

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 18 October 2007

The President (The Hon. Peter Primrose) took the chair at 11.00 a.m.

The President read the Prayers.

PETITIONS

Retail Worker Parking

Petition objecting to compulsory parking charges on retail workers at Westfield Liverpool and requesting preservation of free, safe parking for retail workers, received from **the Hon. Greg Donnelly**.

Female Boxing Matches

Petition requesting that the Boxing and Wrestling Control Act 1986 be amended to allow women to compete in boxing matches in New South Wales, received from **the Hon. Lynda Voltz**.

Northern Rivers Rail Expansion

Petitions requesting that the Government introduce regular local passenger trains on the Casino to Murwillumbah rail line, develop an integrated and sustainable plan for meeting the current and future transport needs of the Northern Rivers region, commence planning for a rail link from Murwillumbah to the Gold Coast and promote the expansion of rail freight, received from **the Hon. Catherine Cusack**.

Barrington Tops Plateau

Petition stating that exploratory mining activities for rubies, sapphires and other gemstones within the Barrington Tops State Forest and conservation areas are likely to cause irreversible damage, stating that the area should be converted to national park status and requesting an environmental impact statement for mining activities to ensure greater scrutiny by the public and relevant authorities, received from **the Hon. Christine Robertson**.

BROADCASTING AND PHOTOGRAPHING OF PROCEEDINGS

Motion by the Hon. Tony Kelly agreed to:

Sound and audio-visual broadcast of proceedings of the House

1. That this House authorises the sound and audio-visual broadcast of the proceedings of the House:
 - (a) on the broadcast system within the precincts of Parliament House,
 - (b) by direct signal to the media gallery in Parliament House,
 - (c) to persons and organisations outside Parliament House approved by the President, on terms and conditions determined by the President from time to time, and
 - (d) by webcast on the Internet.

Broadcasting

2. The live broadcast or rebroadcast of proceedings of the Legislative Council is authorised on the following conditions, and any other terms and conditions, not inconsistent with this paragraph, determined by the President from time to time:
 - (a) excerpts may be taken from the proceedings of the House from the time of the meeting of the House until the adjournment of the House,
 - (b) recordings and broadcasts must only be made from the sound or audio-visual signal provided by the Legislative Council,

- (c) broadcasts of excerpts must be used only for the purposes of fair and accurate reports of proceedings and must provide a balanced presentation of differing views,
- (d) excerpts must not be used for:
 - (i) political party advertising or election campaigns,
 - (ii) the purpose of satire or ridicule,
 - (iii) commercial sponsorship or commercial advertising,
- (e) excerpts of proceedings which are subsequently withdrawn may be broadcast if the withdrawal is also broadcast,
- (f) excerpts must be placed in context,
- (g) where audio excerpts of proceedings are used on radio and television, commentators must identify members by name,
- (h) where audio excerpts of proceedings are used on television, their use may be that of audio over still frames, or overlay material,
- (i) where excerpts are used on commercial stations, the station must ensure that advertising before and after excerpts is of an appropriate nature,
- (j) events in the galleries are not part of the proceedings and excerpts of those events must not be used,
- (k) access to proceedings for the purpose of recording is on the basis of an undertaking to observe these conditions. A breach of these conditions by a station may result in the suspension or withdrawal of permission by the President for the station to broadcast excerpts of the proceedings of the House,
- (l) the instructions of the President or delegated representatives, on the use of recorded excerpts, must be observed at all times, and
- (m) the President may approve filming, on request, by persons or organisations, according to the terms and conditions set out in this resolution.

Still photography

- 3. That this House authorises access to the proceedings of the Legislative Council by still photographers on the following terms and conditions:
 - (a) photographers from the print media who are accredited members of the parliamentary press gallery may, with the approval of the President, take photographs during question time and at other times,
 - (b) photographers who are accredited members of the parliamentary press gallery require the approval of the President and a signed undertaking to comply with the terms and conditions set out in this resolution,
 - (c) accreditation passes are to be worn and clearly visible at all times whilst a photographer is on the parliamentary premises,
 - (d) photographs must be used only for the purposes of fair and accurate reports of proceedings and must provide a balanced presentation of differing views,
 - (e) photographs must not be used for:
 - (i) political party advertising or election campaigns,
 - (ii) the purpose of satire or ridicule,
 - (iii) commercial sponsorship or commercial advertising,
 - (f) photographs must be placed in context,
 - (g) photographs of individual members, not speaking in debate, are not permitted,
 - (h) photographs taken with telephoto lenses or zoom lenses must not show any member closer than at 'head and shoulders' distance,
 - (i) telephoto lenses or zoom lenses must not be used to inspect members' documents or computer screens, and close-up photographs of members' documents or computer screens must not be taken,
 - (j) photographs of persons in the galleries must not be taken, with the only exception being photographs of distinguished visitors at the time they are welcomed to the House by the chair,

- (k) photographs of disturbances by visitors or any other persons is not permitted,
- (l) the use of flash or other sources of additional lighting and motor driven cameras is not permitted,
- (m) photographs are not to be digitally enhanced, touched up or altered in any form,
- (n) cropping from single or group photographs is not permitted,
- (o) as a general rule, photographers should be as unobtrusive as possible and not disturb the view of visitors in the galleries,
- (p) photographers shall observe the instructions of the President, or the President's delegate, at all times, and
- (q) non-compliance with these conditions by a photographer or media organisation may result in the suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.

Sound and audio-visual broadcast of proceedings and still photography of committee proceedings

4. That this House authorises a committee, by a vote of the committee, to:
 - (a) authorise the filming and broadcasting and still photography of its public proceedings by accredited members of the parliamentary press gallery,
 - (b) authorise the filming and broadcasting and still photography of its public proceedings by a person or organisation not an accredited member of the parliamentary press gallery on an undertaking by the person or organisation, in writing, to comply with the terms and conditions set out in this resolution and any other terms and conditions determined by the committee,
 - (c) authorise the broadcast and rebroadcast of its public proceedings in the Legislative Council chamber on the terms and conditions set out in paragraph 2,
 - (d) give instructions for the observance of terms and conditions determined not inconsistent with this resolution, and
 - (e) order that part of its proceedings not be recorded or broadcast.
5. That if a committee authorises the filming or broadcast or still photography of proceedings, a witness who is to appear before the committee in those proceedings must be given a reasonable opportunity, before appearing in the proceedings, to object to the broadcasting or televising of proceedings. The witness may state the grounds of the objection. The committee must consider an objection having regard to the protection of the witness and the public interest in the proceedings. If the committee decides to permit the broadcast or rebroadcast of proceedings despite an objection of a witness, the witness must be informed before appearing in the proceedings of the committee.

Details of organisations and terms and conditions

6. That the President is to report to the House:
 - (a) details of the persons and organisations authorised from time to time to receive the sound and audio-visual broadcast, and
 - (b) details of additional terms and conditions determined under this resolution.

SESSIONAL ORDER

Quorums

Motion by the Hon. Tony Kelly agreed to:

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, for the remainder of the current session Standing Orders 29 and 30 be varied to read as follows:

29. Quorum at commencement of sitting

- (1) If there is no quorum present when the chair is taken at the time appointed for the meeting of the House, the bells will again ring for five minutes. If there is still no quorum present the President will adjourn the House until a later hour of the day or the next sitting day.
- (2) A member who enters the Chamber at or after the time appointed for the meeting of the Council may not withdraw until a quorum is formed or the House is adjourned.
- (3) When the House is adjourned for lack of a quorum, the names of the members present will be entered in the minutes of proceedings.

30. Quorum during sitting

- (1) If it appears, on the report of a division of the House by the tellers, that a quorum is not present, the President will adjourn the House until a later hour of the day or the next sitting day. No decision of the House will be considered to have been reached by that division.
- (2) When the Chair of Committees informs the President that a quorum is not present in Committee, the bells will ring for five minutes. The President will then count the House, and if a quorum is still not present, will adjourn the House until a later hour of the day or the next sitting day. However, if a quorum is then present, the President will leave the chair and the Committee resume.
- (3) If a member draws attention to the lack of a quorum, the bells will be rung until a quorum is formed but for no longer than five minutes. If after five minutes a quorum is not present, the President will adjourn the House until a later hour of the day or the next sitting day.
- (4) When the attention of the President, or the Chair of Committees, has been called to the absence of a quorum, a member may not leave until the House or Committee has been counted.
- (5) The doors of the House will be unlocked while the President is counting the House.
- (6) When the House has adjourned for lack of a quorum the names of the members present will be entered in the *Minutes of Proceedings*.

PARLIAMENTARY REMUNERATION ACT: DISALLOWANCE OF PARLIAMENTARY REMUNERATION AMENDMENT (ASSISTANT SPEAKER) REGULATION 2007

The PRESIDENT: Pursuant to standing orders the question is: That the motion proceed as business of the House.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK [11.08 a.m.]: I move:

That, under section 41 (1) of the Interpretation Act 1987, this House disallows the Parliamentary Remuneration Amendment (Assistant Speaker) Regulation 2007 published in *Government Gazette No. 63*, dated 4 May 2007 page 2585, and tabled in this House on 29 May 2007.

I am reading a very interesting book at the moment called *Morris in Wonderland*. It was quite difficult for the Premier to write the book because he is both the author and the main character, and because Wonderland is a world in which logic works in reverse. When the Premier sat down to start his book, he discovered the first 11 chapters of the book had been written by another guy called Bob Carr. Basically, Premier Morris Iemma had to begin his book by finishing off Bob's book first. In Bob's book there are lots of colourful characters, but only 21 are allowed to play the role of Minister or Cheshire cat. So Morris begins by getting rid of some of Bob's Cheshire cats.

It is easy to begin with because one cat called Michael leaves to go fishing and never comes back. Two more cats, Craig and Andrew, need to spend more time with their families, so this gives the Premier a bit of room to start his story. He needs to get started quickly because in chapter 12 there is going to be an election where Morris will be asked to explain all the gaps in the old story written by Bob—and he knows that is not going to be easy to do. So he needs to get going on a whole new beginning to distract voters from what has been going on for the last 12 years.

But along the way to the election things start going wrong with the cats. Some like Craig keep reminding everyone of the bad old Bob days in Wonderland and Morris has to get rid of him. Others get arrested and Morris starts running out of Ministers. He asks his deputy Cheshire cat, John Watkins, to take on more and more jobs, hoping to make it through to polling day. Polling day comes and there are big celebrations in Wonderland. Now Morris wants a whole new beginning but things go wrong almost straightaway. Some of the older cats do not want to go and one of the good cats called Carmel does not want to be one anymore, and this makes the story very, very complicated. There is trouble in Wonderland with everyone fighting for the leading roles and Morris determined that it is going to be a new book, not the same old story.

He announced a new ministry and almost immediately one of them goes under a bus and one of his staff members also gets caught up in the accident. Then along comes Richard Torbay from the New England region. In the spirit of another book by Lewis Carroll, in which the red prince asks, "What's the problem?" Morris says to him, "In our country you'd generally get to somewhere else if you run very fast for a long time, as

we've been doing," because the Premier has been working very hard trying to make a new beginning for his book but seems to be making very little progress. However, as Richard Torbay sees in the spirit of Wonderland, "A slow sort of country, Mr Premier. You see, here it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

The Premier, who likes his friend Richard Torbay, the member for Northern Tablelands in another place, decides to reward him for his efforts during the election campaign and all his sound advice by making him the Speaker of the House. Now he suggests he can finally have his new beginning. But the characters in the Labor Party's Wonderland are very angry that one of the plummiest jobs in the Parliament would go to a character from another world, and suddenly the Premier finds himself besieged. He has to find a whole host of important jobs for the many angry characters. There are 71 characters altogether in the Labor Party—22 Ministers who are getting between \$72,000 and \$120,000 on top of their normal salaries and allowances.

That leaves 49 unhappy characters. The Premier begins handing out second prizes hoping to make his people happy. Initially eight Parliamentary Secretaries are appointed and they each get an extra \$16,500 a year, plus staff and allowances. The Premier appoints some chairs of parliamentary committees and creates new chairs on things such as the Internet so he can give \$9,000 salary top-ups and have fewer unhappy members. He appoints the new President of the upper House, who perhaps should have been a Minister. However, he has to keep the same Deputy-President, and this is awkward too because there was another person he had been talking to about doing a similar job. However, that one has to be put aside for another day.

When all the jobs have been taken, there is still unhappiness in the Labor Party. People keep going on and on about Mr Speaker's job. Frankly, the trough needs to be made a little bigger to accommodate all the angry snouts. So two extra Parliamentary Secretaries are created at the bargain price of a salary top-up of \$16,500 each, bringing the total to a new record of 10 Parliamentary Secretaries, costing taxpayers nearly a million dollars, including staff but not including redesigning all of their offices. The office of Leader of the Government in the Legislative Assembly for the first time has been split off the ministry to create another job with more salary entitlements. The Speaker, who now has a deputy as well—a position created in 2003 in another unhappy incident involving John Price—has staff allowances and an additional \$38,000 a year in his pay packet.

The Premier then creates two more positions of Assistant Deputy Speakers—which sounded a bit junior so we call them Assistant Speakers, which is much more important. They each get an extra \$26,000 a year. The Australian Labor Party has 71 members of Parliament. By the time this frenzy of appointments, pay rises, staff increases and new allowances was finished, 60 out of 71 members were winners.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Who are the losers? Who didn't get a job?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am coming to that. If one looks at the parliamentary car park, the office holder passes on level 4 are rorting the parliamentary car park similar to the way that the Hon. Eric's Roozendaal's disability parking scheme is being rorted in the streets of Sydney. In Morris's Wonderland, his team of 71 members has a backbench of only 11 members who are not getting some type of salary and title.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: You would hate to be one of the losers, wouldn't you?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It would be embarrassing. As the Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell, said:

This is really Morris Iemma's job creation scheme for his own MPs. More than 80 per cent of Labor MPs have scored additional paid positions. It's a chocolate wheel and almost everyone gets a prize unless you're Paul Gibson.

The regulation before the House seeks to give effect to part of this rort. The Government has used its numbers in another place to create extra paid jobs for its Labor Party sons and daughters, but in order to effect payment, a regulation amending the Parliamentary Remuneration Act was needed. By moving this motion of disallowance I am giving members of the Legislative Council the opportunity to dissociate themselves from the astonishing display of snorting and rorting that the Government has engaged in. I am calling on my parliamentary colleagues to express their dismay that the Parliament should be abused in this way and made to look so ridiculous by the Labor Party.

For 147 years the Legislative Assembly was able to function effectively under the leadership of two Presiding Officers—the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. Between 1988 and 1991 there were 109

members and only two positions were required. Today we have fewer members of Parliament but four paid Presiding Officers in the Legislative Assembly. What an absolute shameless nonsense! Taxpayers are forking out an extra \$500,000 a year in salary top-ups alone to keep disgruntled Labor members happy—and this is happening at a time when the Parliament's budget is falling apart around our ears.

Every division within the building has had to cut its spending and large numbers of long-serving, loyal staff have taken redundancy and left under the restructure. There is no money to remove the carcasses of broken photocopy machines from the Parliamentary Library, but the Government is able to find hundreds of thousands of dollars to renovate offices of members who have been made Parliamentary Secretaries, Deputy-Speakers or Assistant Speakers. It is bizarre. It is time to take a stand.

There are 19 Government members in the Legislative Council. I am trying to work out how many I can count on to take a stand on principle, cross the floor and support this motion. The Hon. Peter Primrose is the President, the Hon. Amanda Fazio is the Deputy-President, six are Ministers, there is a Whip, a Deputy Whip, the Hon. Henry Tsang and the Hon. Penny Sharpe are Parliamentary Secretaries, and the Hon. Kayee Griffin, the Hon. Christine Robertson, the Hon. Helen Westwood, the Hon. Tony Catanzariti and the Hon. Ian West are committee chairs with little \$16,000 pats on the head. So that leaves the Hon. Linda Voltz and the Hon. Eddie Obeid on the Government backbench in the Legislative Council.

The Hon. Rick Colless: Poor old Eddie. Fancy doing that to a loyal servant like Eddie!

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It is a shame, but it is an opportunity for the Hon. Eddie Obeid to take a stand on principle, cross the floor and vote with us to reject this shameless rorting by his colleagues. All will be forgiven if he takes that courageous action today. This motion is a wonderful opportunity for both the Hon. Lynda Voltz and the Hon. Eddie Obeid to say to their Labor colleagues, "Enough. All this rorting has got to stop. We care about this Parliament and its reputation—it is not just about booby prizes and noses out of joint. The Parliament is a special place and is at the centre of our democracy." The Labor Party is abusing and denigrating this place, and it has got to stop. I believe that in the Legislative Assembly there is a genuine backbench of just 9 members out of 52 members. I am sorry I cannot ask them to come into this Chamber to help us out by supporting this motion. Perhaps they will join us in spirit. It would be a brave stand for the Government's two backbenchers in this place, the Hon. Lynda Voltz and the Hon. Eddie Obeid, to take, but it would be a principled stand. I invite them to join us and condemn this shameless and demeaning rorting of the Parliament at taxpayers' expense.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Go and win an election!

The Hon. JOHN DELLA BOSCA (Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance) [11.20 a.m.]: I wish to respond to the interesting and fantastic—I mean "fantastic" in the original sense of the word—presentation of the Hon. Catherine Cusack. I think she was unable to develop much further her metaphor about the Premier and his fictional work because, in fact, his fictional work is not fictional at all. The Premier is providing effective government. He was endorsed by the people of New South Wales only six months ago, when the Coalition and its ridiculous program were again shown to be a fiasco, a fiction, the product of fevered imaginations. Coalition members were shown to have nothing worthwhile to say and nothing worthwhile to do, and that they are prepared to waste an infinite amount of time and taxpayers' money on silly crusades.

