenders may have a negative effect on their rehabilitation and counteract the effects of the Drug Court Program.

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

WINDSOR BRIDGE

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [4.30 p.m.]: Together with the shadow Minister for Heritage I will speak to this petition in relation to Windsor Bridge. First, I thank the men and women present in the public gallery today, those whom I visited in that lovely part of Sydney and those who have taken the effort since I have been shadow Minister for Roads to lobby me and to enlighten me about their issues and concerns. Being a member of Parliament is very different from being a bureaucrat in an agency.

Mr Andrew Fraser: You would know.

Mr RYAN PARK: The member for Coffs Harbour says that I would know. I do know that they are very different roles because I have been both. Staff of the Roads and Maritime Services—formerly known as the Roads and Traffic Authority—are fantastic at building roads and are very good engineers, but they are not great at listening to community concerns. That is not their strength. That is why people rely on those of us who sit in this Chamber. Our role is not to trot out a government department line or what a government agency says; it is to challenge, poke, prod and critically analyse. We have to look hard at decisions that Cabinet is making and to question them. Sometimes it means not toeing the party line and remembering that we work for the community,

not a government agency. Having worked in both roles, I know very well that the two roles are different. The men and women in the Windsor and surrounding communities have made it very clear that this proposal needs to be re-examined. I will talk about it from a traffic modelling scenario. The report of the Roads and Traffic Authority, now Roads and Maritime Services, states:

If the RTA intends to decommission the bridge in the near future, the bridge in its present condition and loading will be safe for some time.

The bridge will be "safe for some time" but it is not falling down at the moment. Maybe it is about effectively managing traffic going forward, which means that there would need to be a long-term plan for the bridge. The problem is that traffic modelling for the bridge by the former Roads and Traffic Authority says that it will be "viable for around only 10 years" before it hits capacity. That is a fact. I ask Government members to remember that there is a different role between being a public servant and a member of Parliament. A member of Parliament is charged with the responsibility of listening.

More than 12,000 signatures have been obtained on this petition, there have been countless submissions and there has been a huge campaign, not by quasi Labor people, as was said to me very early on, but by men and women of the community concerned about the future of not only Thompson Square but the whole of Windsor. They want the best outcome: they want a better outcome. They want members of Parliament who represent them to challenge and to make sure that their concerns are being listened to. I think that is reasonable for the men and women in that community to expect that, and that is something that I encourage members of the Government to do a lot more. [*Time expired.*]

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.35 p.m.]: I have pleasure to lead on behalf of the Government in this important debate on this integral piece of infrastructure, the Windsor Bridge, and how important to the Hawkesbury region. From the outset I say there is no more passionate advocate on behalf of the unique heritage of the Hawkesbury area than I am.

[*Interruption*]

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! While I appreciate that members of the gallery are passionate about this issue, they are not permitted to interrupt or participate in the debate. While the House is happy for debate on the petition to take place, they will respect all members' rights to be heard in silence.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: My family's involvement with Thompson Square dates back to just over 200 years ago when the Father of Australia, Governor Lachlan Macquarie, proclaimed Thompson Square. Standing at his side was his senior orderly, my ancestor, Charles Whalan. He travelled alongside Macquarie for the 12 years of his tenure, and had done so with the previous Governor, Governor Bligh. He knew this area implicitly. Our family has remained in this area during the following two centuries.

In 1812 Thompson Square was a square, on the north-western side of which there was a road corridor that provided access from the square down to the river where goods were transported onto ships and transported to the Sydney market. In 1874, with the completion of the current bridge, that corridor still provided the access to that bridge. Indeed, one travelled down and turned left onto the new bridge. In 1939 the Department of Roads decided that it would provide a new access to the current bridge from the roundabout at the Bridge Street and George Street intersection and a new corridor was completed—that corridor dissecting and halving Thompson Square as it sits today.

Thompson Square is divided by that road corridor. The option in the new plan that this Government supports—and the previous Government and the former Roads and Traffic Authority, now Roads and Maritime Services, decided in 2008—restores Thompson Square to its original state. It will use the original heritage corridor for accessing the Hawkesbury River. The new bridge will be a new two-lane bridge with an ability to provide three lanes, cycleway, pathway and improved intersections on both sides of the bridge. In 2008 the previous Government put forward this proposal with great fanfare. The *Gazette* featured the former member for Riverstone on its front page, stating "We are building infrastructure for Western Sydney". Unfortunately, the previous Government was big on promises but not too big on delivering infrastructure.

In 2011 when this Government was elected I, along with my colleagues the member for Riverstone and the member for Londonderry, made a commitment that we would follow through and build the new bridge, because we understand and appreciate the importance of this integral piece of infrastructure. We are going to

complete what we promised for this area. When we attained the Treasury benches in 2011 we found that although the Roads and Traffic Authority, as it then was, had visited my office in 2008 and had advised me that the bridge was going to be commenced in 2009, unfortunately those people told the same untruths as the former Government.

There was not one piece of evidence of an environmental impact statement, a geotechnical investigation or a heritage investigation, and there was not even a design for the bridge. So we undertook to go back to the community for further community consultation, then to undertake an environmental impact statement and a heritage assessment, and then to provide a full design, which is currently to be approved by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. We certainly hope it will be done as soon as practicable. I am very proud to be a member of this Parliament delivering—not making false promises to the people of western Sydney and my electorate—that infrastructure. I took the liberty of writing to every one of my 11,000 constituents on the western side of the Hawkesbury River and I got one response objecting to the particular design. That is a glowing endorsement for our Government and the proposal and I look forward to our Government delivering it. [*Time expired.*]

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [4.40 p.m.]: I thank everyone who is in the gallery today. I thank members of Community Action for Windsor Bridge for their extraordinary work. They have held this Government to account, and rightly so, and have made sure that this debate happened. The petition is about the shocking and wanton destruction, the slicing up and cutting off, of one of our most precious heritage precincts. The classic view of Windsor includes the river, the development on its northern banks, Thompson Square and the bridge, as a compositional group that has remained relatively stable since early colonial times. As the environmental impact statement notes, that is very rare, particularly within the greater Sydney region.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Opposition members will remain silent.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY: Let us get this straight: The proposed option 1, with its traffic lights, raised bridge and significant road, will dominate the precinct, as will the massive roundabout on the other side of the river. The composition of the historical setting will be lost forever with the destruction of the historical alignments of the bridge and the old wharf. The decision to demolish the State-significant Windsor Bridge will destroy a rare historical and technical structure, to say nothing of the destruction of Aboriginal and other archaeological sites. Most importantly of all, this project will destroy some of our most important social history—history important not just to the Hawkesbury area but to our nation. Governor Lachlan Macquarie named Australia's first public square not after a king, a lord, a former Governor or a foreign dignitary, but after Andrew Thompson, a convict who had redeemed himself. As Nina Butler has so beautifully written:

In the soil of Thompson Square Governor Lachlan Macquarie wrote a symbolic contract with all Australians. In naming the Square for an ex-convict, he effectively sowed the seeds of his own destruction ... he stood up to the Exclusives; those who sought to rule by virtue of birth, social worth and economic power; choosing rather an Australia committed to a fair go for all.

What would be worth destroying that for? There will be no improvement; the new bridge will not help the flood issues or the traffic issues. It is a so-called cost-effective solution to nothing. If we do not label this as a short-sighted act of savagery we do not understand our history well enough. We saved The Rocks because we knew that what it stood for was bigger than what could be gained from its destruction. People who are able to flourish into the future are those who understand their past. Our heritage tells us who we are and how we came to be here. It tells us about what we stand for. If we lose this we are at risk of losing our core values. I ask the Coalition to join us and end this act of savagery—the costs are too high. Save Windsor Bridge, save Thompson Square. Save it for those in the gallery and save it for now and for our future. [*Time expired.*]

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [4.43 p.m.]: Since 1874 Windsor Bridge has stood proudly at its current location, providing safe and reliable access for the people of the district on both sides of the river—for the people on the far side to cross into the town and access the services at Windsor and for the people of Windsor to enjoy the hinterland. For those 140 years the bridge has served its purpose well. For most of us—and the member for Mount Druitt would know this well—after 140 years we are going to feel the strains of time. The existing Windsor Bridge has reached the end of its design life. In 2008 the Roads and Traffic Authority, as it was then, concluded that the most appropriate long-term solution was to build a replacement bridge in the same locality.

If we are going to respect the heritage of a town we have to respect the way that it has worked for all those years. Replacing the bridge in approximately its current location—35 metres downstream—will retain the

historic alignments of Windsor Bridge, it will retain the historic transport route and it will retain the way the town has always worked. While the Roads and Traffic Authority reached this conclusion in 2008 the first proposal for a bridge in the location we are speaking about was made four years earlier by the New South Wales Government Architect's Office in the Windsor Town Centre Masterplan, commissioned by Hawkesbury City Council. At that time there was no funding and no proposal as such to build a new bridge, but the Government Architect noted that it would enhance the historic alignments of Thompson Square and restore the way the town originally worked before the 1930s cutting if the new bridge were to be placed just downstream from the current location.

It was recommended to Hawkesbury City Council back in 2004 that on heritage grounds and out of respect for Thompson Square a new bridge should be built just downstream of the current bridge to restore the alignment of Old Bridge Street, which is precisely what we are now proposing. I put on the record that I am pleased that there is no building in the entire Thompson Square precinct that is in any way jeopardised by this project. Nothing is being demolished. The area of park will be enlarged and the combined areas covered by bitumen will be reduced—there will be a larger park for the community to use.

The approach road will be lower than the floor level of the lowest building in the precinct, so there will be no intrusion of visual sight lines across the square. The new bridge will be about four metres higher, providing a greater degree of flood immunity and reducing the frequency and duration of bridge closures during times of flood—something the community will very much appreciate. The community will continue to have access to a safe bridge across the river and access to the town of Windsor, as they have for the last 140 years, and hopefully this bridge will serve for another 140 years.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I thank members of the public in the gallery for coming to Parliament to hear this debate today. This mechanism was introduced by the Government to allow people to hear these debates in Parliament. I sincerely thank the people in the gallery for their attendance today.

Discussion concluded.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

AUSTRALIAN CAMBODIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION INC.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [4.48 p.m.]: Today we congratulate the Australian Cambodian Chinese Association Inc. for organising the 2013 Lunar New Year dinner and HSC Academic Awards ceremony on 16 February 2013. The dinner marked the beginning of the Year of the Snake by paying tribute to the achievements of the students belonging to the Chinese-Cambodian community after their hard work and efforts during the 2012 Higher School Certificate. This House also acknowledges the work of the Australian Cambodian Chinese Association Inc. Committee, led by its chairman Mr Sou Lien, in organising the successful function. The Australian Cambodian Chinese Association Inc. Committee should be commended for its work in preserving and promoting the Chinese-Cambodian culture for the whole of the Australian Community.

SHOALHAVEN LINEAR ACCELERATOR COMMITTEE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [4.49 p.m.]: On Thursday 7 March I was pleased to join with the member for Kiama to accept a cheque from the Shoalhaven Linear Accelerator Committee [LINAC] for \$557,500 on behalf of the Minister for Health and the New South Wales Government as the community's first progress payment towards the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre. The Shoalhaven Linear Accelerator Committee was established in 2004 and was instrumental in securing a commitment for a cancer care centre and \$34.8 million in funding from Commonwealth and State governments.

To date the Linear Accelerator Committee, currently under the leadership of Mayor Joanna Gash, has raised an incredible amount of money—well in excess of \$1.5 million. During the presentation the Lions Club of Nowra and the Lions Club of Jervis Bay donated a further \$10,000 each towards the Cancer Care Centre. The combined Lions Clubs of the Shoalhaven have joined with the committee to spearhead the fundraising efforts over many years. Construction of the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre is 75 per cent complete and it is due to be opened in the second half of this year. I congratulate the community on their wonderful fundraising.

CAMBODIA VISION

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [4.49 p.m.]: Today I commend Cambodia Vision for its successful fundraising dinner held on 9 March 2013. I congratulate committee members and donors on raising more than \$65,000 that evening. I acknowledge Mr Chek Ming Ly, chairperson, and Or Kim Frumar, vice chairperson, for their hard work in organising and hosting this successful event. I acknowledge also Cambodia Vision's special guests, Henry and Jenny Nghi of ABC Tissues, for their ongoing support for Cambodia Vision and the great work it has achieved.

PORT MACQUARIE BEATLES FESTIVAL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [4.50 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the organisers of the first Port Macquarie Beatles Festival. In particular, I acknowledge President Neil Porter, Vice President and Secretary Janette Hyde, Treasurer Eric Nethery and additional support provided by Necia Waghorn, Scott Mesiti, Geoff Cairns, John Bell, Rob Richardson, Amanda Hatton, Collin Ross, Ruth Lewis, Rod Powell, Tom Benson and Andy van Brandwyck.

JIM ANDERSON SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [4.51 p.m.]: This week two students in my electorate have been presented with Jim Anderson Scholarships: Gemma Barbagallo, Rooty Hill High School; and Mark Taii, Chifley College, Bidwill Campus. Sadly, this month marks the tenth anniversary of the passing of Jim Anderson. Jim, who was the member for Londonderry at the time, passed away on election day 2003. While passing on my best wishes and congratulations to the two graduates I have mentioned, I say to Jim's wife, Kathleen, daughter Rona and her family, son Robert and the rest of the family that we are all thinking of them at this difficult time. Finally, I am pleased that the State Government has continued to fund this scholarship in recognition of Jim Anderson's contribution as a member of Parliament and former Mayor of Blacktown City.

A TOUCH OF ORANGE CHARITY BALL

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [4.52 p.m.]: Today I draw the attention of the House to an incredible fundraising effort in the City of Orange to provide patient transport for people who need to travel to Westmead and other Sydney hospitals for treatment that is not available in the local area, and towards a research project at Westmead Hospital. There is always a need for funding for medical research, which makes this fundraising effort doubly significant. While health services in Orange have come a long way and have greatly improved, the organisers of A Touch of Orange Ball, chaired by Hugh Gardiner, recognised the need and held a charity ball to raise funds for that purpose. The organisers set the target for the 2012 A Touch of Orange charity ball at \$45,000. Hugh Gardiner and his committee can feel pleased because they raised a mammoth \$105,000. I congratulate them on their efforts. I wish Hugh and his committee further success for the 2013 A Touch of Orange charity ball.

CALVARY MATER NEWCASTLE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [4.53 p.m.]: Today we acknowledge the vital contribution that the Calvary Mater Hospital has made to the health and wellbeing of the people of Newcastle and the people of the Hunter more broadly. Pleasingly, the hospital has spent more than \$150,000 to upgrade existing equipment, including two ventilators for the intensive care unit, six low electric beds, 10 iPads and five bar fridges for adolescent patients in isolation. The Mater Auxiliary Group raised this money and all those purchases will go towards increasing services and better patient outcomes. I congratulate the Mater Auxiliary Group on its excellent work in raising \$445,000 in 2012, which made these purchases possible.

ILUKA WOMEN'S BOWLING CLUB FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [4.53 p.m.]: I congratulate the Iluka Women's Bowling Club on celebrating its fiftieth anniversary on 17 February 2013. I congratulate the past and present members of the club on their commitment to keeping the club strong over such a long period and I wish them another 50 years and more.

GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN YOUNG ACHIEVERS AWARDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [4.54 p.m.]: Today we congratulate the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin on hosting the fourth successive Youth Achievers Awards Night on 2 March 2013. I note that

the function recognised students who achieved an Australian tertiary admission rank [ATAR] of 98 and above in the 2012 Higher School Certificate examinations. The function recognised the achievements in Indian languages, dance, drama, music, photography and visual arts. It also recognised State and national level sporting achievements by youth under 21 years of age. I congratulate President Lucky Singh and the organising committee on their outstanding service to the community.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT CHARLES BROCK

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [4.55 p.m.]: Today we congratulate Mr Charles Brock on being awarded a New South Wales Government Community Service Award in recognition of the enormous contribution he has made to the community through his membership and chairmanship of Woy Woy Community Aged Care and his many years as a member and office holder of the Rotary Club of Woy Woy. I commend Mr Brock for his caring and devoted nature, his service and impressive work ethic.

BANKSTOWN AUBURN COMMUNITY RADIO

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.56 p.m.]: Today I note that Bankstown Auburn Community Radio hosted a dinner in celebration of its successful community broadcasting. I note also that Bankstown Auburn Community Radio's licence was granted by the Australian Communications and Media Authority for a five-year term. Bankstown Auburn Community Radio produces a broad range of programs, including *The Way Life Is*, which deals with family issues; *Nine to Noon*, which has a news reading section; *Blast from the Past*, a 1950s and 1960s music request program; and a variety of multicultural programs, including programs in Macedonian, Arabic, Samoan and Spanish. I congratulate the executive committee of the Bankstown Auburn Community Radio on its tireless efforts, in particular President Tony Bennetts and the volunteers who have contributed to its success.

PREMIER'S AWARD FOR WOMAN OF THE YEAR DR CATHY FOLEY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [4.57 p.m.]: I congratulate Dr Cathy Foley of St Ives Chase, who was announced as the winner of the 2013 Premier's Award for Woman of the Year. Dr Cathy Foley is one of Australia's leading scientists. Her research, much of which has been ground breaking, has earned Cathy numerous accolades and the respect and admiration of her peers. In addition to her own considerable achievements, Cathy has also championed the role of women in physics and science for the past 28 years. I am delighted that she resides in the electorate of Davidson. As the Minister for Women, Ms Pru Goward, said, the Premier's Award for Woman of the Year is an opportunity to highlight a woman who has demonstrated the highest level of excellence and who inspires our community with her achievements and contributions to New South Wales and beyond. When asked about her work and women's participation in science Dr Foley said:

It is becoming increasingly clear that the role of the workplace in creating the right environment for women is critical if we are to embrace the full human potential.

I also again congratulate Catherine Knox, the Davidson Electorate Woman of the Year. Catherine is a champion for mums. Many mothers who have suffered from perinatal anxiety and depression have benefited from her work.

WESTERN SYDNEY CYCLING NETWORK

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [4.58 p.m.]: Today I commend the Western Sydney Cycling Network for the successful Community Bike Ride event held on 3 March 2013. I acknowledge the hard work, time spent and community involvement of President Doug Draper, Vice President Mr Joe Farrugia, Secretary Brian McMartin, ride coordinators Mr Mark Rutledge and Mr Bob Ward, and volunteers and members of the Western Sydney Cycling Network. I acknowledge also the success of the Community Bike Ride, with up to 50 or more cyclists attending any given event.

SHOALHAVEN LINEAR ACCELERATOR COMMITTEE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [4.59 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the extraordinary work of the Linear Accelerator Committee [LINAC], which recently handed a cheque for more than \$500,000 to NSW Health for the linear accelerator project. In particular, I acknowledge chair Mayor Joanna Gash and former chairs Councillor Greg Watson and the Hon. Paul Green, MLC, and committee members, including Paul Dean and Mick Ison, who have made an extraordinary contribution to this facility. There can be no doubt that without

these fundraising contributions, which now total well over \$1.7 million, this facility would not have been available to our community. These funds will provide the accommodation component of the Cancer Care Centre at Shoalhaven hospital. Last week I joined the Speaker and member for South Coast, the Federal member for Gilmore, and the Mayor of Shoalhaven City to take receipt of these moneys, which were raised through a number of fundraising organisations. In particular, I commend Lions Club Australia for its tireless efforts in this regard.

HUNTER SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [4.59 p.m.]: We acknowledge the importance of maintaining and observing history for future generations. We recognise the enormous contribution of Hunter soldiers to Australia's campaigns prior to World War I, during World War I and World War II, and since. We remember that shortly we will hold a special commemoration of Anzac Day in 2015. We congratulate Newcastle author Juan Mahony on his work in collecting and preserving primary source material relating to World War I and his effort in publishing this information to inform and educate the public about this important and significant period in Australian and world history.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER JESSE HANNA

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [4.59 p.m.]: Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello, who has responsibility for Youth Affairs, has appointed Mr Jesse Hanna from Bexley to the NSW Youth Advisory Council. The 12-member council is the major channel of communication between the State's young people and the Government. Mr Dominello said:

The Council provides young people with a mechanism to directly advise the government on youth issues and provide input into the development of policies which affect young people.

It makes a valuable and important contribution to the NSW Government's work and the way we deliver services to young people across the state.

Jesse is a fourth year commerce/law student at the University of New South Wales. He is chair of Rockdale City Council's youth council and received a St George Community Award for outstanding service to the St George Community in 2012. He also works part-time as a learn-to-swim instructor and a lifeguard. I congratulate Jesse on his appointment to the council. I look forward to working with him and his fellow members to address the issues of concern to young people.