Section 6 of the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989 provides for holders of certain offices specified in schedule 1 to that Act to receive a salary and expense allowance in addition to the basic salary to which they are entitled as members of Parliament. The additional salary and expense allowance to be received is expressed as a percentage of the basic salary. The object of the regulation was to amend schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Remuneration Act to remove the reference to the Chair of Committees in the Legislative Assembly and replace it with a reference to Assistant Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. This change was necessary as a result of new standing orders adopted by the other place, which abolished the position of Chairman of Committees and replaced it with the position of Assistant Speaker.

As a result of new standing orders adopted by the other place, the responsibilities previously assigned to the Chairman of Committees are now carried out by the new position of Assistant Speaker. The Assistant Speaker will receive the same remuneration as the former Chairman of Committees. There was no increase in the rate of remuneration or the expense allowance associated with the position. This was a purely technical amendment designed to facilitate the adoption of new standing orders in the other place. The Legislative

Council should not put itself in a position where it could be perceived to be interfering in procedural matters associated with the other place. The only work of fiction in this debate has been that produced by the Hon. Catherine Cusack.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.22 a.m.]: I support my colleague the Hon. Catherine Cusack. She highlights what she said was a fairy story, but I have to say it is a horror story. I refer to the rotting that is happening in this State. The Government Whip's response to what the Hon. Catherine Cusack outlined earlier was to say, "Go and win an election!" That is what it is about: winner takes all. The rewards are there for the troops of the Labor Party.

For years we have run the Legislative Assembly with a Speaker and a Chairman of Committees, and the Legislative Council with a President and a Chairman of Committees. In fact, during the time the Hon. Catherine Cusack referred to Speaker Rozzoli, together with Chairman of Committees Webster, in the first instance, and then Chairman of Committees Machin, together with Chairman of Committees Turner when Chairman of Committees Webster subsequently became a Minister, were able to look after a Chamber of a greater number of members than there are in the Legislative Assembly today. The question must be asked: Why do we need them?

The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner: What do they do?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is a reward for being quiet and not getting the plum job. As my colleague the Hon. Jennifer Gardiner said, "What do they do?" Exactly: What do they do? I look at the salaries that have been added and we talk about the car parks. The former Speaker, the current Leader of the House—

The Hon. Rick Colless: He's not a Minister, though.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: He is not a Minister, but he comes equipped with a chauffeur-driven car. It is just unbelievable. We are heading the same way in this House. When Max Willis was President—a man with a very busy itinerary who sometimes found time to visit Australia—the Chairman of Committees' role was extremely onerous, yet we only had one Chairman of Committees in those days. However, now we are heading in the same direction as the lower House.

At a time when we have problems in our hospitals and problems with the staff of our own Parliament, we believe this is the wrong way to go. We suspect that we will not win this, but it is a point that must be made. The Labor Party has quietly been giving everyone a job. It has got to the situation: spot the person that has not got a job. I do not suggest that members who are Ministers and have other important roles should not have salaries of office, because they work very hard. Many traditional roles in this Parliament are proper roles and they certainly deserve to be recompensed. What we are questioning is the splitting of roles to reward loyalty or to keep people quiet.

The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner: They don't split the pool of money; they just grow the pool of money.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: That is right, the salary is not split between the two people performing the same role. In an earlier time, a commissioner or assistant commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption would have said it was "creating a climate conducive to corruption". I rest my case on those words.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 18

Mr Ajaka	Ms Hale	Mrs Pavey
Mr Clarke	Dr Kaye	Mr Pearce
Ms Cusack	Mr Khan	
Ms Ficarra	Mr Lynn	
Mr Gallacher	Mr Mason-Cox	<i>Tellers,</i>
Miss Gardiner	Reverend Dr Moyes	Mr Colless
Mr Gay	Ms Parker	Mr Harwin

Noes, 21

Mr Brown	Mr Macdonald	Ms Voltz
Mr Catanzariti	Reverend Nile	Mr West
Mr Costa	Mr Obeid	Ms Westwood
Mr Della Bosca	Ms Robertson	
Ms Fazio	Mr Roozendaal	
Ms Griffin	Ms Sharpe	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hatzistergos	Mr Smith	Mr Donnelly
Mr Kelly	Mr Tsang	Mr Veitch

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

CLIMATE FUTURES BILL 2007**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 27 September 2007.

Ms SYLVIA HALE [11.34 a.m.]: Climate change is real and is happening now. There is overwhelming scientific evidence, summarised in the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Nobel Prize winning international group of the world's leading scientific experts operating under the auspices of the United Nations, that greenhouse gas emissions will probably inflict extensive damage on the way of life, the health and the economy of this country. The International Panel on Climate Change predicts that an average temperature rise of more than two degrees centigrade will result in the increasing severity of extreme weather events, sea level rise and the spread of insect-borne diseases. Extended droughts will threaten food supplies, coastal areas will be inundated, severe storms and bushfires will wreak havoc. Even the Commissioner of the Federal Police, Mick Keelty, has stated that the greatest security risk of this century is climate change because of the worldwide repercussions of threats posed by water and food shortages in various countries.

The effects of climate change are both obvious and all around us. Rising sea levels have received much attention. More than 60 percent of the world's population lives near the sea and rising sea levels are beginning to take their toll on some low-lying nations. We have seen refugees fleeing Tuvalu and we will see more from countries such as Kiribati and the Maldives. Indeed, the World Health Organisation has already drawn our attention to the growing number of environmental refugees.

In the face of all this evidence, Australia has been paralysed by the unfounded, unscientific and self-interested scepticism of politicians like Michael Costa and John Howard. I am confident that history will not be kind to either of them and to others who have deluded themselves into thinking they can hold back the tide of global warming. The question is no longer is global warming real, but how do we tackle it? The bill, introduced by Dr Kaye, is a blueprint for what we must do. There is no denying the urgency of the legislation. The Greens have introduced similar legislation to other State parliaments and to the Federal Parliament. In every instance we have been voted down by the two major parties and no doubt that will occur again in a repetition of the same inability or refusal to come to grips with what must be done. It is deplorable that it will be the people of this continent and, indeed, this State who will be paying the price of the hubris and lack of insight of those ill-informed sceptics John Howard and Michael Costa.

Clearly there will be consequences for us here. Each centimetre of sea level rise will lead to impacts on low-lying coastal land. Modelling predicts the inundation will cause sandy beaches on the Australian coastline to recede in the order of 100 times the vertical sea level rise. For example, if the sea level rises by a metre, coastal beaches may retreat by about 100 metres unless preventative action is taken. Given that about 85 per cent of Australia's population lives within an hour's drive of the coast, this prospect is concerning. Along the eastern seaboard of New South Wales, including Sydney, more than 200,000 buildings may be vulnerable. The crisis is made particularly urgent in this State, both by our vulnerability to adverse climatic outcomes—demonstrated by the current drought and recent coastal storms—but also by our disproportionate contributions to greenhouse gas emissions.

I am not exaggerating when I say that it is a crisis that we must address now and New South Wales has an important role to play in doing that. The New South Wales Government is failing to limit the greenhouse gas

emissions that are causing climate change. According to the Government's own State Plan, emissions in New South Wales have risen to 158 million tonnes per year. The Government has approved huge new coalmines and an energy intensive desalination plant. The Government is pushing ahead with a new baseload power station. It has failed to stop the growth in energy use and consistently prioritises motorways over public transport. It is turning more and more farmland into housing and continues to allow woodchipping of the south-east forests.

If the world persists on its current course, average temperature rises will exceed two degrees centigrade within the next few decades with devastating results. Government policy must change to ensure that this does not happen. The time to allow ill-informed scepticism to delay us has passed. We must keep global warming below two degrees. To do so will require a complete revolution in the way we produce and consume energy. The sooner we commence that energy revolution the less economic pain we will endure. The energy revolution offers us great economic opportunities, if only we have the foresight and political will to seize them.

The bill of my colleague Dr John Kaye is the sort of legislation that is required at this time. I guarantee members that may not be today, it may not be this year, but some time soon a similar bill will be passed in this Parliament and in parliaments in other States and countries because this is something we must do. We have no choice but to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy, thereby minimising greenhouse gas emissions. We need leadership from government—not in two years or five years or by 2030 but now. We are not seeing this leadership in Australia, even though most people want it. People want to do more than merely change a light bulb. They care about the future. They can see forward in time further than three-year election cycles. Our governments are lagging behind much of the populace. We need to gear our economy and efforts towards replacing coal quickly before we reach peak oil and experience the consequences of declining oil. We need to direct our remaining petroleum and gas supplies to replacing those fuels by building renewable energy capacity.

At the very least, we should adopt what Susan George calls "environmental Keynesianism", that is, directing investment and jobs into renewable energy capacity building. We should treat this as if it were a war effort, rather than fighting other wars such as the one in Iraq. The general aim of the bill is to cut back on energy sources that create greenhouse gas emissions and to foster energy sources that are clean and renewable. For New South Wales it is a formidable task, since our major energy source in this State is coal. But other countries that are just as reliant on coal have started to tackle the problem in a positive, proactive way. Possibly the country that has most relied on coal for its past economic development is Germany. Yet the German government has recently announced plans to totally phase out the country's entire coalmining industrial sector by 2018. The proposal is subject to approval by both Houses of the German Parliament. It will ensure structured compensation payments for the country's 34,000 coal workers.

The German Social Democratic Party has secured a review of the plan in 2012 before it goes into full effect in an effort to safeguard the mining industry, which was partially responsible for the party's creation in the nineteenth century. It looks as though Germany's aggressive push for renewable energy sources may be solidifying structural inducements that will help anchor renewable energy sources as the essential ingredient in the German energy mix. How is Germany able to make such a bold proposal? One reason is that it has already experienced the detrimental impacts of industrial emissions such as acid rain. But another is that politicians of all the major German parties have accepted that coal is the prime generator of greenhouse gas pollution and that something must be done. Another reason is that several political parties, including the German Greens, have promoted tough policies of environmental protection and aggressive goals for renewable energy production. Despite the fact that coal is often projected to be our primary electricity provider for some time to come, by assuming that it must always be so we are precluding the possibility of any discussion of alternatives.

Germany is not alone in taking action. Other countries reliant on coal have also started to confront the issue. As the *Wall Street Journal* recently reported, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation has suggested that the uncertainties created by fluctuating fuel prices, transmission bottlenecks and, the latest pressure point, the need to reduce reliance on power plants that emit large quantities of the gases that contribute to global warming require new ways of addressing the climate change problem. The *Wall Street Journal* also noted that the nation's 10 big grid-running organisations said that 44 per cent of the proposed new power generation in their markets is expected to come from renewable energy projects. Wind power leads the pack with 10 times as much being added to the grid and double the amount of new capacity proposed by coal-fired generators. So there are alternatives; they do exist. The question for us here in New South Wales is which way do we go? One oft-touted path is to pursue the oxymoron "clean coal". That technology is not proven and may never be proven. It will be highly expensive and, at best, is still a long way off.

Another source, as advocated by the current Prime Minister, is nuclear power. But there are far too many problems with the nuclear path to even consider it. We have only to look at the past history of nuclear

power to see some of the issues. The 1979 accident at Three Mile Island in the United States of America and the 1986 Chernobyl accident in the USSR played a key role in alerting people to the fact that nuclear power is not risk-free. This helped stop new plant construction and started a phase-out of nuclear power in several countries. Moreover, with limited uranium resources it is inevitable that nuclear plants also will be eventually phased out. Nuclear power with its limited lifetime is simply not worth pursuing. The crisis of climate change is with us now. Getting nuclear plants up and running will simply take too long. And, as John Howard has found out, the "not in my back yard" syndrome represents strong voter disinclination to go down that road.

A final reason for rejecting the nuclear path is that there is no need to pursue it. We have alternative energy sources. They are with us now, they are renewable and they are sustainable. They are solar, hydro and wind power. Australia is a country that, as the Federal Bureau of Meteorology indicates, has some of the highest levels of sunlight in the world. Solar power must receive serious consideration and assistance. Despite our high levels of this resource of sunlight, we are well behind other countries already going down the solar path. Let us look, for example, at the work that has been done in Spain. A project that is already up and running will soon begin to feed solar electricity into Spain's electricity grid. It will be Europe's first commercial solar power plant. It highlights solar electricity's emergence as an increasingly viable source of energy. The plant will run on concentrated solar thermal power, a technology that produces electric power by converting the sun's energy into high temperature heat using various mirror configurations. The heat is then channelled through a conventional generator.

The new advance is due in part to the evolution of existing technologies and in part to a ministerial ruling by the Spanish Government in March 2004 that removed economic barriers to the grid connection of renewable energy. Spain has set an overall target for 29.4 per cent of its electricity to come from renewable energy sources by 2010, that is, within three years. By then it predicts that 500 megawatts of power will be provided by concentrated solar thermal power. The trend is not confined to Spain. It is predicted that solar thermal technology is destined to move from being a relatively modest renewable energy source in Europe and elsewhere to being a very significant contributor by 2040; it will meet at least 5 per cent of the world's demand and it will avoid 56 million tonnes of CO² being pumped each year into the atmosphere. In this, it sits alongside current market leaders such as hydro and wind power. A range of countries are already moving down the wind power road; Denmark and China among them.

In spring 2007, a number of analyses were carried out for the Danish Wind Industry Association aimed at quantifying the costs and benefits of increasing wind power capacity in Denmark to a production volume corresponding to 50 per cent of Danish electricity consumption in 2025. We should also develop an integrated policy on energy and climate change. We have to recognise that energy and climate change policies should go hand-in-hand. Already, various regions are going that way. At a landmark summit last March, European heads of state agreed to move forward with ambitious objectives to slash greenhouse gas emissions and boost renewable energies by 2020. This, as they explained, was a bid to reduce the European Union's dependence on imported fuels and set the pace for what they called a new global industrial revolution.

This is how we should be conceiving the challenges facing us, and the rewards that they can potentially give us. The first industrial revolution also gave the world vastly increased material wealth and the possibility of a better redistribution of that wealth. The first industrial revolution saw a shift from animate to inanimate sources of power. It also saw the shift to fossil fuels. But we are now seeing the immense dangers that those fossil fuels pose. It is time for another industrial revolution, one that moves us from fossil fuels to renewable energy. This is the way we should be going. This is where our future lies. It is time for the sceptics to get out of the way and for this Parliament instead to lead the way towards a cleaner, jobs-rich, renewable energy future. This is the path along which the bill will take us. I commend the bill to the House.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS [11.51 a.m.]: When Dr John Kaye gave notice of the Climate Futures Bill 2007 I thought it would be interesting to see the structure of the bill and to hear the arguments that would be advanced to support it, despite the fact we could largely anticipate the tenor of such arguments. Nothing could have been further from the truth. One would think that a bill that prohibits the expansion of the coal industry, prohibits the development of new coal-fired power stations, prohibits the expansion of existing coal-fired power stations, prohibits the expansion of coal export facilities and revokes the approvals for expansion of the Kooragang Coal Terminal and the Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group Coal Export Terminal, and the development of the Anvil Hill coalmine, would require more than a simplistically worded four-page document called the Climate Futures Bill to see it through to fruition.

Further, it commits the Government to targets of 20 per cent renewable energy sources by 2012 and 50 per cent renewables by 2020, and to propping up those communities that will be decimated by the shutdown

of the coal industry—all in four pages of legislation. This extraordinary lack of detail clearly outlines that the introduction of this bill is nothing more than a political stunt. The sponsor of this bill knows only too well that it has absolutely no chance of surviving this House and will never become reality. Of course, the Greens will call a division at every stage of this bill to hide behind the reality that it is doomed to failure.

Thankfully for all the residents of New South Wales, ACIL Tasman has provided an independent assessment of the likely financial impacts if this bill were to become law in New South Wales. ACIL Tasman compares the bill's targets of 20 per cent renewable energy by 2012 and 50 per cent by 2020 with the current targets of 9 per cent by 2012 and 10 per cent by 2020. ACIL Tasman estimates that the proposed targets would require 10,459 gigawatt hours of electricity to be produced by renewables by 2012 in New South Wales alone, and that figure would increase to 42,608 gigawatt hours by 2020, corresponding to additional generating capacity of 3,519 megawatts in 2012 and 14,336 megawatts in 2020 from biomass, solar and wind technologies.

ACIL Tasman further expressed concern as to whether the equipment requirements and approvals processes—processes that are also hindered by the Greens policies—could be put in place by 2012 and that the extra capacity would come at a capital cost of more than \$30 billion by 2020. By 2012, if the targets were to be met, 40 per cent by solar and 20 per cent each by wind and biomass, New South Wales would require 2,234 wind turbines, 67 biomass power plants and 168 solar thermal power plants. By 2020 those figures would increase to 10,304 wind turbines, 309 biomass plants and 773 solar thermal plants. The logistics of this are obviously beyond the scope of the proponent to comprehend.

It means that for each year of the next five years there would need to be constructed in New South Wales 447 wind generation turbines, 13 biomass power plants and 34 solar thermal power plants. It means that for the eight years between 2012 and 2020 there would need to be constructed in New South Wales each year 1,070 wind turbines, 31 biomass power plants and 76 solar thermal power plants. Some 2,600 megawatts of existing generating capacity would need to be shut down by 2020—about the same size as the Bayswater Power Station. The decommissioning of such a large baseload generator would put enormous pressure on other baseload generators as solar and wind cannot provide baseload power unless the electricity is used to store some form of energy during off-peak periods. The financial outcome would result in forgone dividend payments to the State Government with a discounted net present value of about \$1.4 billion and coal royalties of about \$230 million.