TVB AUSTRALIA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.00 p.m.]: We congratulate TVB (Australia) on hosting the eighth commercial awards ceremony on 28 February 2013. We acknowledge the vital role that TVB (Australia) plays in multicultural media in Australia. We acknowledge the high quality of Chinese and Vietnamese programs presented to 25,000 viewers in Australia. We also congratulate the TVB (Australia) director of sales and marketing, Jacky Cheung, on his outstanding work in multicultural media.

HASTINGS HEROINES AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [5.01 p.m.]: I congratulate Marie Winter, Lynn Lelean, Barbara Smith, Maureen Cooke and Kylie Dowse on being named this year's Hastings Heroines at the 2013 International Women's Day Awards. I was pleased to be able to host this event with the Hastings Business Women's Network. It is an annual event that raises much-needed funds for the Hastings Women and Children's Refuge.

Community recognition statements concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [5.02 p.m.]: Friday 8 March was International Women's Day. As such, it was an important opportunity to reflect on the issues facing contemporary women and their ongoing

struggle for equality. The theme of this year's International Women's Day was "Ending Violence Against Women". The theme coincides with the New South Wales Government's priority to promote the advancement of women. We continue to note that the majority of the world's poor are women and, on average, women receive between 30 per cent and 40 per cent less pay than men for the same work. Sadly, women continue to be victims of violence. Rape and domestic violence are listed as significant causes of death and disability amongst women worldwide.

While International Women's Day is an opportunity to reflect on some of the tragedies and challenges that women face across the world, it is also an opportunity to acknowledge the many achievements that women have made and continue to make in the broader community. In Bankstown I had the pleasure of attending a breakfast in honour of International Women's Day hosted by the Zonta Club Sydney West. I thank Diana Humphries, the president of the club, for her invitation. During the breakfast 12 young students received Zonta Sydney West citizenship awards, including many from my electorate. In particular, I acknowledge Amara Khan of Bankstown Girls High School, Yasmine Dakkak of Bass Hill High School, Aditi Jalahandra of Birrong Girls High School, Yasmin Hamdash of Condell Park High School, Wafa Kazal of East Hills Girls Technology High School and Laila Ali of Wiley Park Girls High School who received this distinguished award.

The special guest speaker at the breakfast was Emma Sleeman of Concord High School, who has achieved much in her short years particularly due to her humanitarian work across the world. Her efforts and determination to make a difference must be commended. Emma was also the recipient of an Order of Australia Association Certificate for her service to the community. I look forward to attending another morning tea in Bankstown tomorrow in celebration of International Women's Day with staff from local businesses including St George Bank, Westpac, the Commonwealth Bank and agencies such as the local police command, Centrelink and the Electoral Commission. I thank Westpac Bankstown for inviting me to be a guest speaker at its important event.

Last week in celebration of International Women's Day I held a morning tea with Bankstown community leaders and community organisations. Bankstown is blessed to have a number of local women who excel in many fields, including public life, education, business, and community service. I thank the shadow Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, who was in attendance. I also acknowledge and thank a number of local principals who took time out of their busy schedules to attend the morning tea. I thank Anica Tanevski, Assistant Principal of Yagoona Public School; Linda Spence, Principal of Calvary Chapel Christian School; Iris Rittau, Principal of Georges Hall Public School; Kim Naylor, Principal of Mount Lewis Infants School; Jenny Eggins, Principal of Banksia Road Public School; and Sharron Curran, Principal of Bankstown South Infants Public School for attending the morning tea. I also thank the mothers and parents and citizens committee members who attended and celebrated the day with us.

Further, I acknowledge a number of other community leaders who attended. I thank Wafa Zaim of the Muslim Women's Association. I also thank Voula Kerr and her colleagues from the Greek Older Women's Network, Maria Cosmidis from the South Western Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Service, Elaine Crockett from Bankstown Women's Cancer Support, Maria Votanao of the Greenacre Area Neighbourhood Centre and Dale Donadel of the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre. I also acknowledge and thank the women from the New South Wales branch of Vietnamese Communities Australia, Meals on Wheels and other volunteers throughout the Bankstown local government area for attending the morning tea. I thank all attendees at the International Women's Day morning tea and hope all members of this House and women everywhere had the opportunity last Friday to reflect on the important status of women in our community.

SHOALHAVEN PARKINSON'S DISEASE SPECIALIST NURSE TRIAL

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [5.06 p.m.]: In 2010 an innovative pilot program commenced on the South Coast, a service to provide assistance and much-needed medical treatment to local Shoalhaven-based Parkinson's disease patients. Ms Marilia Pereira was appointed to the position of neurological nurse in 2010 and is highly respected across the local community. The service was welcomed by the more than 500 local residents currently diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, with 224 patients utilising the service provided by Ms Pereira. The service provides one-on-one treatment and support in the patient's own home, assisting them to manage and treat their disease. It has seen improvements in Parkinson's disease patients' physical and mental health, and increased carer support and assistance, and provided additional training in patient care for carers.

The program was conducted locally over a three-year period with the support of Parkinson's Australia, Parkinson's NSW and local health professionals. It is highly successful and well regarded in the medical

community, with 90 per cent of all healthcare professionals in the Shoalhaven region, including general practitioners, specialists, community nurses and allied health staff, supporting the specialist nurse trial. Parkinson's disease costs the Australian economy \$8 billion each year and the number of cases is predicted to rise by 80 per cent over the next 20 years. Unfortunately, this groundbreaking service is at risk as the Commonwealth Government has withdrawn its funding. Primary care funding is the responsibility of the Commonwealth and I am extremely disappointed that the success of the trial has not been recognised by the Federal Government in its decision to cut the funding. In fact, the Commonwealth Government withdrew its funding more than one year ago and the program has been funded through generous donations by private benefactors or donors, a pharmaceutical company and the local Bendigo Bank branch.

Most recently, a private benefactor donated \$40,000 to the program, which will ensure its operation through to June 2013. I congratulate Bendigo Bank on its leadership in providing funding for this fantastic program and sincerely thank the private benefactors for their generous donations. It is truly remarkable how the South Coast community has once again come together to support this program and ensure its survival. However, in the words of Parkinson's NSW chief executive officer Miriam Dixon, "We can't keep going on like this." Funding security is essential for this program to provide assurances to patients and their carers that this service will continue. As Patron of the Shoalhaven Shakers, a local Parkinson's support group, I have seen firsthand the effects that Parkinson's disease has on sufferers and the positive impacts of the neurological nurse's work. Many local patients, including Peter Moller, Ron Hewitt and Jenny Girdlestone, who utilise the services provided by Ms Pereira, are severely disappointed that the program is at risk.

The failure of the Federal Labor Government to fund this position has placed undue stress on the families of local sufferers. Should the program be forced to close in the future, it will severely diminish the work that has been undertaken by the Shoalhaven-based neurological nurse educator over the past three years. The local program has been overseen by a steering committee made up of medical health professionals, patients and community members who deplore the fact that the Federal Labor Government has ignored the success of the trial and not continued the funding. Representations made by me and the State Minister for Health to the Federal Government have not provided any assurances that funding for this important program will be provided into the future.

In December last year, along with the Liberal candidate for the Federal electorate of Gilmore, Ann Sudmalis, I launched a petition calling on the Federal Government to provide funding to continue the services of the Shoalhaven-based neurological nurse educator. To date, the petition has garnered almost 1,200 signatures, and the number continues to rise. If the program had proved to be unsuccessful the Federal Government might have been justified in cancelling the funding. However, with the program receiving national attention for its overwhelming success in patient outcomes and reduced admissions to higher healthcare providers, withdrawal of government funds is simply unfounded.

I call on the Federal Government to reverse its decision to withdraw funding for the Shoalhaven-based neurological nurse. I ask it to reconsider in light of the petition and in light of all the overwhelming evidence of the success of the program, and allocate what I would consider to be a fairly minor amount of funding for one position for a Shoalhaven neurological nurse educator. Marilia Pereira is much loved and much supported by the Parkinson's community, and we would hate to lose the services she provides because the Federal Government decides to cut funds to a highly successful program.

BURRINJUCK ELECTORATE EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPONSE

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [5.11 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the incredible community spirit and can-do attitude in the Burrinjuck electorate. On Tuesday 8 January the fire danger in the Burrinjuck electorate reached the "catastrophic" level for the first time since this rating was introduced by the Rural Fire Service in 2009. I spent that day visiting the fire control centres in Queanbeyan and Goulburn to be briefed on their preparations. That afternoon a fire started at Jugiong near the intersection of the Hume Highway and Cobblers Road. Driven by 60 kilometres per hour winds, the fire burnt out 450 hectares within an hour and threatened residents on Childowla Road, Talmo Road and Bogalara Road to the south of Bookham.

Our volunteer firefighters responded magnificently, putting in a valiant effort—often with little sleep or respite—until the fire was brought under control just 10 kilometres west of Yass. The Cobbler's Road fire was one of the three worst fires in New South Wales this fire season. In all, 10,169 head of sheep and 170 head of cattle were lost and 1,291 kilometres of fencing were destroyed across almost 19,000 hectares of open grazing

and timbered grazing land. The Department of Primary Industries estimates the economic impact of this fire at almost \$19 million—that is 194 per cent of the total gross value of agricultural production across the five affected parishes.

In all, 70 properties were directly affected by the fire. Some of the worst-affected properties were Tekooti, Hansie and Gary Armour; Kingslea, Caroline Spittle; Kooinda, Richard Walker; Wattle Vale, Ian Armour; Rockview, Alan Ticehurst; Glenrock, Tony Armour; Sutton Grange, Graham Robertson; Fairview, Peter Southwell; and Wylandra, Matt and Gaenor Bingley. The Captain of the Bookham Rural Fire Service Brigade, Ian Bush, was off fighting one fire front as the blaze tore through his own property on Childowla Road from a different direction. Fortunately, firefighters were on hand and they were able to save his house, but he lost some 1,100 acres, which were burned out, and about 700 head of sheep.

I note that the New South Wales Government has acted quickly to obtain a category C natural disaster declaration from the Federal Government. I thank the staff in the office of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services—in particular Suzanne Fosberry, who spent long hours throughout the night assembling the aerial firefighting assets, without which the outcome would have been much worse. Our volunteer firefighters received great support from Fire and Rescue NSW, the Police and ambulance services, the State Emergency Service, the Volunteer Rescue Association, the Department of Primary Industries and the volunteers who staffed the Bookham staging area.