Let me turn now to the impact on electricity prices. Should this bill become law, ACIL Tasman estimates that electricity prices will increase by at least 25 per cent by 2012 and by 64 per cent in 2020. These higher prices will have flow-through effects to all electricity users and to the broader economy in terms of increased costs of manufacturing and trade. These significant increases in electricity prices will have negative implications for the New South Wales economy and for the demand for electricity. In particular, ACIL Tasman points out that all electricity-intensive metal processing operations in New South Wales, such as the aluminium industry, would close down as they would be internationally uncompetitive.

Consider also the impact on low-income earners. I remind the House that ACIL Tasman has said that by 2020 the minimum increase is going to be 64 per cent. So, realistically, we could be looking at an increase in electricity prices of well over 100 per cent by 2020. Consider the impact of that on low-income earners—the battlers who are turning off their heaters on cold nights now because they cannot afford to pay the electricity. It is going to mean that instead of having a hot meal every night they will have a hot meal every second night, and they will not be able to turn their heaters on at night to keep themselves warm. It will not affect the Greens because they are high-income earners and they can turn off their air conditioners and save electricity, but the people who live in the cold areas of the State and the low-income earners of this State will suffer more.

The final point made by ACIL Tasman is the most pertinent in relation to the preparation of this bill:

In order to understand the implications for the NSW economy of this bill if it were to become law, detailed modelling of the electricity market and the NSW economy would need to be undertaken. It is apparent that the proponents of the bill have not undertaken this modelling and they would therefore have no understanding of its implications.

I turn to exposing some of the hypocrisies in the arguments advanced by the proponents of the bill. In his opening statement Dr John Kaye concluded that global warming is caused by increasing carbon dioxide levels and that those levels are the direct result of coalmining in New South Wales. Perhaps he needs to do some research on some of the other vast natural cycles that impact on the global climate, including the rotation of the earth; the path of the earth around the sun; the inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of the ecliptic; the procession of the earth's axis; the enormous turnover of the oceanic water, which also has a huge impact on the

amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere; the effect of cloud albedo; the influence of the other planets, in particular, the gas giants of Jupiter and Saturn; the activity of sun spots; extratropical cyclones; intertropical convergence; the major ocean currents; and, of course, volcanic activity.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I direct my question without notice to the Treasurer. Why is the Government rushing construction of a \$2-billion-plus desalination plant, which is opposed by most water scientists and all environmental groups, and described by former Premier Bob Carr three years ago as "bottled electricity", when serious infrastructure needs for hospitals, roads and public transport are lagging and underfunded?

The Hon. MICHAEL COSTA: The proposition that this Government is underfunding infrastructure is absurd. This Government has a record infrastructure program; in fact, it is the largest infrastructure program in the nation's history. The Government will spend \$50 billion over the next four years on infrastructure. It is absurd to claim that the Government is underfunding infrastructure. Even the ratings agencies have acknowledged that the infrastructure program is ambitious and should be managed properly. I accept that as a proper response. However, implicit in it is an acknowledgement of the size of the program.

I find it particularly galling to have this proposition put to me when the Commonwealth Government is spending less than \$6 billion a year on infrastructure nationally. In addition, when it chooses to spend on infrastructure, for example, for the Department of Defence, it stuffs up one program after another. We have aircraft that cannot fly, submarines that can barely stay under water and a radar system that the enemy—if there were one in our region—would discover immediately because of its poor quality. The Commonwealth Government is managing that project and it has had 11 years to get it right. We have a joint strike fighter that does not work, tents that are falling apart and a defence budget that is a disgrace. Members opposite think that the Coalition can run infrastructure better than this Government. That is an absolute joke. The public of New South Wales made its judgment in March about what they thought of the Opposition, and they resoundingly re-elected the Iemma Government.

In addition, I was given a personal mandate. As everyone knows, I was the star of the Coalition's advertising campaign, which said that a vote for Labor was a vote for Costa! The electorate returned the Government, which demonstrated its great wisdom. I will use my mandate to ensure that we have a properly run budget and that we continue this Government's record program on infrastructure. We are very proud of our infrastructure program. If the member thinks that he can do better, he should put his position to the people and see what their judgment is in four years. It will be the same as it was in March.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE WORKERS

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Can the Minister inform the House of concerns being expressed by New South Wales health and community service workers about their working conditions?

The Hon. JOHN DELLA BOSCA: I thank the member for her ongoing interest in the health workers of New South Wales. Today nurses, pathologists, doctors, physiotherapists, community health workers and other care professionals will be expressing their strongly held concerns about the future of their working conditions to the residents of New South Wales. Today's activities will include doorknocking, offering free blood pressure tests, making cakes, dropping leaflets, offering information to commuters and shoppers and speaking out in their workplaces about the effect of WorkChoices on workers who care across Australia today.

The Iemma Government shares these concerns because John Howard has used industrial blackmail by making his WorkChoices agenda compulsory in return for Commonwealth Government funding. John Howard's ideological obsession has been applied to our universities, the TAFE system, the AusLink road project and the

building and construction industry. For example, in the TAFE sector Commonwealth funding is made conditional on the offer of Australian Workplace Agreements or individual contracts to TAFE staff, regardless of whether the institute director believes it is in their best interests or whether employees are demanding them. It is no wonder that the 340,000 New South Wales health and community workers are so concerned that they will be the next to fall victim to WorkChoices blackmail by the Commonwealth Government.

Further proof of John Howard's secret agenda to force all health professionals into the unfair WorkChoices system is demonstrated by his radical and foolhardy take-over of the Mersey Hospital in Tasmania. The Howard Government's purchasing guidelines enshrined in regulation 9 of the Financial Management Act 1997 make it a condition that purchases, including employment of staff, are to be in accordance with government policy, including its workplace relations policy.

The Howard Government's WorkChoices laws already affect more than 100,000 nurses in nearly all aged care facilities, private hospitals and private practices across the country. Up to 275,000 community service workers across Australia are also threatened by WorkChoices. No amount of costly taxpayer-funded, full-page newspaper advertisements by Joe Hockey will convince anyone, let alone workers in the health sector or hardworking Australian families who rely on these essential services. John Howard, Joe Hockey and the rest of his cronies simply cannot be believed on WorkChoices. If they are re-elected, then more workplace changes will be implemented. Members need only look as far as Nick Minchin—the only honest man in the Federal Liberal Party—for evidence when he was quoted last year:

I think we do need to seek a mandate from the Australian people at the next election for another wave of industrial relations reform ... This is evolution ... not revolution ... and there is still a long way to go.

Members should make no mistake: If given the opportunity on 24 November, the Howard Government will embark on a new raft of industrial relations changes that will further disadvantage workers and burden businesses with even more costly red tape. The outcome for the health sector will be devastating. Lower wages will lead to an erosion of services and care. Australia cannot risk a further term under the Howard Government. Australian health care services cannot afford the risk of doctors, nurses and other people in sensitive, caring professions being put on the WorkChoices agenda. WorkChoices needs to be replaced with a fair, transparent and equitable system. That is what all New South Wales families need and businesses and the health sector deserve. The only way to achieve this is by electing a Rudd government.

SCHOOL ZONE FLASHING LIGHTS TENDER

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads. Does the Minister recall my request yesterday for the name of the successful tenderer for the New South Wales Government's \$46.5 million rollout of flashing lights at 400 schools? Does he recall tabling a list of seven companies? Did the Minister mislead the House by tabling the list of the companies chosen for the November 2006 trial of the flashing lights? As the Minister has already announced the four-year rollout of flashing lights, which company or companies have won the tender?

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: I refer to my answer of yesterday. In fact, the names on the list were the successful proponents for the expressions of interest that led to a tender for the first 100 sites. As part of that expression of interest, there is capacity for those companies, which were selected through that process of expressions of interest and through the tender process, to supply additional flashing lights.

The Government has announced a \$46.5 million rollout over four years. Of course, all probity requirements will be met to ensure that rollout is done in accordance with the appropriate regulations and requirements. It is worth reminding the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who is distinguishing himself in this House as the king of smear, that every step in the rollout of flashing lights has been done under the supervision of an independent probity auditor. Of course, this point is always overlooked by the king of smear, who is intent, in the twilight years of his career, on trying to destroy or smear the very important program of school zone safety in this State.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I ask a supplementary question. In light of the Minister's answer that he has let a tender, will he explain to the House why a representative of one of the seven companies the Minister said had won the tender told me that it was news to them that they had won a contract?

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: Clearly, the honourable member does not listen. I have not said that any tender has been won. He is clearly incompetent. What I said was that the expression of interest and the previous tender allowed for a continuing rollout—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: You said yesterday that you had. You said on 27 September in your press release that the contract had been let.

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: Quite the contrary. I am quite happy for the honourable member to table the media release to show where it says that. He is misleading the House with his interjections. Clearly the honourable member does not understand that school zones require the assessment of the sites under strict criteria conducted by the New South Wales Centre for Road Safety, which is doing that. At the same time, there is an opportunity within the expressions of interest for the continuing rollout. It is a four-year program of \$46.5 million to improve school zone safety in the State.

DRUG USE IN SCHOOLS

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I ask the Minister for Education and Training a question without notice. Is it a fact that recent reports indicate increased drug use in our public schools? Is it a fact that primary school children have taken ecstasy tablets in error, thinking they were lollies, and had to have their stomachs pumped out? Will the Minister urgently consider the introduction of a random drug-testing program in our government and non-government schools to save our children from illegal drug abuse, as is being discussed in South Australia?

The Hon. JOHN DELLA BOSCA: I am not currently considering any such proposal or program. All the evidence that was canvassed this morning was very wrong—and I say this with great respect to be *Daily Telegraph* and its journalists and the outstanding job they do in reporting public affairs. I think even senior journalists at the *Daily Telegraph* would admit that they got the story wrong this morning. It is unusual. The real story is that we are doing very well in New South Wales in securing our young people against the use of illicit drugs and, for that matter, the use of legal drugs that are age inappropriate for them. It is important that honourable members, regardless of what side of politics they stand on, understand that today's article in the *Daily Telegraph* was sourced from Bureau of Crime Statistics data that shows a consistent and substantial decline in drug use in both primary and secondary schools. Unfortunately, this was not reported in the story.

Any drug use is too much and inappropriate. But it is encouraging that drug-related incidents in our schools have reduced by two-thirds. Our students, teachers and parents should be commended. This is a community problem, not just a school problem, and every one has a role to play and work to do. New South Wales students from kindergarten onwards learn of the effects and harm of drugs and values that promote a healthy lifestyle. Over the past seven years the New South Wales Government has provided additional resources to reinforce those elements of the curriculum and teach students about the dangers of drugs. For example, one measure was a \$1.5 million targeted cannabis education program, which I have discussed with Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. The clear, overwhelming evidence is that cannabis use amongst New South Wales school students has halved. Most jurisdictions around the world would clamour for such an achievement. We have done it here, and we are doing it very well, and we need to promote the fact that we are successful in that regard.

In addition to the elements of the personal development and health and physical education curriculum, we have spent nearly \$1 million on multicultural drug education to support the needs of students and parents from non-English-speaking backgrounds in the development of resources and school community partnerships. The department has allocated nearly \$700,000 over three years to support a program in partnership with schools and Aboriginal communities to improve Aboriginal students' knowledge and understanding of the dangers of alcohol and substance misuse. We have strengthened school suspension and expulsion procedures so that principals, where required, can deal appropriately with those very few students who continue to promote and bring illegal drugs into our schools. We have also provided \$340,000 over two years to ensure that school leavers and their parents continue to receive the materials that encourage safe celebrations at end-of-year activities.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile is well aware that the vast majority of problems, both health and social, come from the misuse of legal drugs by older young people rather than from illicit drugs. Over the past five years drug offences in primary schools have dropped from 52 to 22; in secondary schools they have dropped from 440 to 150. Statistics like that would be envied anywhere in the world, and my response to the Leader of the Opposition, who is now ignoring me, is that he should know that the reporting of drug incidents in all government schools is mandatory. So, the overwhelming evidence in the so-called law of large numbers is that we are confronting this issue and getting it under control. I can also inform him that discussions with the Catholic and independent sector indicate that similar policies are successful there. In a system with mandatory reporting, these incidents represent 0.2 per cent of the student population, and it is a declining number.

ETHANOL INDUSTRY

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: My question is addressed to the Minister for Rural Affairs, and Minister for Regional Development. Will the Minister update the House on issues related to the ethanol industry in New South Wales?

The Hon. TONY KELLY: It saddens me to report to the House the announcement this week of the Australian ethanol company AgriEnergy to put on hold its plans to build ethanol plants in Australia. For New South Wales this means a \$120 million plant for Condobolin has now been shelved indefinitely. Condobolin is not that far, only about an hour, from Wagga Wagga. One reason AgriEnergy gave for its decision was the lack of Federal Government support, namely its refusal to mandate ethanol. The company has proposed two plants in Victoria, to be followed by the Condobolin plant. As company executive Stewart Rendell said about the Federal Government's position on biofuels:

Our knowledge is that mandating will not happen [this is Federal mandating] and of course they [the oil companies] do not need us and so there will be a target for biofuels—but targets have been shown in this country not to work.

So now AgriEnergy will focus on its operations overseas and move its investments offshore. This is what we get from the Howard Government: no plan for regional Australia, no regional investment, and companies forced to invest overseas. Over the past decade the Federal Government has merely paid lip-service to the biofuel industry—a committee here, a report there, but no real plan, no real action. I am reminded of Backdown Barnaby Joyce's famous four pillars—regulating cross-media ownership, supporting student unions, opposing privatisation of Telstra and establishing a national mandate for ethanol. How many of these pillars are standing today? Members of The Nationals in particular should hang their collective heads in shame. Members of The Nationals support biofuels, but while they talk things up themselves, all we see is that they roll over, time and again, to the Liberals' plan to slash protection and rollback subsidies for renewables like ethanol and biofuels.

As a result, we get the type of unfortunate decision made by AgriEnergy this week. The Federal Government has no real plan for biofuels and no effective plan for the emerging biofuel industry. By contrast the New South Wales Government's position could not be clearer. Members would be aware that from 1 October New South Wales has a volumetric mandate requiring at least 2 per cent of the total volume of petrol sold in New South Wales to be ethanol. It is not a wishy-washy unenforceable target like that of the Federal Government but a concrete piece of legislation that has far greater investment in renewable fuels and rural communities.

During my recent visit to the South Coast I took the time to inspect the new facilities that have been spurred on by the Iemma Government's ethanol mandate. Our mandate has proved to be a boost for domestic producers of fuel ethanol such as Manildra Limited, which employs around 250 workers in Nowra. With the commitment of the Iemma Government's mandate, Manildra has the confidence to invest in two new fermentation tanks valued at over \$5 million each, and associated infrastructure. This investment alone created 100 construction jobs and will help ensure that ethanol supply meets the volumetric requirements of our mandate. In fact, as of this week Manildra can produce 150 megalitres a year whereas the mandate only requires 120 megalitres.

Manildra's recent investments and its plans for future expansions are great news for the environment and the local community. It shows what can be achieved when a Labor Government invests in regional development and puts in place a policy framework that encourages the expansion of a domestic biofuel industry.

BOTANY BAY DESALINATED WATER PIPELINE

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question is directed to the Treasurer, representing the Minister for Planning. Is it true that no planning consent has been granted in respect of the pipeline under Botany Bay connecting the Kurnell desalination plant to Sydney's water reticulation system despite the Iemma Government having signed a \$1 billion-plus contract for construction of the Kurnell plant and another contract with Veolia for the operations and maintenance of the plant? Given that the rejection of any future application for a pipeline under Botany Bay would effectively isolate the plant and expose the State Government to a massive financial burden, what guarantees are there that the environmental impacts of the plant will be properly assessed and, if the plant is found to have unacceptable environmental impacts, that there will be a rejection of the application for the pipeline?

The Hon. MICHAEL COSTA: I will take the question on notice for the Minister for Planning. However, I make one observation. Where there are environmental impacts in relation to planning or

developments in general, there are options other than to reject developments. The Greens have not got it into their heads that there can be a balance between the environment and development. In these sorts of projects we often put environmental conditions on developments to allow them to go ahead. Once again this is an example of the Greens' black and white approach to everything. Ultimately their policies are about lowering living standards, not only for Australians and the developed world but certainly the developing world. If people want to look at a bunch of policy positions that make no sense and are based on irrationality, they will see this embodied in the question that was just asked. It is a ridiculous question.

Dr John Kaye: What if you cannot find a path through Botany Bay?

The Hon. MICHAEL COSTA: In the past we have put people on the Moon, yet we can't get across Botany Bay! Maybe a tsunami will stop us. What an absurd position. The Greens are getting more foolish every time they ask a question. I am sure the Minister for Planning will deal with this matter in a responsible way.

The Hon. Rick Colless: Put a Green on the Moon.

The Hon. MICHAEL COSTA: Don't put a Green on the Moon. They will want to ban threatened species, and it will probably be them! We will find a way through whatever environmental issues are there, as we have in the past.

SCHOOL ZONE FLASHING LIGHTS TENDER

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads. Does the Minister recall yesterday, when I asked a question about who had won the tender for the flashing lights, he indicated in part, "It would be interesting for the House to understand that we had an expression of interest that then went to a tender process, which I believe seven companies were successful in, and they all provided technologies that were then rolled out across the State so they could be properly assessed for technical specifications, reliability, visibility and effectiveness. That is how it works." How do those comments equate with his comments in the House today that no tender has yet been awarded?

The Hon. Michael Costa: He is just making this up as he goes along.

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: He is indeed. I call the attention of the House to *Hansard* because yet again we have the king of smear, once again with his selective reading.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: When I ask factual questions in this House I do not expect this sort of response smearing my character. I am being called the king of smear by the king of sneer.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is no point of order. However, I ask all members to use parliamentary language.