The firefighting efforts near Yass and Boorowa were greatly assisted by the ready availability of fixed-wing and helicopter aircraft, including the Elvis air cranes. Jim and Andrew Field and their staff from Yass Earth Movers and Council Plant Operators who cut fire trails and containment lines also deserve special mention. Essential Energy was of immense help in getting power restored. Its repair teams were in the fire area among the smoke and flames replacing poles and wires so that properties under threat would have power to fight the fire. They replaced about 27 poles. Essential Energy's Community Relations Manager, Penny Cox, was, as always, available, amazing and ever ready to coordinate our requests for assistance. I rang her at 10 o'clock at night; she answered the phone and took my request for assistance.

The most heartening aspects of the recovery phase have come from volunteers, residents and community groups. It is impossible to name everyone who has assisted in the recovery efforts. Yass Valley Council staff coordinating the offers of help described them to me as "random acts of kindness, most of them anonymous". BlazeAid volunteers from across Australia have come to help repair fencing—they are still at Yass; it was great to talk to them on radio station Yass-FM 100.3 last weekend—and undertake other farm recovery work. The organisers expect that 1,200 volunteers will come to help in the next six months. Some of the fire-affected farmers also experienced the fires in January 2003 that went on to devastate suburbs in Canberra. They have remarked on the wonderful difference the BlazeAid volunteers are making to the recovery effort.

For farmers who have lost so much, to see so many volunteers, many of them retired and not particularly young themselves, turning up to help is a massive boost to their morale. The BlazeAid volunteers have been welcomed with open arms by the local community. Yass Valley Council has set up a camp area for BlazeAid, and I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for approving my request for financial assistance for Yass council to operate basic amenities at this site. Local community groups are providing up to 60 meals each night for the BlazeAid volunteers. So far, the Murrumbateman Lions, the combined churches of Yass, the combined churches of Harden, Bookham Bakers, the Yass Soldiers Fishing Club, the Uniting Church, the Anglican Church, Yass Red Cross, Yass Rotary, Yass Men's Shed, Landcare Yass, Rotary Harden and the Harden Show Society Farm Club are on the catering roster. Many individuals are also providing meals, many just turning up unannounced with a prepared meal at the BlazeAid camp site.

Several small businesses in Yass shut down so they could assist with the firefighting efforts. I know of Michael Gray from Yass Real Estate and local barber Wayne Dawe, but there were many more. Binalong Volunteer Rescue Association members, including Paul Vasey, Debra Scanes and Tony Greenwood, spent time checking on farmers in the fire-affected areas after the fire. Fodder drops to properties were run initially by Phil Butt and Mal Peake before they were relieved by Kim Turner. The Bookham Agricultural Bureau has been very active in providing support and practical assistance to fire-affected members. The people I have mentioned will probably be embarrassed at being singled out; not one of them has sought recognition or thanks and many have acted anonymously. But firefighters, police, ambulance officers, volunteers, cooks, bulldozer drivers, pilots or neighbours deserve our gratitude.

TRIBUTE TO ESTELLE NIELSON

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services) [5.16 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to the late Estelle Nielson, who passed away on 18 January. Listening to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business speak about the fire conditions reminded me of that terrible day, 18 January, when Estelle passed away. On that day the temperature on the far South Coast was about 45 degrees; it was a terrible day. Our region lost a tireless community worker—someone who could be described as a community gem. At 81 years of age, Estelle gave enormously to her community until the end of her life. Indeed, when she passed away in the evening on 18 January she was on her way home to cook scones for the Country Women's Association because the Moruya show was on that weekend.

With Estelle's tragic passing, the community has lost someone who was dedicated way beyond most when it comes to serving the local community. Estelle was an active member of the Liberal Party; she revitalised the Moruya branch of the Liberal Party and was party president. Estelle was also an active member of the Country Women's Association, having served that organisation over many years. She fought tirelessly for local community causes. She was part of the Moruya Hospital Auxiliary and was dedicated to ensuring that politicians, including me, were always in tune with hospital issues. She was forever fighting to ensure that the appropriate supports were in place for nurses, doctors and patients.

Through the Country Women's Association, Estelle advocated strongly for improved health services for her community. She was a foundation member of the Narooma Croquet Club, and she was an avid bridge player. Through her social outlets she enjoyed enormous respect from her peers, her friends and the community, given her degree of community activism. I convey my regards to Nigel and Estelle's family, who have had a terrible start to this year, given Estelle's passing. I know that certainly Nigel and Estelle were a wonderful couple who worked tirelessly for their community and in particular for the Liberal Party. Members of this House cannot function in their roles without active party volunteers. Certainly in my case I feel blessed to have had Estelle serve a branch. Particularly in country branches, the number of members fluctuates but she turned the Moruya branch around from a small number of members to one of the most active and vibrant branches of the Liberal Party in country New South Wales.

Estelle was particularly renowned for getting the Friday night functions happening at the Country Women's Association Hall, where a country roast would be served by the association as part of bringing people together to talk about the local issues as they related to the local community. I know that Estelle had the respect of members of the local Labor Party branch who have expressed to members of the Liberal Party branch their condolences for Estelle. That demonstrates that regardless of Estelle's passion for matters political as they related to the Liberal Party, she always had a desire to see Australia continue to be the wonderful country that it is. Estelle also had a passion for and was very fond of the local communities of Congo and Moruya. The passion that Estelle had for her local community was well respected by those involved in local politics in the South Coast region. I pay tribute to Estelle by informing the House of the real privilege it has been for me to work alongside Estelle Neilson. God bless her soul.

CESSNOCK ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [5.21 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House an issue that is probably topical for a number of regions throughout New South Wales, but in particular for the Cessnock electorate. I refer to the impacts of mining-related activity and the strain that places on infrastructure in the Hunter region. As the parliamentary representative for the Cessnock electorate, I have the good fortune to represent four different local government areas—Singleton, Cessnock, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. All four areas are impacted by the mining and mining-related activity boom that is occurring in the Hunter Valley.

The Cessnock electorate has train lines that pass through Greta, Branxton, Beresfield and Tarro. In the Cessnock local government area there are four active coalmines; in the Lake Macquarie local government area there are five active coalmines; in the Singleton local government area there are approximately 20 active coalmines with future expansion and exploration currently underway; and Maitland, although not having any active coalmines, certainly has a coal loading station because it adjoins coalmines in the Cessnock local government area. Each year 120 million tonnes of coal are driven through the main street of Maitland each year. The amount of coal and the fact that coalmining is happening is one thing, but the reality is that coalmining does not happen without a workforce. The workforce travels in many and varied modes of transport.

The enormous traffic surge of coalmining activity brings the New England Highway to a standstill every morning between the hours of 5.30 a.m. and 7.00 a.m. and every afternoon between the hours of 3.00 p.m.

and 5.30 p.m. The New England Highway is a dual lane carriageway west of Branxton and a dual lane carriageway east of Branxton, but Branxton and Greta are significant pinch points because the highways reverts to single lane carriageways and turns the highway into a car park. As a result, those who think that they are a little bit smarter than those who use the New England Highway will use the back road and the rat runs. Roads such as Hermitage Road, Camp Road, Old North Road, Maitland Road, Cessnock Road and ironically a road named Broke Road carry very heavy and fast-moving traffic. Broke Road leads to a village named Broke, but Broke Road is indeed broke.

All the roads that I have mentioned carry the significant impact of people who are trying to beat the cause. I am not talking about hundreds of vehicles or perhaps 1,000 or 2,000 vehicles, but tens of thousands of vehicles that use the roads I have mentioned every day. They are used by people associated with coalmining activity on their way up to work and of course on their way home from work. The vehicles range from regular sedans and little work cars to the famous white utes that travel across the Hunter Valley with their orange flags and orange flashing lights. For whatever reason, it seems as though every individual travels as an individual in his or her car, which places stress on the roads. Our roads network is crumbling. The roads have fallen apart. They are enormously potholed and dangerous by nature because they are country roads and are meant to carry only country traffic of small volume. But of course there are large volumes of traffic on those roads.

We also have people travelling in a manner in which they should not be using country roads that are mainly dirt and dust bowls. But of course everyone is in a hurry to get to work because they are running late, or to return home from work because they want to get home to see their wife and children or get to sport, or whatever the case is. The local councils cannot afford to fund the infrastructure that is required for those roads. They simply cannot afford it. New South Wales is in an extremely fortunate position where it is earning royalties up to \$2 billion, and most of that comes out of the Hunter Valley and down through the Port of Newcastle. Importantly, I commend the current Government for announcing the Resources for Regions Program. Labor and Liberal governments have failed to recognise that royalties should be reinvested in the regions that produced them.

The Resources for Regions Program announced by this Government is currently running at approximately 2 per cent of productivity. I would love to see that percentage move to double figures and I would love to think that a future Labor government would adopt a similar policy. In Western Australia the percentage is approximately 30 per cent, and if New South Wales adopted a similar rate that would be outstanding. Visitors to the Cessnock electorate are surprised, shocked and dismayed at the condition of the roads because they know that we are a proud coalmining area. They think that our facilities should be lined with gold, based on the productivity of our area, but unfortunately they are falling apart and crumbling.

WORONORA RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [5.26 p.m.]: Today I wish to share an excursion that I recently enjoyed with the Woronora River Public School. This little school is situated in my electorate of Menai, nestled in the valley of Woronora. I was honoured to have the opportunity to join with about 30 year 5 and 6 Woronora students as they toured the New South Wales Parliament. Unlike most of the school groups that visit, the eager students were given an unusual welcome with bagpipes and a flag ceremony out the front and in the foyer, as part of the Commonwealth Day festivities. Having this group visit was a particularly exciting experience for me as I happen to be a very proud past student of Woronora River Public School. Furthermore, my current assistant, Rebecca Maher, is also a past student of the school and was even recognised by some of the children who live in the area. It was great to see these young minds soaking up the information and experiencing firsthand what they have already learnt in the classroom.

I admired their powers of memorisation as the students aptly answered the difficult questions concerning New South Wales Parliament and watched as they passed a mock bill in role play. The bill they were attempting to pass was to extend school hours to include Saturdays. The mock government expressed the desire for New South Wales to lead the country in education, arguing that this would become a reality if school hours were extended. The mock opposition retorted with some interesting points including an amendment in the Legislative Council that proposed adding an hour onto each school day instead of using up Saturdays which are usually used for sport, music practice, relaxation and family time. It was easy to see that some of the children are already excellent public speakers and it was a joy to see them getting more and more theatrical as members of parliament.

Our mock madam speaker did a fine job practising "Order!" to keep her classmates focused on their task. The children also were very interested to hear about the many rules that preside over the lower House. The

fact that we have 368 rules in this place came as a surprise to the students of Woronora River Public School. At their school there are no longer any rules, punishments or warnings. As outlined in a recent article in the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, their teachers are now using "cares". Cares are designed to help pupils cooperate, achieve, respect and encourage. In such a small school with only 111 enrolments, and where the teachers know each and every student, this is a clever approach.

It is primarily about removing negative connotations and incorporating more positive language. The leading newspaper gives some examples, such as "take turns" instead of "don't be selfish", "active listeners" instead of "do not ignore", and "don't be rude" becomes "use your manners". Another example is that "do not be a bully" becomes "accept others' differences and be a good friend". Principal Pam Walmsley has noticed positive behavioural changes and has seen that the children are responding well. The changes at school are also being introduced in many of the students' homes, ensuring consistency.

The Woronora River Parents and Citizens President, Natalie Chapman, recently contacted me about their playground surface. The parents and citizens group and the teachers are happy to have extra playground space but they are concerned that, since the removal of the demountable library last year, the surface has become uneven and they are worried about injuries. I remember that library from when I attended the school and, to be honest, I was surprised that it was possible for it to still be standing, let alone in use so many years on. While the old library has been taken away, we must ensure that the space that is there now is safe. I am glad that the Minister for Education is giving this situation serious consideration and is actively looking at ways for it to be rectified.

Safety was also a consideration recently as this school backs on to the bush. When I was a kid this was wonderful as we were able to have classes out in the bush, where we often had the opportunity to make damper and enjoy our environment. Times, though, have changed and a fence was needed to protect the school and the children. There were also some students who liked to roam out in the bush and they needed to be kept safely within the grounds. I am pleased that we were able to provide for this school when it outlined the need and the fence has now been installed. I wish all the students, teachers, and the parents and citizens association all the best for the terms ahead. I do hope that the students in years 5 and 6 enjoyed their tour and that it was a worthwhile day for them. I hope what they learned takes them in good stead into the future.

PORT MACQUARIE FORESHORE DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) [5.31 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of members a draft plan of management for the Port Macquarie foreshore. The foreshore has been described as the jewel in the crown of the Hastings and is an iconic part of our landscape. The area stretches from Settlement Point to Town Beach taking in the Port Macquarie marina, Kooloonbung Creek harbour and the town green. After years of fighting and a 16,000-signature petition to State Parliament, last year an area of land known as Westport Park, within that area, was given the highest level of protection as open public space by the O'Farrell-Stoner Government, much to the delight of our local community. It was pretty clear what our community wanted. Not surprisingly, the community wants the same level of assurance given for the future of the Port Macquarie foreshore.

The draft plan of management seeks to realise the potential of the foreshore as a sustainable social, environmental and economic hub that will cater for the current and future economic, employment, commercial and recreation needs of the permanent and tourist population of Port Macquarie. This is not the first time that a draft plan of management has been on exhibition, but it is the first time it has been taken seriously by a State Government. In 2010 the then Labor Government exhibited a draft plan of management for the Port Macquarie foreshore for a period of less than one month, receiving approximately 160 submissions from the community. However, the majority of those submissions were actually about Westport Park. Unfortunately, the issues raised in those submissions were never made public.

I will reveal some of the community's concerns, which are not too different from the concerns being raised this time in relation to the foreshore plan. Some of the issues include the relocation of the boat charter operators to Kooloonbung Creek harbour, loss of parking, location of the swing moorings, concerns with regard to dredging, funding issues and, of course, not wanting to lose open space. Those previous submissions were considered by the Foreshore Land Advisory Group [FLAG] which was made up of members including former member of Parliament Peter Besseling, Federal member Robert Oakeshott, and former Port Macquarie Hastings Council General Manager Andrew Roach, as well as some of the current user group members. An amended

draft plan of management was presented to the then Minister for the Environment, Tony Kelly, which he promptly put in his desk. It did not see the light of day again. So much for listening to what the community had to say.

On Sunday 30 January this year, Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and I called for community comment on the draft plan of management for Hastings Regional Crown Reserve, Precinct A, to give it its full name. The draft plan of management has been developed by the New South Wales Government, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and the Foreshore Lands Advisory Group to determine the future management of this important public reserve. The draft was put on public exhibition, this time for eight weeks—double the time offered by the former Labor Government. Despite inquiries, this will not be extended any further because we want to get on with the job. As I said earlier, there are concerns with the draft plan of management, and that is why it is on public exhibition, so we can get community feedback.

We will then go through all of the submissions and develop a plan of management that takes those concerns into account. I am pleased to announce that relative submissions from the 2010 draft plan of management exhibition will be revisited in review of the 2013 draft plan of management. I have met with a number of user groups, particularly the Port Macquarie Game Fishing Club. I also attended the annual general meeting of the Port Macquarie Foreshore Protection Association where further issues were discussed, and agreement was reached that this group would put in a submission. Previously this group did not even have a seat at the Foreshore Lands Advisory Group table. It was through my insistence that the Minister responsible for Crown lands decided to expand the terms of reference to allow a member of the Foreshore Protection Association to be part of the Foreshore Lands Advisory Group.

While I acknowledge that the draft plan will not please everyone in its current form, I remind them that it is a draft plan, not the final version. I encourage everyone in the Port Macquarie community to go to the Crown Lands website, the Crown Lands Office in Taree, or the council office to have a look at the draft plan of management currently on exhibition and make a submission by close of business next Friday, 22 March. It is extremely important that people understand that this is a starting point and an avenue on which to build a better platform for the future and for our foreshore.

BRISBANE WATER LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [5.35 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of members the recent story of an operation that occurred within the Brisbane Water Local Area Command. I was informed by Commander Danny Sullivan of some excellent police work done by the Brisbane Water Local Area Command team that led to the arrest and charging of a 42-year-old male from Kariong for seven armed robberies across the Central Coast. I recognise the tireless and sometimes dangerous work performed by our Police Force, which mainly flies under the radar. Now and again this work needs to be brought out into the public arena so that we can recognise to those involved and let them know that what they do is really appreciated. Their job is a thankless one in many ways and it is a credit to them and their commanders that they keep their morale high.

Recently a number of armed robberies occurred in bottle shops in the Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes commands. On each occasion a male armed with a large hunting knife threatened staff before stealing cash and bottles of alcohol. On each occasion the offender wore a face covering, and the level of violence displayed by the offender increased in seriousness. Brisbane Water Local Area Command established a team to focus specifically on this male as a high priority target. The offender used techniques to evade modern policing tools like closed-circuit television and biometric evidence. It was through traditional investigative techniques that the Brisbane Water Local Area Command team identified the 42-year-old male as the suspect. This male had a lengthy criminal history for armed robbery, and probation and parole had issued a warrant revoking his parole. He had only been released from jail eight days prior to the first offence being committed.

A coordinated surveillance operation was conducted with Brisbane Water Local Area Command detectives and general duties and anti-crime team officers to identify the location of the suspect. The suspect was located in Kariong and a high-risk arrest was effected. The male suspect evaded the surveillance team and the arrest was single-handedly effected by Plainclothes Senior Constable Thomas. Upon arrest, the team arrived quickly and placed the offender in custody. Once the arrest was safely completed, a search warrant was executed at the address occupied by this male where disguises, bottles of alcohol and an amount of cash were seized. The charges included armed robberies of the following premises: Woy Woy Trading Post, Woy Woy Hotel bottle shop, Wyong Royal Hotel bottle shop, Long Jetty Liquorland, the Avoca Beach Hotel bottle shop, Kariong Bottle-O and the Kariong Liquorland Express. A further charge of stealing relating to an offence at the Empire Bay Tavern was also proffered.

As members can gather, this guy was getting around and committing offences—he committed eight offences in a short period of time, 14 days to be precise. In parallel, a large-scale crime prevention operation was undertaken to ensure local bottle shop traders were informed of the risk and were provided with crime prevention tips and security assessments by the Brisbane Water Local Area Command. In fact 100 crime prevention packages were delivered to local businesses and 69 business inspections were conducted in 14 days. This offender caused considerable concern to the local community, but the integrated operation focusing on the potential victims, high visibility policing and the identity of the offender significantly increased confidence in the capacity of the Brisbane Water Local Area Command to respond.

The work of the investigation team was a credit to its traditional detective investigation skills. The arrest phase of the operation was high risk and the bravery of the officers involved has been forwarded through the NSW Police Executive for consideration of higher recognition. This operation highlighted the excellent teamwork of the Crime Management Unit in creating targeted crime prevention messages, the general duties police proactive response to the community and the investigative teams quick resolution of the matter. Detective Senior Constable Gerard Ivins and plainclothes senior constables Benjamin Reurich and James Thomas have also been recognised individually for their determination, commitment and professionalism in effecting the arrest of this male.

Plainclothes Senior Constable Thomas has also been recognised for his personal bravery in the arrest. The integrated crime response to this matter is an excellent case study to highlight the commitment, courage, skills and dedication of the Brisbane Water Local Area Command to reducing crime and the fear of crime in the local community. I congratulate the Brisbane Water Local Area Commander Danny Sullivan and the officers involved—Detective Senior Constable Gerard Ivins, Plainclothes Senior Constable Benjamin Reurich and Plainclothes Senior Constable James Thomas—on a job well done.

ROOTY HILL RAILWAY STATION EASY ACCESS

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [5.40 p.m.]: I am pleased to see the Minister for Transport at the table. I bring to the attention of members, and the Minister, the need for the installation of lifts and escalators at the Rooty Hill railway station. All members, or many of them I imagine, would no doubt be asking the Minister for Transport to install easier access to railway stations that do not have lifts and escalators. I note the Minister has referred to the expansion of a list on a number of occasions in question time. No doubt the Minister is faced with many arguments as to why one station should have the benefit of such a program over another. In support of the case for Rooty Hill I will add a couple of points.

The current steps and ramps that form part of the Rooty Hill railway station are not just for access to the platforms on the station. They are also the only pedestrian link between Rooty Hill South and Rooty Hill North shopping, and services such as the post office, medical facilities and the like. This issue has become even more of a focus in recent years when the only chemist shop on the south side moved to the north side of town, where two pharmacies are providing a service to the people of Rooty Hill. The issue has been exacerbated by the large and increase in number of senior citizens who reside on the southern side of the railway station.