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: I will reread the proof *Hansard*. It states:

The New South Wales Centre for Road Safety is assessing and selecting the next school zone sites to receive this technology. This is about getting more sites equipped later this year and ready for the first term in 2008. I am advised these sites can be accommodated from the existing tender.

It then goes on to state—and this is the bit that the member fails to mention:

There will also be a further selection or tender process to provide flashing light technology for the remaining school zones. Obviously the successful companies will be determined at the time in an open and public process. The next stage of procurement will again be overseen by a probity auditor, as it should be. It is important to explain to the House a probity auditor has been present right through this process to ensure that the insinuations—

And I said it yesterday and it is like *déjà vu* today because we have a very lazy member who does not do the work—

and the typical smear that the honourable member is now renowned for will have no basis whatsoever.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: The Minister is flouting your order that he not indulge in that sort of silliness.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Again I ask all members to use parliamentary language.

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: I am reading from the *Hansard* proof, which continues:

The reason a probity auditor is engaged by the Roads and Traffic Authority—and that is an independent probity auditor especially brought in—is to ensure fairness.

We have a selection process to determine the technology; the whole process is overseen by a probity auditor. The selection of the appropriate companies will be done in an open and transparent way, properly supervised by a probity auditor.

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

The Hon. IAN WEST: My question is directed to the Attorney General. In light of last week being National Mental Health Week, what is the latest information on initiatives to help people with mental health issues navigate the justice system?

The Hon. JOHN HATZISTERGOS: Last week was National Mental Health Week and as part of the National Mental Health Week program, I was pleased to launch the Mental Health Links for Lawyers online information resource. This important new web resource will provide legal practitioners with information and referral resources for clients with a mental illness. Mental Health Links for Lawyers is a project that was developed by the Criminal Justice Research Network, a network that contains experts in mental health and criminal justice policy, led by Legal Aid New South Wales.

The resource contains a central information source on mental health services that is readily accessible and will assist lawyers identify mental health service options for their clients. This will in turn assist the court in sentencing options, thereby improving the outcomes for those people with mental illness. This project aligns with the Government's initiatives and policy directions right across Australia. The Council of Australian Governments has identified as a priority the integration and improvement of the mental health care system. One of the important ways this can be achieved is by increasing and co-ordinating early identification and referral services.

Improving mental health outcomes is a priority area in the New South Wales State Plan. And encouraging the dissemination of mental health information to reach people in non-health settings is a commitment in the New South Wales interagency action plan for better mental health. The New South Wales State Plan also emphasises the importance of agencies developing flexible and creative approaches to deliver benefits for the community. Agencies are particularly encouraged to come together and form partnerships in order to meet their goals more effectively.

The Mental Health Links for Lawyers web portal is an excellent example of an effective partnership. The project team consisted of representatives from the New South Wales Law Society, the New South Wales Bar Association, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales, the Mental Health Association of New South Wales, the Homeless Persons Legal Service, the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales, the Human Services Network Mental Health Co-ordinating Council of New South Wales, and Legal Aid New South Wales.

The outcome of this collaboration is an important tool that will be of benefit to many. Mental Health Links for Lawyers provides very targeted information, notably mental health crisis phone numbers, statewide telephone referral numbers, links to key reference material on mental health, search engines from the Australian Association of Social Workers and the Australian Psychologists Society, and a hotlink to Servicelink, the online directory located on the Human Services Network website. Centralised in one portal, these handy tools will go a long way to helping lawyers identify mental health service options for their clients.

To make it as accessible as possible, the new portal will be located on the intranets and/or electronic bulletin boards of the Law Society of New South Wales, the New South Wales Bar Association, the Attorney General's Department, the Aboriginal Legal Service, Combined Community Legal Centres, and Legal Aid New South Wales. Material promoting the site and listing crisis contact numbers will be distributed in the November edition of the Law Society Journal, and similar promotion will take place with other organisations.

I commend the Criminal Justice Research Network for generating this project and Legal Aid New South Wales for taking the lead role in bringing it to fruition. Mental health is an important issue. The New South Wales Government is strongly committed to delivering new, innovative and practical solutions to improving services for the community.

FIREARMS ACT 1996 PARENTAL LIABILITY PROVISIONS

The Hon. ROY SMITH: My question is directed to the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice. It is a fact that the Firearms Act 1996 is the only Act that makes parents liable for offences against the act by their minor children? If so, is the Government considering extending this liability to offences against other Acts, such as the Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Act and the Crimes Act? If not, why not?

The Hon. JOHN HATZISTERGOS: I do not have the relevant instruments before me. In any event, the question is somewhat out of order because it seeks a legal opinion. However, I will take the question on notice and respond to the member as appropriate.

KURNELL DESALINATION PLANT

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: My question without notice is directed to the Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure, and Minister for the Hunter. In view of the Government's so-called green announcement regarding powering the Kurnell desalination plant by wind turbine electricity, given that wind power costs more than double the cost of coal to produce electricity, can the Treasurer guarantee that neither Treasury nor New South Wales consumers will be required to pay more for this so-called green announcement?

The Hon. MICHAEL COSTA: The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox asks an interesting question but one that I believe is misguided. Under the current electricity arrangements there are already targets in New South Wales in relation to renewables, and that includes wind power. Regardless of whether one takes a view on whether these projects are sustainable in terms of base load in the future, the reality is that there will be targets and they will form part of the component of the electricity market. Even the Federal Government has announced that at some point in the future—we do not know when—it will also put in place some caps and that will lead to a trading regime that will also have an impact in terms of renewables. The issue should not be whether there is a renewable component to the electricity market, because the facts are pretty clear that there is. The Government's commitment in relation to the desalination plant has been to access that part of the market to power the plant. That can be done under existing market conditions, and it will involve a pricing structure similar to the one that currently exists.

SPORTSTEC SPORTS ANALYSIS TECHNOLOGY

The Hon. MICHAEL VEITCH: My question is addressed to the Minister for State Development. Will the Minister inform the House about how Sydney technology is making a difference at the 2007 Rugby World Cup?

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: We all felt disappointed on 6 October when England beat Australia 12 points to 10 in the quarter final of the Rugby World Cup in Marseille.

[*Interruption*]

I didn't feel that disappointed: I was still smarting over the result of the Aussie rules grand final! The game on 6 October was a bad case of déjà vu, following England's win over the Wallabies in the final of the Rugby World Cup in Sydney back in 2003. As it turns out, it was not just Jonny Wilkinson's boot that sealed Australia's fate for the second time in a row. Today I want to reveal the bitter-sweet story behind the latest Wallabies loss.

Sadly, the England team has revealed that it identified a weak point in the Wallabies, game with the help of technology developed right here in Sydney. The United Kingdom's *Daily Mirror* newspaper quoted England player Lewis Moody saying that a secret to England's success was a piece of analysis drawn from tapes of Australia's pool performances which showed the Wallabies had "lost their edge" at the breakdown. Moody said:

We felt they had become a bit lacklustre in the way they were working around the rucks. Their work-rate had dropped off because they hadn't had a decent workout.

The Hon. Michael Gallacher: It sounds like you blokes. Look at the legislation, talk about dropping off.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: It sounds like the Opposition over the last 10 years. The Opposition is hopeless. Tragically, it was sports analysis technology developed by Sydney company Sportstec that helped

England discover Australia's Achilles heel. Sportstec's Sportscode system uses video cameras and sophisticated software to allow coaching staff to closely analyse and tweak team and player performances. England, I am told, has 14 of Sportstec's systems. That is how serious and focused the Poms have become on their player empowerment.

England used this Aussie technology to exploit Australia's perceived weakness, and attributed its subsequent forward's display in the scrums for the undoing of the Wallabies. South Africa has also gone all the way in France with the help of the same Sydney technology, although I am told the Sportstec system it uses has been contracted from a South African university. In fact, 13 out of the 20 teams competing in the 2007 Rugby World Cup have been using Sportstec's products. They are England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Italy, Argentina, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Japan, South Africa, Namibia and Romania.

While this is bad news for the Wallabies, Sportstec has once again demonstrated its worth on the world sporting stage. This is an excellent example of New South Wales innovation—coming out of a company grown on the northern beaches, at Warriewood, that is making a big splash in world sport. I am proud to say the Iemma Government, through the Department of State and Regional Development, has helped this smart Sydney company succeed in international markets. We have assisted Sportstec with export market visits to the United Kingdom, South Africa, Europe, China and Singapore. We have also been a strong supporter of Sportstec's technology through our Australian Technology Showcase program, with the company winning the 2006 Australian Technology Showcase Patrons Award for its export efforts.

It will be very interesting to see who wins the Rugby World Cup final on Saturday, given that both teams are using the same Australian technology. It should make for a very tactical game. I am sure coaching staff from both teams are poring over their Sportstec systems as we speak and using the best technology New South Wales has to offer. What a pity Australia does not use its own technology.

SNOWY WATER LICENCE REVIEW

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I address my question to the Minister for Energy, and Minister for State Development. On 30 May this year I asked when the Snowy water licence would be reviewed to comply with section 25 of the Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Act 1997. I also asked what steps the Minister had taken to initiate the review process and what form of public consultation would take place as part of the review. The Minister indicated in his response that the review would be conducted by the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water and that he would refer the question to that Minister in order to provide a detailed response. Given that it is now some 4½ months since the Minister gave that answer, is he now in a position to provide the House with a detailed response?

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: That is an interesting question. I thought I answered it the other day.

Ms Sylvia Hale: No, your answer was about a scientific committee. I have asked about the licence.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: All of that is under discussion at the moment. When we finalise that discussion, I will inform the House.

RENTAL HOUSING CRISIS

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: My question is directed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Infrastructure. Given that the Treasurer has now acknowledged that his infrastructure levies, together with the Government's red tape and bureaucracy, have contributed to the housing affordability and supply crisis, will he now acknowledge that the Government is also driving businesses and investors interstate, particularly residential property investors who could otherwise provide rental housing stock to meet the New South Wales crisis in rental housing?

The Hon. MICHAEL COSTA: The Government does not acknowledge the first part of the question, and the second part of the question is wrong.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I ask a supplementary question: If the Minister does not accept that his policies are driving investors interstate, why is it that the Minister for Housing, Matt Brown, has six investment properties in Queensland, another in Western Australia and yet another in New Zealand?

The Hon. MICHAEL COSTA: The Labor Party prides itself on having young and upcoming Ministers who have at least enough commonsense to properly manage their own personal finances. It is absurd

that someone should abuse a pecuniary interest declaration in this manner. I congratulate Matt Brown for looking after his own interests. I suggest that the Hon. Greg Pearce confine his comments to matters related to policy. The Government does not regard the economy of this State as a closed New South Wales economy. Matt Brown is not the only New South Wales taxpayer to go out of his way to help the people of Queensland: all taxpayers in New South Wales go out of their way to help people in Queensland! In fact, through the present GST arrangements we are all subsidising Queenslanders.

If the honourable member is so concerned about subsidising Queenslanders, I suggest that he stop consuming. He might start with food and accommodation. It is apparent that he has already stopped consuming products that instil knowledge because the questions he asks in this Parliament are becoming more and more absurd and ridiculous—an indication why Mike Baird is speedily closing in on his position as shadow Treasurer. The reality is we live in a national economy and people are entitled to invest their own personal funds wherever they choose in that national economy. I congratulate Matt Brown for being so diligent with his personal investments.

WINDSOR FLOOD EVACUATION ROUTE

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads. Can the Minister provide the House with the latest information on improvements to road infrastructure in Sydney's north west?

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: I thank the honourable member for her question and commend her for her interest in this matter. On Sunday 16 September I was delighted to open the new Windsor Flood Evacuation Route. At this great community celebration more than 2,000 people walked over the new bridge before it was opened to traffic. It was a sunny and fantastic day. John Aquilina, the member for Riverstone, and Allan Shearan, the member for Londonderry, attended that opening with me. They have both worked tirelessly to see the project completed.

The new 2.6 kilometre Windsor Flood Evacuation Route between Day Street, Windsor and Railway Road South, Mulgrave is a major engineering achievement and it will improve traffic flow for motorists during peak hour. The opening marks the final stage of the Windsor Road upgrade, a \$500 million investment by the Iemma Labor Government in infrastructure in Sydney's thriving north-west. Windsor Road is one of the oldest corridors in Australia and is a vital part of Sydney's road network, with around 37,000 motorists using Windsor Road every day. The half a billion dollar investment by the Iemma Labor Government in the Windsor Road corridor makes it, I am advised, the largest urban arterial road program ever carried out by a State government in Australia. The Windsor Road upgrade is about reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow for motorists travelling between the north-west and the city.

The Windsor Flood Evacuation Route will provide further improvements to traffic along this busy route, allowing traffic to bypass the Windsor town centre. On top of that the State Government has poured \$524 million into the north-west T-way to provide bus-only roadways and lanes to improve public transport in the region. That means that over \$1 billion has been invested in upgrading transport infrastructure across the west and north-west over the last few years to improve traffic conditions and public transport. The Windsor Flood Evacuation Route is a magnificent piece of engineering. More than 1,500 workers were employed during its construction, amounting to approximately 600,000 worker hours.

As members will be aware, the Hawkesbury Nepean River is one of the State's major river systems, covering a catchment area of 22,000 kilometres. It is also one of the most flood prone areas in New South Wales. In fact, the House may be interested to know, the largest flood in the State was recorded at South Creek in June 1867. That is why the 2.6 kilometre Windsor Flood Evacuation Route includes the impressive 1.5 kilometre high level bridge, or 17.3 metres above sea level, and is designed to protect the route from wind-generated waves. This new road is about giving residents additional time to safely evacuate their homes in the event of a major flood. The road will also alleviate peak hour congestion in nearby McGraths Hill and the Windsor town centre, improving safety and traffic flow.

The new 1.5 kilometre bridge along the Windsor Flood Evacuation Route has been named the Jim Anderson Bridge, after the late Jim Anderson, a former State Labor MP for Londonderry and former Mayor of Blacktown. Jim passed away suddenly on the day of the State election of 22 March 2003. He will be remembered as a hardworking local MP who made a major contribution to improving services and facilities in the west and north-west. He was particularly passionate about the development and construction of the Windsor Flood Evacuation Route. It was pleasing to have many members of Jim's family present at the opening of the Windsor Flood Evacuation Route. I commend the project to the House.

TAFE COLLEGES CHAPLAINCY

Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES: My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Training. Is the Minister aware that there are no multi-faith chaplains in TAFE colleges in New South Wales whereas there are chaplains present in New South Wales universities? In particular, is the Minister aware of the contribution of chaplains to the general welfare of students, teachers and administrative staff, by providing spiritual support and counselling? Will the Minister indicate if approvals will be given for chaplains in TAFE colleges? Furthermore, will the Minister indicate if funds might be offered to support such chaplains as the Federal Government is providing for secondary schools?

The Hon. JOHN DELLA BOSCA: This is the first time I have had this proposal put to me. With the member's agreement, or blessing perhaps, I will take the question on notice and come back to him with a response.

EQUINE INFLUENZA

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy, Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for State Development. Is it a fact that there was a confirmed positive test for equine influenza near Temora on Thursday last week, yet zoning for the area was not changed until Tuesday this week? Why was there this delay in rezoning, and how many other horses within the new exclusion zone are now at risk of infection?

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: The member will find that action was taken very quickly at Temora. We have been vaccinating; in fact, there have been over 5,000 vaccinations around the area. I am not sure of the precise details about the imposition of the zone but I am sure the Chief Veterinary Officer would have acted responsibly to ensure that—

The Hon. Rick Colless: Six days elapsed. How many other horses passed through the area in six days?

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: I am not sure how many horses passed through the area.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: You have been in charge while the disease has spread right across the State. It has happened in your brief and on your watch. You have been the one in charge while it has gone right across this State.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: It is true that equine influenza was detected in New South Wales on my watch but it was caused by a Federal National Party Minister. He was responsible for letting the disease out of the Eastern Creek facility and letting it spread. The Federal Minister and the Federal Government have in fact been totally irresponsible—

[Interruption]

The Hon. Rick Colless: Point of order: My question was very specific: it related to the equine influenza outbreak near Temora. I want to know how many horses were at risk of infection at the Temora site. The Minister can forget about—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I get the gist of the point of order. I ask the Minister to be generally relevant to the question.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: At the Callinan inquiry the Government will be represented and we will go in there hard and fast on this issue. The Nationals are in the last remaining, and soon to be defeated, Coalition government in the whole of Australia. Of the nine jurisdictions there remains but one Coalition government. There will soon be no Coalition government. The Federal Government has been responsible for letting the equine influenza disease—

The Hon. Rick Colless: Point of order: The Minister is clearly flouting your ruling. I ask that you refer him back to the Temora issue.

[Interruption]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Primary Industries to order for the first time. The Minister was asked a question in relation to equine influenza. The Minister is being generally relevant and he may continue.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: I look forward to the Callinan inquiry because only one result can come from that major inquiry: The Nationals, on their Federal watch, have been responsible for running down quarantine services in this country to the point where equine influenza was able to escape from a quarantine facility and wreak havoc across our State.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: The Minister is misleading the House. I look forward to the inquiry into how he allowed the equine influenza to spread across the State—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Numerous Presidents have ruled that members must not take frivolous points of order, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows full well that he has taken a frivolous point of order.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: And the reason he has taken a frivolous point of order is that The Nationals have asked a ridiculous question, they have interjected and now they are copping it. The outbreak of equine influenza in our State was caused by the Federal Government. The outbreak has cost the racing industry alone over \$100 million. It was the Federal colleagues of members opposite who let the disease out of the quarantine centre. The Federal Government has no real facilities for quarantine security— [*Time expired.*]

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Education and Training. Can the Minister advise the House about the number of students sitting the Higher School Certificate examinations today and any trends in the study of subjects?

The Hon. JOHN DELLA BOSCA: I thank the Hon. Helen Westwood, who has an ongoing interest in education matters, for her question. The New South Wales Higher School Certificate written examinations started this morning. The first examinations at 9.25 a.m. include a Higher School Certificate trade course for Industrial Technology. That curriculum includes the trades of Automotive, Building and Construction, Electronics and Metals and Engineering. Examinations are also being held today in Classical Hebrew, Latin and Engineering Studies. I take this opportunity on behalf of the Government to offer my best wishes and congratulations to this year's 67,189 students. A record number of students are sitting the Higher School Certificate and embarking on the last phase of their schooling. The mandatory English examinations will be held tomorrow and on Monday 22 October. The final examinations will be on Tuesday 13 November.

The Higher School Certificate is the most rigorous year 12 leaving credential in the nation, and all students can be rightly proud of their achievements. Examinations will take place at more than 750 New South Wales centres and overseas. Several schools in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore now choose to offer the New South Wales Higher School Certificate. It is the gold standard in Australia with an excellent international reputation. Interestingly, new data about the 2007 Higher School Certificate that has been released by the New South Wales Board of Studies reveals a jump in the number of students undertaking vocational education in schools. In the past five years the number of year 12 students undertaking vocational education and training has increased from one in four students to about one in three. In 2007, 20,579 students in Year 12 are undertaking one or more vocational education and training courses. This represents almost 31 per cent of final year students who will gain nationally recognised employment qualifications as part of their Higher School Certificate. These numbers will increase further next year as the Iemma Government continues the rollout of our successful trade school initiative.

Some of the fastest growing vocational education and training courses this year are Construction, with enrolment in this course increasing by 32 per cent on 2003, and Metal and Engineering, which is up 13 per cent. Hospitality remains the largest vocational education and training course with 7,747 students. It has grown 8 per cent since 2003. The most popular vocational education and training courses are Hospitality, Information Technology, Business Services, Construction and Retail Operation. To build on the success of VET in Schools Program the Iemma Government is implementing a series of innovations, including the introduction of school-based apprenticeships as part of the Higher School Certificate in Metal and Engineering, Automotive, Construction, Electrotechnology and Commercial Cookery. Those trades were all skill shortage areas at the beginning of 2007. Further innovations include the establishment of 25 trade schools across the State, an

increase in the flexibility of school-based traineeships by offering the new Board of Studies-endorsed course called Industry-based Learning, and the piloting of vocational education and training in schools for students in years 9 and 10 in 2006 and 2007.

Other highlights of the 2007 Higher School Certificate are that almost half the students enrolled in English, that is, 44 per cent, have chosen the most demanding level of 2 unit English, that is, advanced level. This is an increase of 14 per cent over the past five years. Also, 88 per cent of students eligible for a Higher School Certificate this year are sitting a mathematics exam or have completed a year 11 or year 12 course in mathematics in previous years. Almost half of all Higher School Certificate students, or 44 per cent, are studying at least one science course. The next few weeks can be a challenging time for students and families, but they can also be very fulfilling as students strive to achieve. My advice to students is to do their best and keep the examinations in perspective because no matter what happens there are many pathways they can take to achieve their educational and career goals. Students can obtain expert support or advice during the examination period by calling the New South Wales Higher School Certificate Advice Line on 13 11 12 or visiting the Higher School Certificate online website or the Board of Studies website. The board's site has past examination papers, self-test quizzes and other services for students, parents and teachers. Once again I offer my best wishes and congratulations to the class of 2007.

SNOWY HYDRO ENVIRONMENTAL FLOW USE

Mr IAN COHEN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy, Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for State Development. Following a pollution incident in July 2006 for which Snowy Hydro Limited was found guilty in the Land and Environment Court, did Snowy Hydro Limited use water from designated environmental flows to flush out pollution downstream from the Jindabyne spillway?

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: I am aware of the particular incident that occurred in relation to the construction of the dam at Jindabyne.

The Hon. Melinda Pavey: To enable environmental flows in the Snowy.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: I was going to say that.

The Hon. Melinda Pavey: I was just helping you.

The Hon. IAN MACDONALD: Thank you for your assistance; it is most unlike a member of The Nationals. The Government, through Snowy Hydro Limited, had spent up to about \$100 million upgrading the Jindabyne dam. The spill occurred during those works. Once the drought is over, the dam will provide the outlet for environmental flows. There are not many environmental flows at the moment, but once the drought is over it will provide them. Previously the outlet provided of the order of 10 to 11 megalitres a day. That has been ramped up to potentially many hundreds of megalitres a day. The dam works have been a magnificent initiative to ensure long-term environmental flows for the Snowy. I acknowledge an incident did take place. If Mr Ian Cohen reads the detail of that incident, he might wonder whether the matter was worthwhile prosecuting. It was very much part of a \$100-million program to make the dam environmentally sound. Overall, the answer is yes, and that was the only water available at the time.

GOCUP ROAD UPGRADE

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Commerce. Why did the Minister mislead the House on Tuesday in response to my question concerning the upgrade of Gocup Road between Tumut and Gundagai by calling upon Visy to make a contribution to this project when the softwood working group, of which Visy is a member, has already committed \$2.5 million to this important project? Again I ask him when his Government will join with the Federal Government and the softwood working group to commit funds to upgrade this vital road? What amount of funding will he commit?

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: The Gocup Road is a regional road and is the responsibility of Tumut and Gundagai councils. I previously provided the House with information regarding Gocup Road. In relation to this question, I direct the honourable member to those comments. For the benefit of the member I will say again that the New South Wales Government recognises that an increasing amount of freight is carried on

Gocup Road, and we support the development of transport infrastructure in line with the growth of the timber industry in the Tumut area.

COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY CENTRES

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: My question is directed to the Minister for Rural Affairs. Will the Minister provide an update on the current focus of Community Technology Centres in New South Wales?

The Hon. TONY KELLY: There are few issues as important to the sustainability of small communities as the provision of modern, up-to-the-minute communication systems. The New South Wales Government recognised this and so forged an agreement with the Federal Government to help keep small rural and regional towns in the information technology race. The result of this agreement is the hugely successful network of Community Technology Centres. From humble beginnings they have come a long way. These days the Community Technology Centres network consists of 80 member organisations located in small towns and indigenous communities throughout regional New South Wales. These are not-for-profit organisations with very strong community engagement and local management committees.

Passionate about bringing communication to the bush, the Community Technology Centres network has developed into technology hubs providing smaller rural communities with a great opportunity to keep up with the latest information technology. Sadly, things change, and not always for the better. The Federal Government, as it so often does, has taken its bat and ball and deserted rural and regional communities. The New South Wales Government willingly provided the necessary funding to set up the Community Technology Centres Association, putting up half a million dollars. And what was the Howard Government's contribution?

The Community Technology Centres Association put together a submission that addressed every single aspect of the criteria required by the Federal Government's Clever Networks Program, which was part of the Connect Australia Package. John Howard's little bucket had \$1.1 billion in it, but all 80 small and mostly disadvantaged centres across New South Wales were given was nothing. All these centres wanted was a lousy \$6 million. They were prepared to put in \$13 million in kind themselves. And what did they get? Nothing. A \$13 million contribution was not good enough for Senator Coonan. It was such a small ask from 80 small towns.

I am not sure what Senator Coonan did not like about the proposal. Perhaps she did not like the publicly accessible high-speed broadband on a high bandwidth network throughout the whole of rural and regional New South Wales. Or was it because the Senator did not like the proposal to have the network readily saleable and able to be upgraded, properly maintained and supported? Helen Coonan grew up a bit south of Wagga Wagga, in the small wheat and sheep district of Mangoplah. One would think she would show some empathy for her country cousins. Ironically, it took someone from the Senator's own side of politics, Barnaby Joyce, to point out just how far she had travelled from Mangoplah. He said of Ms Coonan:

Helen is so typical of that Liberal elite from Sydney's eastern suburbs whose main view of the world is the harbour. Just completely out of touch with working rural Australia.

With the Liberal Senator ignoring country New South Wales, did we see The Nationals stand up? They bend over backwards to get funding for a new local polo paddock, and you would have no problems securing a Federal grant to landscape your heritage-listed homestead if you were a senior member of the executive of the Queensland branch of The Nationals. However, if you are a small New South Wales country town just hoping to stay in front of the information technology race you have got a snowball's hope in hell of getting any support from The Nationals.

Eighty very small New South Wales rural communities are doing their utmost to keep up in the ever-changing world of information technology, and an uncompromising, intransigent Federal Government is doing nothing to help them. As I have said before in this Chamber, we do not get too many inquiries about broadband from the Opposition. The Iemma Government will continue to support initiatives such as the Community Technology Centres because it is committed to social and economic development in the bush, and it cares about country New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN DELLA BOSCA: I suggest that if members have further questions, they place them on notice.

FIREARMS ACT 1996 PARENTAL LIABILITY PROVISIONS

The Hon. JOHN HATZISTERGOS: During question time today the Hon. Roy Smith asked me a question in relation to the Firearms Act and provisions that make parents liable for offences against the Act by

their minor children. First, that Act is not administered by me; it is administered by the Minister for Police. Second, the section, strictly speaking, does not make parents liable for offences against the Act by their minor children unless the parents knowingly authorised or permitted the contravention. Obviously, there are distinctive features of the Firearms Act that make it appropriate for a provision of that kind.

Questions without notice concluded.

[The President left the Chair at 1.05 p.m. The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.]

CLIMATE FUTURES BILL 2007

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS [2.30 p.m.]: Prior to question time I outlined the cycles that have a significant impact on this planet's climate. The convergence of many is largely unknown and to impose the simplistic solution of shutting down the New South Wales coal industry is to ignore those effects. The proponent of the Climate Futures Bill correctly stated that coal is carbon and that when carbon is burnt it produces carbon dioxide. Dr John Kaye also stated that 226 million tonnes of carbon dioxide is produced from the burning and mining of coal. The member did not mention that national parks are carbon and that when they burn they also produce carbon dioxide. I analysed the fire in the Goonoo Community Conservation Area near Dubbo a couple of years ago. I am sure that the Hon. Tony Kelly will recall that very serious fire. It occurred in an area that had been locked up for a number of years at the insistence of the Greens.

The Hon. Tony Kelly: The Greens political party.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Yes, the political party. I estimated that 170 tonnes of carbon, equivalent to 629 tonnes of carbon dioxide, were emitted from each hectare burnt. The fire covered some 50,000 hectares of forested land, so that one fire alone pumped nearly 32 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

The Hon. Tony Kelly: It is a pity that it had not been logged first.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: It should have been. It had been logged for a long time and the biodiversity in the forest resulted from the active management of the Forestry Commission. Dr John Kaye, who introduced the bill, justifies revoking the approval of the Anvil Hill coalmine by stating that the mine will produce about 10.5 million tonnes of coal or 27 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. That is less than the amount produced by one wildfire in one national park each year. A far better plan would be to prevent the destruction of the environment caused by wildfires in national parks. That single achievement would prevent far more carbon dioxide emissions than shutting down the coal industry of New South Wales.

I will clarify the amount of coal under discussion. China, which takes a reasonable proportion of our exported coal, uses about 2.4 billion tonnes of coal each year, of which about 1.4 billion tonnes is used for electricity generation. New South Wales uses about 50 million tonnes of coal for electricity generation. Australia's exports of coal are about 220 million tonnes a year. China imports only 100 million tonnes of the coal it uses, so the vast majority of the coal it burns is from local mines. Interestingly, if Australia did not produce one molecule of carbon dioxide from now on, China would take up that slack in seven or eight months. Therefore, shutting down the coal industry of New South Wales would not have any impact on the global emissions of carbon dioxide. Of course, it is ridiculous to suggest that it would save the planet.

If the proponent of the bill were serious about cleaning up the Australian coal industry he would be promoting it and attempting to reduce coal consumption, particularly in Victoria because the coal it mines is of far lower quality than the coal mined in New South Wales. Shutting down the coal industry of New South Wales would cut off supplies of the best burning coal in Australia, which would be deleterious to the entire State. In conclusion, I reiterate the final statement of the ACIL Tasman report that we have access to.

Dr John Kaye: Have some guts and table it, so we can see what it says.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The member can read all about it in my speech tomorrow. The report stated:

In order to understand the implications for the NSW economy of this bill if it were to become law, detailed modelling of the electricity market and the NSW economy would need to be undertaken. It is apparent that the proponents of the bill have not undertaken this modelling and they would therefore have no understanding of its implications.

The proponents of the bill have obviously not considered the bill in detail. They have not done the necessary modelling. I call on all honourable members to reject the bill outright.

The Hon. TONY KELLY (Minister for Lands, Minister for Rural Affairs, Minister for Regional Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [2.40 p.m.]: The New South Wales Government will not support the bill. It proposes very high arbitrary targets for renewable energy generation rather than allowing generators to choose least-cost emission reduction options. This will increase the generators' cost, which will ultimately be borne through higher electricity prices. I would like to address the bill's two major tenets: phasing out the coal industry and prohibiting the development of new coal-fired power stations, and imposing very high targets for renewable energy generation.

The New South Wales coal industry makes a major contribution to the economic wellbeing of our State. Direct employment in the coal industry as at 30 June 2007, this year, was over 13,300 jobs. The industry creates many times this number of jobs indirectly in mining and non-related services. Importantly, the coal industry is a major employer in regional New South Wales. The coal industry provides a major economic stimulus to local communities such as those in the Hunter. The Hon. Rick Colless mentioned places such as Gunnedah and Mudgee. New South Wales is presently heavily reliant on coal as a source of energy and our economy gains much from coal exports. Approximately 70 per cent of saleable coal produced is exported to some 24 countries and provided \$6.2 billion in value in 2006-07. The Greens would deny the State those jobs and that income.

A significant part of the State's workforce is either directly or indirectly reliant on the coal industry or its products. The current standard of living enjoyed by residents of New South Wales can be, at least in part, attributed to the benefits we derive from plentiful and relatively inexpensive availability of electrical energy produced in coal-fired power stations. We probably have some of the cheapest electricity in the world, and New South Wales has the cheapest electricity in Australia—much of it due to the fact that we have coal-fired power stations. While power stations consume about 85 per cent of all domestic coal, some 15 per cent is used in our steel works. A prohibition on new coalmines or on the expansion of existing coalmines is not practical. It would endanger those jobs as well.

Approved new mines and expansions are necessary to replace older mines, sustain the industry and provide vital regional employment and economic activity. As each new mine is developed it is safer than the previous one. All new coalmine proposals are fully considered under the Government's comprehensive planning legislation. The development, assessment and approval process for coalmine proposals is extensive, transparent and rigorous, and provides for community input. All relevant environmental, cultural and heritage issues, including cumulative impacts, are comprehensively considered in this process. Phasing out the industry will not achieve the emissions reduction purposes of the bill because, first, coalmines are only directly responsible for 9 per cent of New South Wales greenhouse gas emissions and, second, the overseas buyers of New South Wales coal can source their coal needs from elsewhere, including from sources that would result in higher greenhouse gas emissions than come from New South Wales coal.

The Hon. Rick Colless has already mentioned this, but I think I should mention it again to reiterate it. If the Greens were fair dinkum about wanting to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and trying to clean up the environment, they would be proposing that all the power that is produced from New South Wales, from Victoria and from Queensland should all be produced from New South Wales coal, because it is so much better for the environment than that dirty Victorian and dirty Queensland coal. If they were fair dinkum, that is what they would be pushing for, not to close down our mines here—the best coal, the cleanest coal—and then call on the other States to take up the slack, causing worse outcomes for the environment. Instead, they are trying to close down the best we have.

The Hon. Rick Colless: It is called voodoo logic.

The Hon. TONY KELLY: Voodoo logic—that is a good description. In contrast, the Government's priority is to allow the industry to serve its market within any carbon limits that may be agreed internationally. To support that approach the Government has consistently supported mechanisms to reduce global emissions, such as Australia's ratification of the Kyoto protocol, despite the Commonwealth Government's unwillingness. In addition, the New South Wales Government has committed, in the State Plan, to meet national air quality goals in New South Wales and to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent by 2050. The New South Wales Government and industry are actively working together through partnerships with organisations such as the Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Gas Technologies, Coal21 and the CSIRO on clean coal

technologies to help curb greenhouse gas emissions, including technologies for the capture and sequestration of carbon dioxide and safe geological storage sites.

In March 2007 the Government announced it would spend \$20 million on two pilot clean-coal projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power stations in New South Wales. On 27 September 2007 the Government announced that a \$5 million pilot carbon capture plant would be developed through a joint initiative between Delta Electricity and the CSIRO. This pilot post-combustion capture facility will capture greenhouse gas emissions from the Munmorah Power Station on the State's Central Coast and is expected to be operational by mid-2008. It is hoped this project will provide the foundation for a large-scale, \$150 million post-combustion capture and storage demonstration project in New South Wales that should be operational by 2013 and capturing more than 50,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. The development of further coal export facilities at the port of Newcastle is in response to the increased international demand for the State's high-quality export coal. The new terminal will provide necessary infrastructure to help meet the future projected growth in our exports and ensure that economic benefits from the projected increase in global coal trade continue to flow to the State.

The Hon. Robert Brown: It won't be a minute too soon.