In years past, many years past, in addition to stairs and ramps the access from the south to the north was also via a level crossing for cars and pedestrians. Cars now cross over the western rail line via the Davis Bridge, which is not situated in the township but many hundreds of metres west of the township. The issue is now a constant cause of complaint and calls for action. In recent years people in the area have noticed the improvement to access to the Mt Druitt railway station, when lifts and escalators were provided to that station in conjunction with a transport hub for the Mt Druitt area.

In response to calls from the community, a petition has been circulating to which there has been an enthusiastic response: locals signing it and delivering it to my office on a daily basis. People in the community, not only individuals but also local businesses and community groups, have also enthusiastically taken up this petition and signed it, all of whom have submitted a number of pages. I will single out a Mrs Marlene Sewell of Eastern Creek, who has taken the petition to the community and single-handedly has collected more than 1,000 signatures in less than two weeks. I congratulate her on and thank her for that sterling effort. I know it has been supported by many businesses in the community. The petitions are being tabled in Parliament as they arrive at my office. I have been peppering the Clerks with a couple of copies every time they arrive.

Only this week, in response to a bit of a surge in signatures due to the work by Mrs Sewell, I was able to lodge a petition containing well over 500 signatures, which, according to the procedures of the House, will

result in a written response from the Minister for Transport. I look forward to that reply. I appreciate that all members who do not yet have easy access to their platforms will be lobbying the Minister to get those facilities installed. However, I do not know whether other railway stations have the same problem as Rooty Hill: the only way residents can go from one side of the town to the other is via the railway station's ramps and stairs. I do not know whether that involves a joint funding issue with another portfolio and Transport, but it has been the focus of many residents, particularly senior citizens, and we ask the Minister and the Government to consider their plight when allocating funds for this very important program.

SHELLHARBOUR SHARKS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [5.45 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to a great local football club, the Shellharbour Sharks. Only last week I had the pleasure to kick off the 2013 season. It was quite funny; I had never kicked a football like that. Nonetheless, it was very good fun. The Shellharbour Sharks home ground is located at Ron Costello Oval, right in the middle of Shellharbour Village. The Shellharbour Sharks have a wonderful and dedicated committee: president, Arthur Eldridge; vice-president of coaching, Peter Wilkes; secretary, Maria Brown; registrar, Jack Brown; fundraising president, Barbara Young; canteen supervisor, Leanne McPhie; vice-president grounds, Luke McPhie; and Mitchell Sturm, who is responsible for the website. I cannot leave out the coaching committee of Darran Chapman, Stan Katrivesis, Arthur Eldridge, Mitch Sturm and Peter Wilkes.

The Shellharbour Sharks club was formed in 1920 and entered the South Coast Rugby League competition until 2009 when it moved into the Illawarra Carlton League for geographical and sponsorship reasons. The Sharks did not enjoy premiership success for 19 years; they did not win their first premiership until 1939. They had to wait another couple of decades before claiming their second premiership in 1962. However, they enjoyed success twice in the 1970s but not again until 2001. Remarkably, Shellharbour's reserve grade side has had much better success. It won its first premiership in 1959 and it did not have to wait long to get its second. In 1971 all three grades won a premiership. In 2007, Shellharbour City struck a deal with the National Rugby League side the St George Illawarra Dragons and this created a new team that entered the New South Wales Rugby League Jim Beam Cup with the name Shellharbour City Marlins, using the colours of their parent club—maroon and gold.

Some notable players from the club include Ron Costello, who played for the Western Suburbs Magpies, Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs, New South Wales and the Australian Kangaroos. The Sharks home ground is named after Ron Costello. Another such player is Luke Bailey, who played for St George Illawarra Dragons and the Gold Coast Titans. He captained New South Wales and Australia. He was a front row forward. Matt Cooper also played for the St George Illawarra Dragons and was a New South Wales and Australian centre. Dan Hunt also played for the St George Illawarra Dragons and was a country prop. Trent Merrin also played for the St George Illawarra Dragons and was a country and New South Wales prop.

Shellharbour has produced many wonderful football champions and heroes. The Shellharbour Sharks have provided the community with a great sense of pride. The players, coaches, parents and committee do a sterling job with the juniors; it has more 300 young players. As I said earlier, the team colours are maroon and gold. All coaches are fully qualified in first aid. The Shellharbour Sharks have a proud history and the electorate of Shellharbour, the best electorate in New South Wales, is very proud of our Shellharbour Sharks.

THORNTON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [5.49 p.m.]: I inform the House about a wonderfully innovative development that is taking place in the electorate of Penrith. It is a twenty-first century development and its name is Thornton. It is a new suburb that is springing up from the ground as I speak. The area is right alongside Penrith railway station and is the poster boy of new developments in western Sydney. Thornton brings density and new types of housing to our urban areas. It also is reintroducing terrace houses into western Sydney. Landcom, now called UrbanGrowth NSW, has partnered with a number of developers and builders across New South Wales to bring a wonderfully diverse range of homes to this particular development. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the suburb of Thornton takes its name from the original historic house that still stands on the site.

Admittedly, it is in a state of disrepair, but as part of the master plan development the house will be restored to its former glory and we are looking at ways in which it can be turned into a commercial entity. The Thornton site is located adjacent to Penrith railway station and is rich in history. As part of the development a

wonderful village green runs right through the middle of the site. It is a typical cricket field with a nice white picket fence around it. There is a lot of history associated with this oval. It is the location of one of the first cricket matches played in New South Wales by Lord Sheffield's team. That is how the Sheffield Shield, the cricket competition played by all the States, got its name. This wonderful public space has been integrated into this new development. There is now a wonderful piece of public art next to the oval that symbolises the aviation history of the area. The site from which the suburb of Thornton is emerging was an aerodrome in a former life. Flights were made from Penrith to Parramatta and often into the city and there were aeroplane races around Penrith.

Probably the most exciting aspect of the Thornton development is the diversity of homes. A thousand new dwellings will be built right next to Penrith railway station. We are bringing people closer to public transport and offering a greater diversity of homes. The Thornton development will have standalone homes such as garden homes, patio homes and courtyard homes, but the real buzz surrounds the reintroduction of the terrace home. We have tried to be very innovative with the terrace home development and are creating Torrens title terrace houses. These are significantly more efficient. People will own the land the house is on so we are breaking away from some of the restrictions imposed by strata titles in the past. These are wonderful homes that range in size from two bedrooms to four bedrooms, all in the terrace format. In this way we can bring resources and sustainability back to some of the developments that are taking place.

It was great to see that UrbanGrowth chose earlier this week to hold its first conference under that name in Penrith. It was good to have the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Brad Hazzard, present as well as the Chairman of UrbanGrowth, John Brogden, who was in the gallery today. He spoke about the wonderful innovation that is taking place. It is good that Penrith and western Sydney are at the forefront of this innovative thinking, making sure that we are offering different types of housing solutions. I have no doubt that my colleagues in Parramatta, Campbelltown and the north-west will start to see some of the fantastic developments that are taking place around Penrith and we will probably see a little bit of copying.

We are happy to share, because I think the reintroduction of terrace housing in western Sydney will be one of the hallmark changes of the O'Farrell Government. It is a privilege to see that first step in reintroducing this type of dwelling to the New South Wales housing market taking place at Penrith. I encourage people to go to Thornton and have a look at the development that is taking place. Fifty lots went on sale last weekend and 30 sold in the first weekend. There is a strong market and if people are looking for an investment property I am sure there are plenty of good opportunities at Thornton. It is innovative and it is at the forefront of what is happening in New South Wales.

BISHOP OF PARRAMATTA AWARD FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [5.54 p.m.]: I recognise today the recipients in my electorate of the Bishop of Parramatta Award for Student Excellence. It was a privilege to attend the award ceremony held at St Patrick's Cathedral, which was celebrated by the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher, OP, Bishop of Parramatta. The Bishop of Parramatta Award for Student Excellence is a new award that seeks to highlight the outstanding and continued contribution of a senior student to their school and to their wider community. Bishop Anthony Fisher said:

This annual award (will) recognise, at the culmination of schooling, some of our outstanding young men and women in their witness to the Catholic faith, as well as their academic, sporting, creative, vocational or community achievements.

In the electorate of Parramatta, four students received the prestigious award. Chanel Bou-Francis received the Bishop of Parramatta Student Excellence Award for her commitment to Catherine McAuley High School. Her citation read:

Chanel is a model of all that is expected of a Catholic school student. She is an active member of Our Lady of Lebanon Parish, Harris Park, embodying the Catholic values of compassion, courage and integrity in all she does. Her faith commitment is evident in speaking up for what is right and putting others first. As School Captain, Chanel has inspired and led by example, modelling leadership through service. She consistently lives the Mercy values espoused by The Venerable Catherine McAuley and is a worthy recipient of the Bishop's Award for Student Excellence.

Laura Millson received the award for Our Lady of Mercy College. Her citation read:

Laura is an outstanding "Mercy Girl". She has made an excellent contribution in many areas of College life. Laura is academically strong and committed to achieving at the highest level. Her leadership skills have been demonstrated in her role as Debating and Public Speaking Leader and she gives generously of her time in that role to younger students. Laura's strong commitment to social justice is reflected in her participation in the College's immersion experience to Cambodia and her continued support of the orphanage there. Laura always operates out of a genuine commitment to care for others.

Matthew Vail received the award for St Patrick's Marist College. Matthew was the 2012 college captain at St Patrick's Marist College Dundas and the Bishop of Parramatta Award for Student Excellence was one of the many prestigious awards bestowed on Matthew over recent months. Matthew received the award for his wonderful leadership and outstanding, selfless and giving role as college captain. Matthew played a prominent role in the Lenten and the St Vincent de Paul Christmas appeals. He serves in religious ceremonies and has represented the college at Marist leadership forums. Through personal example and service to the college community, Matthew has embodied the spirit of St Marcellin Champagnat the founder of the Marist Brothers.

Mark Elias was the award recipient for Parramatta Marist High School. Mark has made an outstanding contribution to Parramatta Marist. He is a focused and academically driven student and has demonstrated leadership qualities which culminated in his election as school vice-captain for 2012. He has a strong sense of social justice, involving himself in many worthwhile initiatives to support the work of St Vincent De Paul. Mark has been an excellent ambassador for the school, representing Parramatta Marist at a variety of conferences, youth forums and seminars, whilst also participating in public speaking competitions and playing in the senior basketball team. He is a very worthy recipient of this award.