The Hon. TONY KELLY: True. On the prohibition on new coal-fired power stations and increasing renewable targets, I point out that the approach proposed in the Climate Futures Bill 2007 to reduce emissions from energy generation will be less effective and more expensive than those proposed by the Government. The bill addresses only one industry sector—coal-fired power stations—and mandates only one solution: renewable energy. The Government's initiatives, such as the New South Wales Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme, provide long-term low-cost solutions that are capable of being applied to a wide range of industries. The bill will result in greater costs than the Government's approach because it seeks to achieve emissions reduction by setting a higher target for renewables than that proposed by the Government.

In November 2006 the Premier announced mandatory renewable energy targets for the State's electricity companies and plans for a \$220 million wind farm. Currently, renewable energy makes up around 6 per cent of the total energy used in New South Wales. Under the mandatory targets announced by the Premier, that figure will rise to 10 per cent by 2010 and to 15 per cent by 2020. This target was calculated to be achievable and not to impose excessive costs on electricity users. It was also designed to allow the emissions market to dictate investments in emissions reduction, which may include renewables but also may include other cost-effective options, such as energy efficiency or low-emissions technology. Finally, this market-based approach will allow the New South Wales renewable industry to develop to such a point where it is ready to scale up to meet any demand when national and international emissions trading regimes are finally established. The bill will not deliver cost-effective emissions reduction and will adversely affect coal industry workers and electricity consumers. The Government will not support the bill.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [2.48 p.m.]: The Climate Futures Bill 2007, which was introduced by Dr John Kaye, is an amazing bill. I am astounded that Dr John Kaye could believe, even in his wildest imagination, that responsible members of this House would ever support a bill that would cause so much damage to the people of the State, the people we are supposed to represent and whose interests we are supposed to protect. It is an outrageous bill. It is based on one view of global warming, the one that the Greens want to tout relentlessly.

I shall speak on climate change, particularly about whether it is a man-made problem. The Greens' mantra is that it is all our fault, that we should shut down the coal industry and stop the production of CO₂. I sometimes think that they are members of the flat earth society. They will not accept that theirs is not always the right view, let alone the only view. No-one argues that climate change is a fact. The cause of the phenomena is in question to almost everyone except the Greens. About a month ago I attended the Australian Environment Foundation conference in Melbourne and, strangely, did not see any Greens politicians in attendance or green non-government organisations even though members of those organisations were invited. That might have been because the views of those delivering speeches would not have been in accordance with what the Greens want everyone to believe.

Dr John Kaye: Who are they?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: The Australian Environment Foundation is a group that supports sound science in making environmental decisions, not like the many voodoo-logic green non-government

organisations that seem to grow, flower, bloom—whatever the word is—in their hundreds, particularly in New South Wales.

The Hon. Rick Colless: Germinate.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Germinate. I commend the Australian Environment Foundation for its interest in the wellbeing of the environment, particularly here in New South Wales and in the bush in relation to woody weeds, but that is a subject for another time. One of the key speakers was Dr Chris de Freitas, a climatologist from the University of Auckland, some of whose very interesting views I would like to share. Global warming is a greatly misunderstood and emotionally charged issue. We have seen that recently with the awarding of a Nobel prize for a fictional film.

The Hon. Rick Colless: It was a peace prize.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Yes, it was a peace prize. Amazing! I do not think we hear enough about the side the Greens do not espouse, that is, that global warming is not necessarily anthropogenic. There is much talk about the Kyoto protocol proposed by the United Nations in 1997 that called for greenhouse gas emission cuts by 5 per cent from 1990 levels by the year 2012. What the Greens do not tell people is that to meet this protocol many of the industrialised nations of the world, including Australia, would have to give up one-third of their energy use—a huge cut. Indeed, the Greens simple solution with a bill like this is to close down the coalmining industry.

The Greens do not say that their view is only one side of the story. A decrease of this magnitude can only be achieved by severe rationing of oil, coal and natural gas—and at what cost to the world, never mind third world countries. Were third world countries to try to meet those protocols, they would regress to the Stone Age. They would not be able to develop. Until I took the time to think about it, like Dr de Freitas, for a time I wanted to accept that increases in man-made additions of carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere would trigger changes in water vapour and lead to dangerous climate change. I thought it unlikely that man-made changes are in fact the drivers of significant climate variation, as shocking and as heretical this might seem to Dr Kaye.

As he pointed out to the conference, Dr de Freitas said much has been made of the increase in emissions over the last 50 years. Rarely mentioned is the fact that carbon dioxide's effect on global temperatures is already close to its maximum, that is, adding more has an ever-decreasing effect. This means it is unlikely that higher concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will greatly influence the climate. He points out that re-analysis of the Vostock and Dome ice core shows CO₂ increases lagged about 600 years behind temperature increases of the three significant deglaciations. Clearly, high carbon dioxide levels are not the primary cause of temperature rises ending the ice ages. He said that other research on geological timescales shows that sometimes temperatures were high when carbon dioxide levels were low and vice-versa. Significantly, the Antarctic ice cores show the preceding four interglacials were warmer than now yet show lower levels of carbon dioxide.

Given that he is speaking as a scientist and climatologist, what are we really trying to address and what is causing our changing climate? If not man, could it all be as simple as the sun? De Freitas says climate change science is bursting with new findings and mostly to do with the sun—and I notice there are detractors coming out of the woodwork there too—which is virtually the ultimate source of all energy on the planet. He says it is not surprising that solar activity is the main driver of the earth's climate and that some solar scientists are predicting that global cooling—not warming—will start in just over a decade and reach its peak in 2055. That is a contradiction in the predictions that scientists are making. So where does that leave us? We are dealing with natural climate change rather than a man-made climate change, which is what the Greens are so keen to have us believe.

The Hon. Rick Colless: The ebb and flow of climate change.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: That is exactly right. Dr de Freitas says that human influence aside, natural climate change will continue and the proper public policy response is to monitor climate accurately, and respond and adapt to change—both warming and cooling—in the same way that we cope with other natural events such as cyclones, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In conclusion, Dr de Freitas says that the best way of ensuring we cope is to build wealth into the world economy and be receptive to new technologies. One cannot build new technologies without a vibrant economy. In order to retain vibrant economies the world engines must keep running. In New South Wales both the Hon. Rick Colless and the Minister pointed out the

economic effect that this bill would have on the State of New South Wales. The Minister also stated that if the Greens were interested in reducing CO₂ emissions worldwide, they should champion the expansion of the New South Wales coal industry, not put forward a turn-out-the-lights bill, which is what this bill is. The Shooters Party could not possibly support anything as crazy as this bill.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ [2.57 p.m.]: The Hon. Ms Hale implies that the New South Wales Government is failing to limit greenhouse gas emissions. I am delighted to be given the opportunity to enlighten this House on the Labor Government's numerous initiatives to minimise New South Wales greenhouse gas emissions, not least because under former Premier Bob Carr New South Wales was the first in the world to introduce a trade emissions scheme. The emissions reduction approach proposed in the Climate Futures Bill 2007 addresses only one industry sector—that is coal-fired power stations—and mandates only one solution: renewable energy. In contrast, the Government's initiatives to minimise New South Wales' greenhouse gas emissions are broadly based, world leading and innovative. These include the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme. New South Wales established the first mandatory greenhouse emission trading schemes in the world in 2003. The Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme provides incentives for existing coal-fired power stations to improve the efficiency of generation through the ability to earn New South Wales greenhouse abatement certificates for reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

This scheme changes the economics of generation options and is driving change in the industry. For example, the ability to earn New South Wales greenhouse abatement certificates under the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme was an important consideration in the development of two new gas-fired power stations, one at Lake Munmorah on the Central Coast, and one being built by TRUenergy at Tallawarra, near Wollongong.

The Government's Renewable Energy (New South Wales) Bill 2007 recognises that the further development and promotion of renewable energy requires changes to energy market regulation and governance and investment in research and development. The Government's bill will foster the development of the renewable energy industry by raising the amount of renewable energy in New South Wales from 6 per cent to 10 per cent by 2010 and 15 per cent by 2020. This will allow the New South Wales renewable energy industry to scale up to meet the expected increase in demand for zero emissions technologies when national and international emissions trading regimes are established. New South Wales has led the States and Territories in the development of a National Emissions Trading Scheme. I welcome the Coalition Federal Government's very late announcement that it will introduce a national emissions trading scheme. However, I note that, unlike the work done by the State and Territories, there is very little detail in the Commonwealth Coalition scheme.

GreenPower was launched by the New South Wales Government in 1997. It is now a national program. It provides a guarantee to customers that their purchase of a GreenPower product supports the development of new renewable energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. New South Wales electricity retailers are required to offer a 10 per cent GreenPower component to all new or moving residential customers. Currently there are more than 500,000 GreenPower customers across Australia.

Measures to reduce electricity demand also reduce greenhouse emissions from electricity generation. For example, the Building Sustainability Index [BASIX] sets targets that buildings must meet to reduce energy consumption in new residential dwellings; the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme provides incentives for activities that increase energy efficiency; the New South Wales Government, together with all other Australian governments under the auspices of the Ministerial Council of Energy, is implementing a national framework for energy efficiency; and New South Wales leads Australia in the introduction of smart meters. Electricity network service providers are actively evaluating the benefits of smart electricity meters to reduce demand at peak times and in this way reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Numerous current initiatives are underway to improve the environmental performance of the coal industry. The initiatives underway to reduce the impact of the mining sector of the coal industry include the capture and use of methane drained from coal seams and mine ventilation air to generate electricity at several New South Wales coal mines, including Appin, Tower and Tahmoor collieries, with several new projects also expected to be commissioned in the near future; the fugitive emissions working group, which is developing measures to improve both the reporting and mitigation of fugitive methane emissions from existing coalmines; the recently released Mining, Petroleum Production And Extractive Industries State Environmental Planning Policy 2007, which requires mining proposals to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and rehabilitate the area in which they operate; and the Government recently announced it will spend \$22 million on two pilot, clean coal projects to reduce greenhouse emissions from power stations in New South Wales.

The clean coal projects not only provide a benefit to New South Wales but allow us to export the technology to emerging countries that rely heavily on our coal but do not have the ability of wealthy nations

such as ours to find better aims of using cleaner, greener gases. As well as relying so heavily on it, clean coal is such an important element not so much for us but for the communities we export to.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [3.02 p.m.]: I wish to make a few remarks and then to adjourn the debate on this bill until the next sitting day. The Climate Futures Bill 2007 is a very dramatic bill from the Greens' point of view, and obviously it has no hope of being passed by this House. I think we should send a copy of the bill to the Greens leader, Bob Brown, who appeared on television last night. He had been speaking at the National Press Club in Canberra, presenting the reasonable man image, saying, "You could trust us. Let us have the balance of power after the election. You know how reasonable the Greens are. We have no extreme policies; we would be a moderate influence." It was a completely new Bob Brown. He must not be aware of the New South Wales Greens party. I will send him a copy of this bill and ask him for his response to it.

If the bill were to be passed, it would prohibit the development of future coalmines in New South Wales, prohibit any development that expands or increases the level of operations of an existing coalmine, prohibit any development that increases the capacity of any coal export terminal or other form of transport infrastructure that is specifically designed and used for the purposes of handling coal, prohibit the establishment of a coal-fired power station, prohibit any development that increases the capacity of an existing coal-fired power station to generate electrical power, and prohibit any development that extends the operational life of an existing coal-fired power station by changing the technology used at the power station. I have taken those words directly from the bill, but it does not stop there. It seeks to close down the Kooragang coal terminal, which, as we know, has been approved—

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Amanda Fazio): Order! The Dr John Kaye will cease interjecting.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: The bill provides that planning approvals will be revoked for the construction of the coal export transport terminal at Newcastle and the establishment of the Anvil Hill coalmine, and so on. It is a very dramatic piece of legislation. I thought I would ask an expert on climate change, Cardinal George Pell, for his opinion. Cardinal Pell issued a statement on the matter, and I thought it was very good. I will read a couple of extracts from it. Cardinal Pell is very critical of the Greens' climate change position. He knows that Australia is only responsible for about 1 per cent of greenhouse gases in the world. Australia is one of the lowest contributors to greenhouse gases of all the developed countries in the world. So we should be proud of what has been achieved in this country. In response to a statement issued by some of the church leaders, which he did not agree to be a party to, Cardinal Pell said:

I think I read somewhere the temperature has gone up 0.5 of a degree on Mars. Well, the industrial-military complex up on Mars can't be blamed for that.

I think we are all clear on the fact that there are no coalmines or industry on Mars. Cardinal Pell voiced deep scepticism, warning that it was impossible to be certain about environmental patterns thousands of years ago. He cast doubt on a CSIRO estimate that temperatures could rise by 3.4 degrees by 2070 if emissions were not cut, accusing the same scientists of contradicting their own research findings from four decades ago. Cardinal Pell also said:

I have studied this a little bit and there's a whole history of differing estimates. Thirty or 40 years ago, actually, some of the same scientists were warning us about the dangers of an ice age ...

Even a movie was made based on those fears. It showed ice covering the city of New York, and so on. Cardinal Pell went on:

... so I take all these things with a little bit of a grain of salt. They're matters for science and, as a layman, I study the scientific evidence rather than the press releases.

Debate adjourned on motion by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS TRIBUNAL AMENDMENT (CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS) BILL 2007

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 September 2007.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA [3.08 p.m.]: As I indicated previously, the Opposition supports the bill.

Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. John Ajaka and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (PATRON PROTECTION) BILL 2007**Second Reading**

Debate called on, and adjourned on motion by Dr John Kaye and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

PRINCES HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Debate resumed from 27 September 2007.

The Hon. MICHAEL VEITCH [3.10 p.m.]: The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of the Princes Highway as a major road transport corridor for New South Wales. The development of the Princes Highway is the highest road priority for the Government in the Illawarra and South Coast region. I am advised that from 1994-95 to the end of 2006-07 the New South Wales Government spent more than \$586 million, compared to the \$44.5 million spent by the Federal Government over the same period. State funding for the Princes Highway has received a massive boost with \$142.8 million allocated as part of this year's State budget.

Projects underway include \$45 million to continue the construction of a four-lane dual carriageway deviation of the highway between Oak Flats and Dunmore, completing four lanes to Kiama; \$30 million to extend the northern distributor from Bellambi on the Princes Highway at Bulli—major construction started in April 2007 and the project is expected to be opened to traffic in 2009; \$14.3 million, including Federal strategic regional funding, for safety improvements and construction of four lanes between Forest Road and Falls Road; \$9 million for the construction of a new bridge at Pambula on the Highway—roadworks began in late 2006 and bridgeworks commenced in April 2007; \$8 million to start construction of Kiama ramps to provide better access between Kiama and the Princes Highway; \$7.5 million to commence the construction of a new bridge at Conjola Creek in conjunction with the realignment of the highway at Conjola Mountain; \$3.4 million to continue the route option investigations for the future upgrade of the highway between Gerringong and Bomaderry; and \$2 million for planning and preconstruction for the upgrade of the highway and Lawrence Hargrave Drive intersection at the foot of Bulli Pass.

In order to improve safety on the highway, an allocation more than \$30 million worth of road safety improvements continues this year, including realignment of the southern curves at Pambula, now completed; construction of an overtaking lane north of Mystery Bay Road; and shoulder widening and median turning lane installation at Bewong to Wandandian. The Roads and Traffic Authority is currently in the planning phase for junction improvements at Island Point Road.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER [3.12 p.m.]: I speak in support of the motion moved by the Hon. Don Harwin. I do so not only because I have recently travelled the length of the Princes Highway several times but because there is a huge similarity between what has been going on over the Princes Highway and what goes on in my neck of the woods in the Hunter, with the Government continually delaying work on major significant roads when there is an issue between the Federal and State governments over funding. The continual delay means cost blow-outs time and time again. In the Hunter, for example, the Weakleys Drive Interchange issue has gone on for years. The New South Wales Government delayed the project for so long the cost ended up being blown out from \$12 million to \$52 million.

The same thing happened on the Pacific Highway over the Bulahdelah upgrade: all sorts of ducking, diving and weaving and refusal to cooperate, so the cost blew out. We have been calling for a flyover at Myall Way. If the State Government had come to the party and done the flyover at the appropriate time, the work would have been much more cost-effective. Instead all it wants to do is blame the Federal Government, and this Minister is one of the best at it. We have had successive road Ministers and nothing has changed. They want to blame the Federal Government for all of the problems and constantly point the finger instead of working cooperatively. What we get is blow-out after blow-out. The same thing is going on with the F3 link road. I note that Frank Terenzini, the member for Maitland, earlier this week spoke about the F3 link road that could have been built. The State Government continually blames and points the finger and, therefore, the cost blows out. That is also happening on the Princes Highway.

The current Labor Government has two strategies for roads such as the Princes Highway corridor, the Pacific Highway, the F3 link road and the Weakleys Drive Interchange at New England. The first thing the

Government does to get rid of any criticism and take the blame off it is attack the Federal Government about funding. The Labor Government always blames the Federal Government. Every State Labor roads Minister has adopted the same approach. The Princes Highway corridor, in particular, is a State Government responsibility. The second thing the Government does is spin the issue with impressive sounding budget figures, such as the often quoted pledge to spend \$380 million over 12 years, despite the fact that such spending figures have never been adequately accounted for in successive budget estimates hearings. This strategy is repeatedly employed to distract voters' attention from the Government's poor planning record.

I listened with interest to the contributions by Government members in this debate. Each of them adopted one or both of these strategies on 27 September 2007. In doing so they failed to address the substantive element of this motion by the Hon. Don Harwin concerning the Carr-Iemma Government's track record of mismanagement and poor forward planning for the Princes Highway over the past 12 years. In the debate so far Government members have trumpeted the various upgrade projects that have been completed or commenced along the Pacific Highway. They have talked about the logistical detail of these projects and their benefits to the motorists. They have repeatedly quoted the amount of funding involved, even when some of it has come from the Commonwealth Government.

The State Government always blames but never acknowledges the funding that has come from the Commonwealth Government. Government Members have been very silent when it comes to defending the State Government's handling of these funds and the management of these projects. They have neglected to speak to those parts of the motion that directly address the delays and the cost blow-outs that have bedevilled this project along the Pacific Highway route for the past decade. This track record—

The Hon. Eric Roozendaal: The Princes Highway. Get it right!

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Princes Highway. This track record is indefensible.

The Hon. Eric Roozendaal: Insert name of road before attacks on us.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: The Minister is the last one to give lessons on pronunciation—the Minister who has failed to address these issues. This is yet another strategy from the Minister—

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Amanda Fazio): Order! Members will cease interjecting.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: The Minister will do anything to avoid acknowledging the Government's failure and inability to take responsibility for the Princes Highway, the Pacific Highway and all other the road failures in between. The Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade, the Kiama ramps, the Berry bypass and the upgrade from south Nowra to the Jervis Bay turnoff are all significant capital works along the Princes Highway route. Each one has been subject to unacceptable delays that have stemmed from the Labor Government's inefficient forward planning and poor project management. Under the Greiner-Fahey Government a preferred route for the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade was identified, an environmental impact study was done and the project was approved in 1997.

The Roads and Traffic Authority and the then Minister for Roads approved the project. That was 10 years ago. Rather than commence construction, the Labor Government chose to delay. It has been a very long and frustrating delay of 10 years for the people on the South Coast. In September 2003 the then Minister for Roads, Carl Scully, stated in a budget estimates hearing that the construction of the Oak Flats to Dunmore project would commence soon after the completion of the North Kiama bypass. Two years later, however, when the bypass was completed, the Government was not ready to proceed with the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade project. Despite the delay, the Government's forward planning was poorly managed and the project simply was not ready.

The same complaint can be made about the Pacific Highway in the Hunter. All one has to do is change the name of the section road on the complaint form. A whole year after the completion of the bypass the Government called tenders for the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade. Government members boast about building the north Kiama bypass and they spruik the benefits of the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade and how much money the Government is spending on the project, but they will not comment on the 10 long years that the people on the South Coast have waited for work on this project to commence. They do not explain why the Government

was not ready to start the upgrade when the bypass was finished. They will not account for the 10-year delay. They have not even acknowledged that lost decade.

Unfortunately, delays have plagued the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade. There are other examples of the Government's poor forward planning and infrastructure delivery management along the Princes Highway route. The Kiama ramps and Berry bypass have been the subject of similarly frustrating delays. The Kiama bypass access ramps to Bland Street and South Kiama Drive were originally integral parts of the north Kiama bypass project and were due for completion in 2005. As a result of mismanagement of the State's budget, the capital works program for the ramps was set aside as a separate project. The local member, Matt Brown, promised the ramps would be in place in 2007. Guess what? That promise has been broken. That is of no surprise to the Liberal-Nationals Coalition because we know that the Government breaks its promises. While the options to the ramp routes were publicly displayed in May 2005, plans were not finalised for another 14 months. Meanwhile the cost blow-out ticks over.

The Government said that the construction of the ramps would begin by the end of the year. It is yet to explain why the people of Kiama have had to put up with these drawn-out delays. Why did the Government fail to build the ramps as part of the bypass project, as originally planned? Why has there been a two-year gap between completion of the bypass and the start of work on the ramps? The answer is inadequate financing of capital works and poor forward planning, which are the core themes of this motion. Further along the route of the Princes Highway the residents of Berry have been enduring years of State Government inaction too. As with the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade, plans for realigning the highway between Gerringong and Bomaderry, including a bypass of the Berry township, were initiated by the State's last Coalition Government.

Again a similar story has unfolded: mismanagement of planning has resulted in excessive and unnecessary delays. The project has not been made a priority by the Government and funding has not been allocated in successive budgets. Local residents have waited a decade for the Government to take action and they are still waiting. In late 2005 the member for Kiama said that the preferred route could be expected in 2006. That is another broken promise. It now transpires that the project is unlikely before the middle of next year, a delay of over 18 months. So the cost blow-out ticks over.

Given the lengthy and complicated approval process, this frustrating delay means that construction will not begin until after the next State election. The ongoing delay of the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade, the Kiama ramps project and the Gerringong to Bomaderry realignment are prime examples of the Government's appalling track record of mismanagement and poor forward planning for work on the Princes Highway. Construction of these projects could have been completed one year ago but the Government has failed to prioritise them. It has neglected to provide the necessary funding and has mismanaged the forward planning. Its handling of these important capital works has been far from expeditious or efficient. Its track record is one of neglect and delay. That is the core issue of this motion.

Whilst listening to the contributions of Government members to this debate I was struck by the repeated references to the money that has been allocated in this year's budget to upgrade the Princes Highway. We have been told of a record budget for the Princes Highway, amounting to \$142 million. The burning question is: Will all that money actually be spent? The Government has a bad habit of announcing funding in the budget and then not spending it during the year. That then gives the Government the opportunity to reannounce the same funding in the following year's budget. Exactly the same thing happens all the way along the Pacific Highway, the New England Highway and any other highway the Government has anything to do with. In 2006-07 the Government announced \$47.7 million in capital works funding for the Princes Highway. Nearly 20 per cent of that money, or \$10 million, was never spent. The Government simply did not deliver. Most of that underspending related to projects south of Kiama. The Government allocated a pathetic \$22.5 million in 2006-07 for the Princes Highway in that area and spent little more than half of that amount, just \$13.5 million.

The people on the South Coast, who know how the Government operates, would have little confidence that the money allocated in this year's budget will actually be spent. The Government has not delivered in the past and there is no reason to believe that it will deliver now. Despite a so-called record budget for the Princes Highway in 2007-08, the neglect of the route south of Kiama continues. The Government has allocated \$119.2 million for capital works on the Princes Highway but only one quarter of this money has been earmarked for projects south of Kiama—just \$34.2 million. While Government members are reluctant to admit it, much of that \$34.2 million does not even come from the State Government; it comes from the Howard Coalition Government in Canberra.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: They are our taxes.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: They are our taxes, and the Howard-Costello Government manages them brilliantly. That is why the economy is ticking over. They know how to manage money. They are experienced, efficient managers. In this year's budget there is funding for four projects on the section of the Princes Highway south of Kiama.

[Interruption]

If the Minister listened he might learn some lessons in management from the Howard-Costello Government. The first of the previously mentioned and seemingly forever delayed Gerringong to Bomaderry upgrades is receiving a token amount for route selection and planning. That work should have taken place years ago at a very different cost from that we are looking at now. As to the other three projects—the safety upgrade from south Nowra to Jervis Bay, the realignment of the Conjola mountain section and the duplication of the Pambula bridge and its approaches—each one is co-funded by the State and Federal Governments. Each and every one of these projects is proceeding only because the Federal Government initiated them by providing funding and forcing the reluctant State Government to take action, and that is despite the fact that the Princes Highway is the State Government's responsibility.

The Coalition Government in Canberra will mainly fund the South Nowra to Jervis Bay safety upgrade by providing 75 per cent of the total cost. This year's State budget includes \$14.3 million for this project, and at least \$10 million of that is coming from the Federal Government. The Federal Government provided another \$10 million this financial year for the realignment of the notorious section of the highway known as the Conjola bends. Less than that amount has been allocated for the project in the 2007-08 budget. It would appear that the State Government is not putting any of its own money into the Conjola Mountain realignment this year.

The third of these projects, the new Pambula Bridge, also has been given an injection of funding from the Commonwealth of \$5 million, or more than one-third of the total cost. The budget papers for 2007-08 reveal that the State Government has put a further \$4 million into the project this year, not quite matching the Commonwealth's funding. These figures show the State Government's complete lack of commitment to that section of the Princes Highway south of Kiama. Even though it is not responsible for the corridor, the Federal Government has put up \$22.5 million for capital works along the southern part of the Princes Highway. In contrast, the State Government has not put forward nearly as much, contributing \$11.7 million for the same three capital works projects in 2007-08.

The State Government is hardly paying its fair share for this section of the Princes Highway. It is quite clear where this Government's priorities are. At the very least it could have matched the Federal Government's funding for this part of the highway. These figures also reveal the truth about the so-called record roads budget for the Princes Highway that Government members have so eagerly touted. These members shamelessly claim the State Government is spending \$142 million on the Princes Highway this year, when at least \$22.5 million of that money has come from the coffers of the Federal Government—a Howard-Costello Government that knows how to manage finances and knows how to plan.

I congratulate the Hon. Don Harwin on bringing this motion forward. It is well written and well researched. It is patently obvious that this State Government is unable to manage funds and that it is unable to work in partnership with the Federal Government when it comes to major capital works. The result is poor planning and budget blow-outs. It is a shameful record and, as proposed in the motion, the State Government should be condemned for it. I commend the Hon. Don Harwin for this motion. He has really put his heart and soul into this issue and has travelled the length of the Princes Highway on a regular basis. He knows how bad the road is and how bad this State Government is.

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL (Minister for Roads, and Minister for Commerce) [3.32 p.m.]: At the outset I wish to put a few important facts on the record. The Treasurer's 2007-08 budget signalled an unprecedented level of infrastructure investment in New South Wales with \$12.5 billion this year alone and \$50 billion over four years. This year the New South Wales Government will deliver a record \$3.6 billion road budget to invest in road infrastructure and improve road safety and traffic flow. Almost three-quarters of the roads capital and maintenance program budget will be spent outside the Sydney metropolitan area with \$2.6 billion, or 72 per cent, committed.

This year's budget is about delivering our commitments for the Illawarra and the South Coast, and the development of the Princes Highway is the highest road priority for the Iemma Government in the region. Roads spending in the Illawarra and South Coast has been increased to \$174.2 million this year, and of that the Princes

Highway will receive \$142.8 in funding. I am advised that between 1995 and the end of the 2006-07 financial year the New South Wales Government will have spent more than \$576 million compared with \$43 million by the Federal Government over the same period. The New South Wales Government is getting on with the job. Startling road funding figures like those show the tokenism and rhetoric of an ageing and soon-to-be-defeated Federal Coalition Government. It shows the Federal Government's complete disregard for the people of the Illawarra and the South Coast.

I know it is a difficult task for Coalition members in this House to do the best they can in their flailing way to try to justify the existence of the Federal-National Coalition Government in its dying days. I know it is difficult for them to try to explain how a measly \$43 million—compared with \$576 million provided by the State Government—shows that the Federal Government has been meeting its obligations to a highway that is clearly of national significance. It is no wonder that claims by Coalition members that the Federal Government is wonderful are regarded as fanciful.

On 27 September the Hon. Don Harwin stated that in his 8½ years as a member of this Chamber he has spoken more about the Princes Highway than he has about any other subject. The Hon. John Ajaka stated that in his view the Princes Highway is the most important road in our State. Stirring words. Yet the Coalition has neglected to pursue with its Federal counterparts the inclusion of the Princes Highway south of Wollongong in the AusLink funding agreement. That is about 430 kilometres of highway from Yallah to the Victorian border that has been ignored by the members opposite and their Federal colleagues. They will suffer in the upcoming Federal election because they have ignored the highway. Members opposite think that charades and theatrics will cover up their inaction and they believe that the people of the South Coast will be taken in by their theatrical acts. But it will not work, because there has been a massive snub to the people of the Illawarra, the Shoalhaven and the South Coast by the Federal Government.

While we are on the subject, I correct an assertion made by the Hon. Don Harwin during this debate that the State Government and the Roads and Traffic Authority had failed to pursue the inclusion of the Princes Highway south of Wollongong into the Federal Government's AusLink funding program. Like just about every other assertion we have heard today from that side of the Chamber, it is not correct. As far back as 12 February 2003, in response to the Commonwealth's Green Paper, "AusLink: Towards the National Land Transport Plan", the then director general of Transport NSW and the then chief executive officer of the Roads and Traffic Authority wrote to the Department of Transport and Regional Services proposing that the F6 and the Princes Highway be included in the national land transport network as they "provide essential links to Wollongong, the Illawarra region and the south coast of New South Wales". The submission also noted that south of Bomaderry the highway is the only land transport link and that the route provides a connection to the defence base at Jervis Bay.

Those opposite have failed to pursue this important matter with their Federal counterparts. Thanks to the impotence of local Coalition members of Parliament, both Federal and State, the Howard Government yet again failed to recognise the Princes Highway in the Federal budget. We see in the Federal budget an announcement of \$16.8 billion moving on from 2009 for roads infrastructure nationally, with no indication of how much will be spent in New South Wales. And New South Wales roads would be in a dire state if we had to rely on members of the Opposition to lobby their Federal counterparts for funding.

The Federal budget does nothing to address the major challenges to upgrade the Princes Highway. The people of New South Wales deserve to know what the Federal commitment to roads and highways in New South Wales will be after 2009 when the current AusLink agreement finishes. There was an interesting comparison drawn between the Princes Highway and the Pacific Highway by the Hon. Robyn Parker—who I notice has not bothered to stay in the Chamber to listen to my contribution. It is interesting because literally hours before an election, suddenly the Federal Government—Howard and Costello—have discovered the Pacific Highway! Well, their last-minute announcement sunk like a brick because no-one had bothered to tell them the real cost of a Pacific Highway upgrade. The Federal Government found \$2.4 billion to upgrade the Pacific Highway. At the same time this Opposition was arguing that it is not a Federal Government responsibility and it should not be funding the project. That demonstrates the quality of members of the State Opposition and their inability to lobby their Federal colleagues to get a decent deal for the people of New South Wales.

The people of New South Wales deserve to know what they will be getting out of AusLink II and not to have it held over their heads. This Government is interested in building roads, and local communities deserve certainty. Where is the funding for the upgrade of the Princes Highway on the South Coast, which has been long

neglected by the Federal Government? In stark contrast, State Government funding for the Princes Highway has been increased to \$142.8 million, including \$23.1 million for important maintenance works. The 2007-08 budget is a credit to the hardworking Labor members of Parliament who continue to represent their communities in the Illawarra: the member for Keira, the member for Shellharbour and the member for Kiama. Those hardworking members have put the interests of their communities first.

This year's budget allocations will allow major projects on the Princes Highway to continue. They include \$30 million for the \$101-million Northern Distributor Extension from Bellambi Lane to the Princes Highway at Bulli and \$8 million for the \$14-million Kiama ramps, which will be completed next year. Incidentally, I point out to the Hon. Don Harwin that I have been advised that the ramps were never part of the North Kiama bypass—they are two to three kilometres south of the project. The member knew that, but yet again he tried to fudge it to make a political point.

The Hon. Don Harwin: The ramps are at Kiama and it is a bypass. How could they not be part of the project? It is in suburban Kiama.

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: They are two to three kilometres south of the project. The budget also includes \$3.4 million to undertake the route selection and planning works for the Gerringong to Bomaderry section of the Princes Highway. That section of the highway is interesting. We have been lectured about delays and questioned about why it has taken so long. That demonstrates why members of the Opposition are fundamentally unfit to move to the Treasury bench. They do not understand the importance of community consultation. They think these are still the good old days of the National Party, which chopped things down and shoved legislation through because no-one cared.

Extensive community consultation is required. Massive demographic changes have occurred in the Gerringong-Bomaderry area since 1991, and the suggestion that the 1991 plan can be plucked off the shelf and used in 2007 is nonsense. Neither the business nor the broader community would like the Government to use the earlier plan, which does not take into account any demographic, freight or business changes that might have occurred. That is why we have community consultation. The Roads and Traffic Authority has undertaken extensive consultation to ensure that we get it right.

As I said, this year's budget allows major projects on the Princes Highway to be continued. It includes an allocation of \$14.3 million for safety improvements to the Princes Highway, South Nowra to Jervis Bay; \$7.5 million for the \$45-million Conjola Mountain route realignment; and \$9 million for the Pambula Bridge upgrade. The Pambula Bridge is yet another project misrepresented by the Coalition. This is a \$17-million project and the original budget has had to be increased because geotechnical challenges have arisen. Such issues often emerge only when geotechnical work is carried out. The Federal Government's contribution to this important jointly funded project—which we were lectured about earlier—is \$5 million out of a total budget of \$17 million. That is the Federal Government's idea of joint funding: it provides a little and the State Government provides the majority.

I remind members that the Federal Government is swimming in such a massive budget surplus that it can pick an obscure hospital in Tasmania and throw money at it. Will it do the right thing by the people of Pambula? No, of course not, because it is too busy playing politics. That demonstrates the insincerity and deceit in this debate about this important issue to the people of the South Coast.

The budget also includes \$45 million for the \$130-million Oak Flats to Dunmore project. That project will link Oak Flats interchange to the North Kiama Bypass, completing the final link in the strategy of providing a high-standard, four-lane highway from Sydney to south of Kiama. When completed in 2009 the Oak Flats to Dunmore project will significantly reduce congestion during school holidays and on weekends and public holidays for tourists and other holidaymakers. That project is being built as we speak. The deviation will improve traffic flows for southern motorists commuting to and from Wollongong during the morning and afternoon peak periods. The project will significantly improve road safety by removing a narrow, winding alignment without overtaking opportunities. It will also reduce delays, bypassing the railway level crossing at the junction of Shellharbour Road and the Princes Highway.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: Hear! Hear!

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his support. The work will include an interchange with Shellharbour Road, which will pass over the South Coast railway line and the

new section of the highway. As part of the project Shellharbour Road will also be upgraded to four lanes for a length of 1.7 kilometres. This will complete the final section of multi-lane carriageway on Shellharbour Road to provide improved access to Wollongong. In addition to the contracted works, Shellharbour Road between Wattle Road and Cove Boulevard will be reconstructed by the Roads and Traffic Authority. This is a huge project for our community and is another example of the Iemma Government working to enhance infrastructure services on which working families rely.