Finally, I pay tribute to the Executive Director of Schools in the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, Greg Whitby. He is recognised in Australia as one of the leading thinkers in education. His focus is on twenty-first century student learning. It is interesting to note that the Catholic school system in western Sydney punches above its weight in terms of dedication to teaching some 25 per cent of students in western Sydney. The three things that I took away from Greg Whitby's focus on students are, first, the student-centred approach. The student is the main focus and everything should be directed to empowering students to gain more of the skills, knowledge and attributes that are essential today. Learning should be all about engaging those students in the classroom and not be prescriptive. It is important to focus on teacher development because they are the ones who provide that experience for students.

LIFELINE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [5.59 p.m.]: It has now been almost two years since I stood in this Chamber and delivered my inaugural speech. On that occasion I talked about an issue close to my heart: the death of a friend through the tragedy of suicide. Unfortunately, my story is not unique; so many Australians will be touched by suicide at some stage during their lives. Suicide is the greatest mental health challenge facing all Australians. Today I was delighted to see the Premier, with my good friend and mentor John Brogden in the gallery, celebrate 50 years of Lifeline, a service that has provided support for those most in need—the most vulnerable in our community. Lifeline was founded in 1963 by the late Reverend Dr Sir Alan Walker when he took a call from a distressed man, who later took his own life.

Determined not to let isolation and lack of support be the cause of more deaths, Sir Alan launched a 24-hour crisis support line. The 131114 service now answers more than 1,200 calls a day with around 50 calls from people at high risk from suicide. Lifeline services are now made possible through the efforts of around 1,000 staff and 11,000 volunteers operating from more than 60 locations throughout the country. Services and resources are provided via telephone, face to face and online mediums. It is important that the House reflects on the fact that suicide is the leading cause of death in Australia for males under 44 years and females under 34 years. Indeed, each year more people die from suicide than die on our roads. That is a national disgrace because it is entirely preventable. Through the work of organisations such as Lifeline, we can prevent this terrible tragedy and reduce its impact on our community.

Today as we celebrate 50 years of this vitally important service I pay tribute to those countless men and women who volunteer their time to provide us with this essential service. I particularly acknowledge the efforts of volunteers and staff in the Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury centre, which provides support and counselling services to my community in Hornsby and communities from North Sydney up to Brooklyn on the Hawkesbury River. These volunteers do not just give up their time to be phone counsellors; they do various activities, including raising funds. I acknowledge my friends David and Patricia Barnett, who have organised the Hornsby Book Fair for many years to raise much-needed funds for this vital community organisation. They make a tremendous difference to many people's lives.

I particularly acknowledge and honour the tireless work of the Chief Executive Officer of Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury, Wendy Carver. Today in question time the Premier acknowledged her as the Ku-ring-gai Woman of the Year. Ms Carver deserves special credit for her leadership and tireless dedication to providing a central support service for those in need and for making a difference in the lives of very vulnerable

people across our community. She has done this for many years and has made a tremendous difference to the lives of others. She is one of the genuine heroes of this State—indeed, of this country. Lifeline has helped countless Australians in crisis. Mental health crises can be reduced simply by recognising the problem and encouraging people to get help.

We all have a role to play in reducing the impact of mental illness in the community and in reducing the impact of suicide. We can do this easily by having a conversation about mental health with our friends and neighbours. I hope we can reach the stage where we can talk about suicide and mental health issues with the same candour as we talk about physical health issues—for example, in the same way I might talk about the knee reconstruction I had a few years ago. Someone who has led the charge in being an advocate for the destigmatisation of mental health is Lifeline's patron John Brogden, whom I consider a hero to all of us who care about mental illness and in reducing its impact in our society. I thank him for his continuing tireless work. He is an inspiration to us all.

SUTHERLAND EARLY SUPPORT SERVICE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [6.04 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the outstanding work of staff and volunteers at the Sutherland Early Support Service, which was the deserving recipient of the Community Group of the Year Award at the 2013 Sutherland Shire Community Awards. This organisation provides vital support to vulnerable mothers caring for newborns and small children. Caring for a newborn is a joyful time in the life of any parent, but many of us know that it is not without its challenges. For mothers struggling with issues like chronic ill health, disability, postnatal depression or highly unsettled infant behaviour, these challenges can sometimes seem insurmountable. What should be a jubilant time can instead feel exhausting and alienating. In a recent article regarding the idea of parenting as a public health issue, the Alliance for Children and Youth stated:

The evidence points to this as one of the most important determinants of a child's wellbeing in Australia, not only for emotional wellbeing, but also for social development, health and success at school. Australia needs to lead the world in child and youth wellbeing, and this can only be achieved if we provide a supportive environment for parents to play their role to the best of their ability.

By offering home visiting and mentoring of mothers by trained volunteer workers, Sutherland Early Support Service is providing invaluable support and opportunity to young families in the shire who need a helping hand. These volunteers work constructively with families to establish a positive foundation for a lifelong relationship between mother and child. They are building inclusive communities by linking families with local services such as libraries, mother's groups and health professionals. According to the National Health and Medical Research Council, up to 15 per cent of childbearing women are affected by postnatal depression, which is just one of many factors that can adversely impact a mother's emotional resilience.

Perinatal mental health is closely linked to infant mental health and without early intervention can have undesirable, long-term consequences for women, their partners, infants and other children. That is precisely why the approach of the Sutherland Early Support Service has proven to be so successful with families. The work of a dedicated team of volunteers makes this possible. In 2012, Sutherland Early Support Service's team of 74 volunteers supported an average of 60 to 65 families each month and contributed up to 11,000 hours in the community. Each volunteer is trained by mental health and other professionals and supervised by the two best-practice coordinators of the service. Their contribution to our local community is extraordinary and has been poignantly described by clients as life saving. The longest serving volunteer of the service, Jenny Dalton, has been with the organisation since 1995 and recently turned 70. She still supports local families.

Sutherland Early Support Service receives support from other local community organisations such as Rotary clubs, the Big Sister Foundation, the Inner Wheel of Sutherland, the Lioness Club of Sutherland Shire, the Ladies Committee of Woolooware Golf Club, Tradies Gynea, Olsens, the Highfield Committee at Sutherland Hospital and the Honda Foundation. In recent times, the service has started using social media platforms to build its profile, recruit volunteers, achieve sponsorship and, importantly, connect with clients and service providers. I am delighted to thank Sutherland Early Support Service for its work in supporting vulnerable families in my electorate. In 2012 alone, 77 client files were closed after some families had been supported for up to 12 months by their volunteer caseworker. By helping mothers to enjoy motherhood, Sutherland Early Support Service is giving children in the shire the promise of the best and brightest possible future.

MACARTHUR DISABILITY SERVICES LEADERSHIP FORWARD PROGRAM

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [6.09 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to share with members the Leadership Forward Program, an initiative of the Macarthur Disability Services—more commonly known as MDS—which is funded by the Department of Community Services. The object of the program is to enhance and develop the leadership potential of people with a disability. I have been involved with three of the programs that have been run at Campbelltown, the opal of the south-west, the best part of the Macarthur. Two programs have been completed and I attended the launch recently of the third program. It is a 12-month, part-time training program for anyone with a disability to develop leadership skills and a knowledge of leadership principles.

The program provides training for 25 people with various types of disability who, through a process of application, can demonstrate that they have leadership potential. The program involves a two-day initial retreat followed by five two-day workshops every two months throughout the year, finishing with a graduation to celebrate the International Day of People with Disability. Each participant contributes an advanced payment of \$100 to the program and 21 people have graduated from the Leadership Forward Program. The 2013 program has 11 participants. I shared a meal with them recently. They are an inspiring group of young people. In fact, one member won a school debate with the member for Kiama. She said, "I don't think the member for Kiama would remember." I said, "Yes, he would", and he did. I am pleased to announce that four of the graduates have found employment, which they attribute to their participation in the program. I acknowledge the member for Kiama, who is an inspiration to many people in my community.

Graduates from this program have reported increased skills and confidence as a result of completing the program. They have developed projects for the program that have resulted in various gains for the community. These include the establishment of the MacAbility Art Award category and the Fisher's Ghost Festival Art Award from 2012 for artists with a disability. The Fisher's Ghost Festival is one of the greatest community festivals in Australia, if not the Southern Hemisphere. Blind Spot involves a group of people with disabilities who have raised more than \$40,000 for various charities in Australia and Africa. The graduates have also worked with Camden Council on the Shop Ability Project, which encourages improved access to businesses through an accreditation process and the purchase of ramps for entrances to premises where lifts and steps are not present. They have also established a steering committee to develop an advocacy support service run by and for people with a disability. With the league season recently kicking off, the New South Wales Physical Disability Rugby League program is even more pertinent, with four teams taking part in the inaugural competition in 2012. One graduate stated:

I found the leadership program to be beneficial in enabling me to better communicate what I am trying to get across. Although I was able to and comfortable with speaking in public, this program has refined my skills and given me new ones, which can I put into practice.

Another stated:

The Leadership Forward Program is a very professionally run program that has been extremely challenging. I did find it tough. However, it made me think. They made me ask and answer 'the nasty questions'.

I have been able to offer myself as a resource for them and I have seen them grow, develop and move on to great things. The Leadership Forward Program is about putting the wind under people's wings to give them the chance to fly and to achieve their potential. In the end, that is the best we can do for anyone in our community. I commend this program to the House.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.14 p.m.]: I was delighted to join the Minister for Health for the early morning launch of the 2013 New South Wales DonateLife Week at Bondi Beach in my electorate on Sunday 24 February. Along with the Minister, I joined Mr Terry Clout, the Chief Executive Officer of South-Eastern Sydney Local Health District, Waverley Mayor Sally Betts, the DonateLife NSW team, and representatives from the Lions Club to officially launch and celebrate the day on which this campaign commenced in New South Wales. We were joined by the Nippers from North Bondi Surf Living Saving Club. They were led by Jim Walker, who is the junior activities manager. The Nippers were presented with two large, pink DonateLife-branded paddleboards to use for their surf activities on Bondi Beach. They were a bright and energetic group of young girls. Even though they were young, they were aware of the importance of DonateLife and were keen to spread its message to their friends and families. They will be doing this by using their paddleboards.

DonateLife Week, which ran from 24 February to 3 March, is a national awareness week to promote organ and tissue donation. The theme this year was "Make your wish count". This message encourages family and friends to make time to discuss organ and tissue donation. The families that have had a discussion about organ and tissue donation and know each other's wishes are more likely to honour those wishes. It is as simple as that. These discussions are crucial to ensuring that the wishes of organ donors are supported and communicated by family and friends to doctors and nurses who may be attending when the opportunity for tissue and organ donations arises. One organ donor has the potential to save the lives of up to 10 people. That is a remarkable and important statistic. It is also why our Government is committed to increasing organ and tissue donation rates. It is heartening to see that donation rates across the State have increased. In the past year 88 organ donations were made in New South Wales, which is a 14.2 per cent increase from 2011. Nearly 4,000 more people in New South Wales have chosen to become organ and tissue donors in the past 12 months.

The Minister and I are pleased to see these numbers increase. It means that more lives are being saved in New South Wales because more people are signing up to the organ and tissue donor register. This increase in donations and registration rates proves that the legislative policy changes that have been made to encourage organ donation following the release of the Increasing Organ Donation in NSW: Government Plan 2012 are making a big difference on the ground. This plan has seen the closure of the Roads and Maritime Services register in order to encourage organ donors to move to the National Australian Organ Donor Register, which is run by Medicare.

The Government plans to introduce other initiatives, including increasing community awareness; introducing education campaigns to encourage people to have discussions with their loved ones about organ donation; employing specialists in hospitals to help families deal with the difficult decisions about consenting to donation at a time of crisis and sadness; providing guidelines for doctors to help them uphold a patient's desire to be a donor; and promoting living donation programs. DonateLife week gives us the chance not only to celebrate the healthy life of organ recipients but also to commemorate the lives of those who have selflessly donated their organs and tissues. We must pause to acknowledge the families and friends who have supported their loved one's decisions to donate.

As a community, we must thank them for their courage, their foresight and for what is ultimately a life-saving action. Discussing organ and tissue donation can be difficult for some people, but it is an important and potentially life-saving conversation to have with those close to you. To put this in context I will relate the story of a tissue donation recipient from Wollongong, whom I met at the launch at Bondi Beach. She is a bright young woman in the prime of her life. Donated corneal tissue enabled her to regain sight in one eye. She is now studying and enjoying life to the fullest. She is a delightful young woman. Her gratitude to both the donor and the program led her to travel a considerable distance to attend the launch of DonateLife Week 2013 at 8.00 a.m. at Bondi Beach. She is one of the many people who have been immeasurably helped by another person's generosity and foresight. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

KIAMA NOISE ABATEMENT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [6.19 p.m.]: This evening I raise concerns on behalf of residents of Coryule Place in Kiama in relation to noise levels in their street. Residents contend that with the upgrade of the North Kiama bypass additional traffic on the Princes Highway has lifted noise to an unacceptable level. I note that residents of Coryule Place also wrote to my predecessor Matt Brown about this matter on numerous occasions. Both he and I have attempted to resolve this matter. Such is the significance of my concern that I felt this important issue to local residents should be raised in the State Parliament. In 2010 Roads and Maritime Services engaged an acoustic specialist to undertake a noise assessment in response to community concerns about road traffic noise from the Kiama bypass.

Roads and Maritime Services has placed a number of Coryule Place residents on the noise abatement program waiting list. As members would be aware, Roads and Maritime Services prioritises noise reduction projects on a State-wide basis and sites are considered for treatment on the basis of the prevailing noise exposure, length of occupancy, practical installation, visual impacts and cost effectiveness. After listening to the many genuine concerns of the affected residents in Coryule Place I feel it is absolutely necessary to expedite the noise treatment process for these residents as a matter of high priority in the next round of noise abatement program funding. There is no doubt that noise levels have impacted on resident's quality of life. In a letter to my predecessor on 12 April 2010 Mr Bob Behl said:

I find the noise level seriously affects the quality of life of those living in Coryule Place to an extent that should not be tolerated in a residential area. The noise is ever-present inside the residence and severely restricts the enjoyment you should be able to experience in your own backyard. One of the biggest inconveniences is the impact that noise has on people trying to sleep.

The traffic noise affecting residents in Coryule Place has a long and protracted history, which the former Labor Government failed to address for 16 years. Proper noise abatement should have been considered and constructed when the Kiama bypass was commenced in December 1983. Unfortunately this did not occur. In August 2012 I was pleased to invite the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads to my electorate and to speak on site with a number of concerned residents in Coryule Place to hear their views. I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for visiting the residents to listen to their concerns. I have also made numerous representations to the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay. Indeed, during a visit to my electorate I took Mr Gay to Coryule Place to hear the noise and experience its impact firsthand. Whilst Mr Gay has advised that noise treatment is available to some residents, those residents do not consider this treatment to be satisfactory as several parts of their homes, such as bathrooms, do not receive noise abatement treatment. In a reply from the Hon. Duncan Gay said:

Unfortunately the former State Labor Government failed to adequately fund the noise abatement program, resulting in a growing waiting list and many residents waiting for an extremely long time for noise treatment. The New South Wales Government is committed to delivering noise treatment as soon as possible and addressing the previous Government's failures.

I take this opportunity to call on Roads and Maritime Services to install noise barriers for Coryule Place so that residents can get the peace and quiet they so rightly and richly deserve. In particular, I acknowledge the efforts of Coryule Place residents John Blom, Robert Behl and Matt Robinson, whom I have met with on several occasions to give them the opportunity to express their concerns to me directly as their local member. They are all very decent people who simply want to enjoy life and are seeking a fair go from Roads and Maritime Services. Like so many local representatives in this House, if I could write a cheque to help fix these problems I would do so. Such is the importance of this issue that I stand here today and place on record the concerns of the residents I represent. I will continue to argue the case within the Government for noise abatement program funding in this year's budget for the residents of Coryule Place, who deserve to enjoy the same peaceful quality of lifestyle as does every other Kiama resident.

These sorts of issues have become problems for governments in the past and I note that in new road design, such as with the Berry bypass, noise and acoustic experts are on hand to make sure we do get it right. In some instances it has not been successful. In this instance it has been of great concern to the residents. I sincerely hope that the Minister hears these concerns and takes action. I will continue to lobby the Government to make sure it is well aware this is an ongoing issue I would like to see resolved. I sincerely hope that within the next budget Roads and Maritime Services will consider the matter and take it seriously; not fob off residents in this area but take the action residents have requested.

SYDNEY NOISE ABATEMENT

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [6.24 p.m.]: I join the member for Kiama in making noise about noise. Residents in my electorate of Sydney suffer noise impacts beyond what most people would consider reasonable. Noise can affect quality of life and health, particularly sleep and lack of time to unwind and relax. In the inner city noise impacts come from many sources. Roads in my electorate are frequently clogged with large volumes of motor vehicles, homes built to the footpath are directly adjacent to roads that are busy day and night, and hard surfaces on tall buildings cause noise canyons. Open-grade road surfaces can significantly reduce traffic noise. Major roads such as Cleveland Street, William Street, Wattle Street, Broadway, Harris Street and Ocean Street should be upgraded and the Government should investigate using quieter materials for heavily trafficked residential roads.

Car enthusiasts with modified vehicles and sound systems that pump bass lines long distances cause intrusive noise impacts in many areas, but affect large numbers of inner-city residents every weekend late at night. While it is an offence to emit offensive noise from a car, it is difficult to get action. Residents must get out of bed, get dressed and go outside to record the number plate of the vehicle, which may have already moved on. Sometime later the reported vehicle may be tested but the resident will hear nothing back from the Office of Environment and Heritage. Police officers issue infringement notices and Kings Cross police organise monthly "Elvis" joint operations. In just one operation none of the 27 vehicles tested complied, resulting in fines of \$11,000. However, noisy vehicles are the responsibility of the Office of Environment and Heritage, which should take the lead and regularly station inspectors at hot spots to catch and fine perpetrators when the problems occur without waiting for local police to coordinate joint operations.

The Government should ban the sale of car sound systems that emit noise significantly above regulations. I welcome recent upgrades to the public bus fleet, but many inner-city services continue to use aged buses that pollute with noise and fumes. The State Government should ensure noisy aged buses are replaced

urgently. Late night hot spots such as Kings Cross, Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, and George Street attract event-size crowds, with many people intoxicated, and hold a street party every Friday and Saturday night. Bureau of Crime Statistics data shows a strong link between areas clustered with liquor venues and alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour. I share residents' concern about areas being saturated with liquor outlets and look forward to the outcome of the Government's cumulative impact study on licensed premises and evaluation of the environment, and venue assessment tools being trialled on George Street.

Extension of the liquor freeze in Kings Cross until December 2015 and on Oxford Street until December this year will continue to give residents in adjacent densely populated residential areas reprieve from expanding liquor trading, but we need long-term solutions. Numerous inner-city major development construction sites create noise impacts over long construction periods, including Barangaroo, Carlton United Brewery, AusGrid's cable upgrade projects and the St Vincent's Hospital campus redevelopment. Residents adjacent to the Barangaroo development site report frequent breaches of permissible hours of construction and tell me that the complaints line provides excuses for delays instead of solutions to protect residential amenity. Consent conditions designed to prevent noise impacts should be strictly enforced to ensure residents can peacefully enjoy their homes.

Apartment and terrace residents live in close proximity to each other and are affected by neighbourhood noise. Older apartments built before improvements to the Building Code of Australia have limited acoustic separation and residents of some new apartments say their buildings do not comply with standards. The State Government must implement measures to encourage good development and reduce building defects, including removing conflicts of interest in private certification and ensuring owners can pursue structural defect claims. Low-frequency bass from subwoofer speakers can be extremely intrusive, with neighbours reporting physical impacts like pounding in their chest. The Protection of the Environment Operations Act limits council and police response to low-frequency noise and should be updated to cover current technologies.

Residents also regularly complain about noisy parties, particularly loud talking, laughing and singing outdoors on balconies and patios late at night. However, there are no enforceable restrictions for neighbourhood noise that is not amplified music. We must balance peace and neighbourhood amenity with allowing people to live as they choose. Legislation should address ongoing and persistent noise problems, and the Government should run education campaigns to promote respect among neighbours. The Government should update controls and coordinate complaints management with one point of contact to report to and get action. I call on the Government to establish a one-stop shop noise reports line which quickly addresses complaints.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.29 p.m. until
Tuesday 19 March 2013 at 12 noon.**