The Iemma Government is committed to the upgrade of the Princes Highway and it is making real progress, as pointed out in detail by Government members during the debate and as acknowledged by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. In a performance reminiscent of Boris Yeltsin, the Hon. Duncan Gay failed to raise anything of relevance in the debate or to demonstrate an interest in or knowledge of the highway. He has not even bothered to come into the Chamber for this debate today. That demonstrates the Coalition's insincerity. The Iemma Labor Government is proud of its contribution to the continuing upgrade of the Princes Highway and looks forward to the change of government federally, which will allow us to work more closely with our Federal colleagues in continuing to upgrade the road network. As I said, this Government has announced a \$3.6-billion roads budget—the best roads budget on record in New South Wales—to allow work to continue on upgrading this State's road network.

The Hon. DON HARWIN [3.48 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their contributions.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask members on both sides of the House to cease interjecting.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I thought that perhaps I should seek an adjournment after the Minister's contribution so that I could carefully examine whether he said anything substantive that warranted a response. The Hon. Rick Colless was all ready to go. But the Minister's contribution spoke volumes: he mounted not one substantive defence of this Government's record. His contribution illustrates that the Government has no record to defend. A number of members contributed to the debate. Ms Lee Rhiannon made some comments about public transport, and I agree that we need a better rail service on the coast. However, she suggested that there should be no upgrade of the Princes Highway. I think Greens supporters who use the highway would be appalled at the representation they are getting from their member. What an unbelievable suggestion.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile made some comments, and I thank him for them. Government members also spoke in the debate. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition certainly put the facts on the record about AusLink, in complete contrast with the Minister's response. The Minister accused us of not outlining correctly the State Government's efforts to secure AusLink funding. He went back to 2003, but he had nothing to say about anything that has happened since 2003. The Government has been missing in action. There was no refutation at all of what we had to say in our contributions about the Government's performance in AusLink 2. The Minister did not contradict one word we said. We were right that the Government completely missed the boat on AusLink 2 and let down everyone on the South Coast.

The Minister made some comments about the Federal Government, but the Hon. Robyn Parker completely demolished what he said about that. She went through a series of projects to demonstrate that nothing at all would be happening on the Princes Highway south of Kiama unless the Federal Government initiated it—be it at the Pambula Bridge, at the Conjola bends or at the extensive work that is happening at Forest Road and Falls Road south of Nowra and just north of the Jervis Bay turn-off. All of that has been initiated by the Federal Government and most of it is Federal money. The Minister was going on about the amount of money being spent on the Princes Highway. I am happy that metropolitan Wollongong and Kiama are having some money spent on them, but we want some money spent on the Princes Highway south of Kiama as well—not just in metropolitan Wollongong. Previous roads Ministers in this Government—not this Minister—have put out press releases on the South Coast about how much money they are spending on the Princes Highway, and a large component of that money had been spent on the metropolitan Sydney part of the Princes Highway. That is this Government's record.

The Princes Highway has been front and centre in two State general elections and the key issue in the electorates of South Coast and Bega. Mrs Shelley Hancock, the member for South Coast, and Mr Andrew Constance, the member for Bega, have been leading for their communities on this issue. They have been promising real action on the Princes Highway, recognising that this is a State area of responsibility and not trying to pass the buck as this Minister and his colleagues did during this debate. Their communities have responded and supported them, and have re-elected them on two occasions with thumping majorities. Their hard work shows they are in touch with their communities. The slur on them from the Hon. Amanda Fazio in her

contribution was an absolute disgrace. Then she had the hide to come to the South Coast, into the Shoalhaven, and spew out more against the sitting members in the press in Nowra and elsewhere. Frankly, nobody is buying it.

The Liberal Party and The Nationals are the only parties in the past two general elections that have made any real commitment to upgrading the Princes Highway in any substantive way. In my comments I outlined how our parties would spend an extra \$200 million over and above the pathetic amount this Government has allocated for work on a number of extremely important road safety projects up and down the highway south of Kiama and north of the Victorian border. The Minister also made some comments about the Kiama ramps. That said it all. He said that the Kiama ramps issue was not dealt with as part of the bypass because they were two or three kilometres south of Kiama. Even Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile would know that the Kiama ramp at Munna Munnora Creek leads into suburban Kiama south. It is an integral part of the Kiama bypass project—both the north Kiama bypass and the south Kiama bypass—and there are other important aspects that demonstrate the ramps were integral to the project regardless of which section of the bypass they were on.

Effectively, today we have had no substantive reply to any of the issues relating to the delays. That was the most interesting thing of all. There was not one attempt to explain why, for example, there was a huge hiatus period between the end of the work on the north Kiama bypass and the Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade. Former Minister Carl Scully came into a budget estimates hearing and said there would be a seamless transition between the conclusion of the north Kiama bypass and the start of the Oak Flats to Dunmore section. The reality is there have been delays of months, if not years. There will now be delays possibly to 2010, as Matt Brown admitted in a moment of candour at the end of last year. Work on that section has now started, but is still years from completion.

The Minister then talked about the highway from Gerringong to Bomaderry and the importance of community consultation on the route. I could not agree more. There needs to be community consultation on the route—no-one is denying that. It started in the middle of last year. However, according to the timetable in the material sent out by the Roads and Traffic Authority, the likelihood is not one single dollar will have been allocated by this State Government in its budget for construction to start during this parliamentary term. There will be four years of consultation and route selection. There is no defence at all for those sorts of delays, which are absolutely critical for the people of the Shoalhaven and communities further south. I conclude simply by saying that the very clear case that Coalition members have put in support of this motion is compelling. The Government has not responded. I hope the House gives strong support to the motion.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 15

Mr Ajaka	Mr Gay	Mr Pearce
Mr Clarke	Mr Khan	
Ms Cusack	Mr Lynn	
Ms Ficarra	Mr Mason-Cox	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Gallacher	Ms Parker	Mr Colless
Miss Gardiner	Mrs Pavey	Mr Harwin

Noes, 22

Mr Brown	Mr Macdonald	Mr Tsang
Mr Catanzariti	Reverend Dr Moyes	Ms Voltz
Mr Costa	Reverend Nile	Mr West
Mr Della Bosca	Mr Obeid	Ms Westwood
Ms Fazio	Ms Robertson	
Ms Griffin	Mr Roozendaal	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hatzistergos	Ms Sharpe	Mr Donnelly
Mr Kelly	Mr Smith	Mr Veitch

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Postponement of Business**

Private Members' Business item No. 5 in the Order of Precedence postponed on motion by Ms Sylvia Hale.

STATE PLAN

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON [4.06 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (a) notes the important challenges facing government in New South Wales across a number of areas, including but not limited to:
 - (i) provision of physical and economic infrastructure,
 - (ii) service delivery in key areas such as health, education and transport,
 - (iii) maintaining a safe and fair society,
 - (iv) growing the New South Wales economy and attracting jobs to this State,
 - (v) providing programs that reduce inequality and promote social justice, and
 - (vi) making New South Wales a great place to live;
- (b) recognises the importance of developing the economy and advancing society in country areas;
- (c) notes that the Government addresses these issues and other important challenges facing New South Wales; and
- (d) endorses the State Plan as an outstanding blueprint setting out the future direction for government in New South Wales, and for addressing solutions to the greatest challenges facing this State.

This motion is about recognising the challenges facing government in New South Wales and, more important, what the Iemma Government is doing about it. With the largest economy and the largest population of any Australian State or Territory, New South Wales has a unique task of efficiently and effectively running health, education, transport, policing, environmental and social welfare programs, amongst many others. Providing physical and economic infrastructure is a challenge to any government and the Iemma Government has a record of maintaining economic prosperity and a triple-A credit rating.

Physical infrastructure requires careful and visionary planning and the Government is tackling the big issues facing urban and regional areas. We know from the recent budget that there is a major emphasis in New South Wales on infrastructure for the future of the people of New South Wales. Services such as health, education and transport are the bread and butter of State governments. Notwithstanding the continuing GST rip-offs that the Federal Government has been inflicting on the taxpayers of New South Wales, the Iemma Government spends more than 60 per cent of the State budget on health, education and transport services. In recent years an increased proportion of the budget has been spent on health and education.

A safe and fair society is a worthy goal, but it needs careful handling—not just a lock 'em up mentality that the Coalition tried to win the last election with. Policing and justice are always important in providing a safe and secure State for people to live in, but fairness and social justice require an understanding of the needs of the population across all portfolios. Growing the New South Wales economy and attracting jobs to this State have certainly been obsessions of the Treasurer, and New South Wales has succeeded in these aims. With 33 per cent of Australia's gross domestic product, our economy is now larger than the national economy of Singapore, larger than the economy of Hong Kong, and larger than the economy of New Zealand. New South Wales is the place to be as it is growing in prosperity and opportunity under the Iemma Government.

The Iemma Government is about balance and fairness, and that is why reducing inequality and promoting social justice have such an important place. This Government wants to see equality of opportunity across the State, to bring out the best in what New South Wales can offer. Social justice and inequality are worth advocating for because they are too easily otherwise forgotten—or even used as reasons to beat up on the defenceless, which is too often the sport of the Coalition. We all want things to work properly and well. It is easy to sometimes work out the simple reason: we want New South Wales to be a great place to live. We have

done a lot of work towards that end, but there is more work to do. That is the challenge. There will always be more that we can do.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: That's the election slogan.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: I think I might use the election slogan more often. It worked. As a Country Labor member I am particularly concerned about how the Government serves people outside the urban areas of the State.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: It's a con.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: Rural and regional New South Wales face many challenges. Changes in population, changes in agriculture and industry, and environmental change all create new policy challenges. Of course, this directly impacts on the workings of the urban areas. It is always important to remember that to enable most of the population to live in the coastal centres of New South Wales the regions around and to the west need to be healthy to ensure the State works properly as a whole. All these points bring us to the State Plan. The State Plan is the Iemma Government's outstanding blueprint for the future directions of New South Wales. By identifying priorities through community consultation and setting targets to achieve improvements the State Plan enables the Government to implement a realistic reform program. Solid work has been done by Labor in New South Wales since 1995 but now, with this plan, there are stated directions and targets that form a binding contract—a 10-year plan—for the Government. It is the whole-of-government approach that won us the mandate to implement the State Plan over the next four years.

There is a perpetual interjection, "Con job". I remind members opposite that as this debate continues the Labor members of this House will present a very strong case to emphasise the importance of planning and of the State Plan to the future of New South Wales, and the importance of measuring the outcomes of that planning process, reviewing it and, when there are indicators that the plan needs some adjustment, actually working on that. This is a very healthy planning process—something the Liberal and Nationals parties could well learn from. It would appear that planning is not their forte. I want to detail some of the ways in which the State Plan addresses core aims for New South Wales and sets about achieving them, since this is the key to the future direction of the New South Wales Government. The consultation process for the State Plan is worth explaining.

One of the main reasons the plan is real and will address issues and deliver good and progressive government in New South Wales is the extensive communication and consultation process that was used to deliver the plan that the Morris Iemma Labor Government took to the 2007 election in New South Wales—the plan that won Labor a very important term of government in New South Wales; the plan that will ensure that New South Wales will continue to move forward. I will outline the consultation process to demonstrate this. Following initial consultation a draft discussion paper was produced. There was wide distribution and the information on the process was widely disseminated to increase participation. A State Plan website was established. There were 300 submissions and 1,247 feedback forms were received from around New South Wales. This was not some backroom plot with specific interest groups. Members of Parliament, including me, were certainly not invited to any of the forums or asked to directly participate in them; it was our role to read the draft and put forward our ideas, as gathered from our constituency, about priorities for the State. I reiterate: This was not some backroom plot with specific interest groups.

Thirty-one community forums were held, 19 of which were held in regional centres. The forums, which were chaired and facilitated by State Government Ministers, were structured with three meetings convened each day. At the first meeting the mayors and other local government representatives gave their opinions and ideas. The second meeting involved community members, who were randomly selected and invited. The third meeting involved community leaders of groups such as religious, sporting and recreational groups, and non-government organisations. The forums were not about extensions of the Labor Party—and I assure members I fielded many complaints from Labor Party members that they were not included in the process. I acknowledge, however, that they were able to put forward submissions. Peak body representative forums were also held on economic development, as well as natural resources and other special interest areas. Two separate meetings were held with representatives of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Sydney.

In addition, the New South Wales Youth Advisory Council, the New South Wales Student Representative Council and individual government departments held meetings with stakeholder groups. For example, in relation to Aboriginal affairs meetings were held with Aboriginal communities in Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bourke, Brewarrina, Weilmoringle, Inverell and Port Macquarie. I am going on about this to emphasise

the inclusive process that was used to develop the State Plan under Labor. New South Wales is an inclusive State, and the priorities that have been set by this process demonstrate that. The State Ministers' job was to facilitate answers to five set questions, which were: What is the New South Wales Government doing well in your area? What could the New South Wales Government be doing better? What do you see as the major challenge facing your area in the next 10 years? Of the 29 priorities outlined in the draft State Plan, which are the most important? Do you have any other comments on the draft State Plan? There was full support for the process and the plan itself from every Minister of the first Iemma Labor Government and each of their departments.

All submissions and input at the forums were considered seriously, and the changes and emphasis of the final plan demonstrate that. Interestingly, despite the often destructive and spurious statements from the Liberal and Nationals parties, particularly during the election process and continually in this place, there was not a continual scream and outcry about the State Government's performance. Rather, there was recognition of the good things that are happening in schools and health services, for example, and concerns were expressed about future needs. In other words, we are heading in the right direction but there is more to be done. That is not to say there are not challenges. However, the sky will not fall in under Labor, and the community right across the State know this. Following the discussion-consultation process, priorities were set using the input from the multiple contributions provided by the people of New South Wales. These priorities were ranked in the following order: health, public transport, reduced rates of crime, more harmonious communities through increased community participation, and clean air through greenhouse gas reduction. Again there is a focus on implementation and reporting that implementation.

Questions that emerged from the massive consultation process included: How will the Government show that it is delivering the plan? How will it show that it is delivered across the State? Just how can communities hold the Government accountable locally? Chapters 7 and 8 of the plan detail the reporting mechanisms, with chapter 7 setting the structures of accountability within government and ensuring the machinery of government is aligned to achieve plan priorities. Chapter 8 of the plan covers local delivery, including key issues across the regions. The information to emerge from the consultation process led to eight new priorities. Those priorities included a secure and sustainable water supply for all users, a direct result of the drought across the State. The issue was separated from the energy supply priority in recognition of community emphasis. A further priority was better access to training in rural and regional New South Wales to support local economies. The people of country New South Wales know how important training and education are to keep their economy growing.

Another key priority is to maintain and invest in infrastructure to support our growing economy. We need to recognise the importance of maintaining and investing in infrastructure. The Government needs to focus on fixing red tape by reducing complexity and increasing predictability and speed in regulatory regimes. I have a personal issue here and get very concerned when I hear the expression "cut red tape", which we in the country certainly hear a lot. People are tempted to believe that they should be left alone to deliver whatever they want, however they want. The aim of the State Plan is to ensure there is no doubling up of red tape. Regulation is necessary but it has to be useful to the people who are delivering in the State.

A further key priority aims to improve outcomes in mental health. The community recognises the ongoing work and investment in this area, believes it is very important and wants the ongoing work endorsed. Improved efficiency of road networks is another priority. There was a concern about roads as well as freight and rail. Improved health and educational outcomes for Aboriginal people are a priority. It is excellent that in New South Wales there is community support for an emphasis on the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people and plans to address it. There is a need to improve survival rates and the quality of life for people with potentially fatal or chronic illness through improvements in health care. In response to the input of the people of New South Wales, the focus continues on providing care to seriously ill people.

Forming a State Plan document involved taking on board the submissions and reviews through the consultation process and developing a list of 34 State Plan priorities. Specific regional delivery plans were then prepared for nine regions of New South Wales: Central Coast, Illawarra, North Coast, south-east New South Wales, western New South Wales, Hunter, New England-North West, Riverina Murray, and western and south-western Sydney. Individual 10-year plans for government departments were also developed, with more detailed priorities and targets to be met for each department. Examples are available from several different models. The keys to delivering the State Plan are the targets and review process. Each of the 34 priorities was broken down into specific targets to allow performance measurement and manageability. The 10-year window allows for targets to be achieved before time but it is not intended to accept unmet targets. The State Plan is also subject to annual review and reporting via an annual report.

Some of the priorities and targets are of specific interest to me. For example, the use of better access to training in rural and regional New South Wales to support local economies is the priority. The target is to increase to 250,000 the number of people in regional areas participating in vocational and educational training [VET] by 2012, with an aim of 300,000 by 2016—in other words, a concrete target to ensure that work is going ahead on that priority. Also of interest to me are practical environmental solutions: cleaner air and progress on greenhouse gas reduction. The target is to meet national air quality goals and to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent by 2050, with a return to year 2000 levels by 2025.

The need to stimulate the economy and advance society in country areas, which is dealt with on pages 46 and 47 of the State Plan summary, is very important to people like me who are from the country. Without hesitation I say that one of the few contributions I made to this process was to continue my usual obsession to ensure that country people are well covered by the planning process. Priority 6, which refers to increased business investment in rural and regional New South Wales, is:

Strong rural and regional economies are critical to achieving the overall prosperity of New South Wales.

The Government is delivering economic growth across New South Wales through programs, which help businesses establish or expand in regional New South Wales and help regional communities build local economic capacity. This includes the new \$95 million (over four years) Payroll Tax Incentives Scheme to regional areas with high and chronic levels of unemployment.

We are improving the delivery, quality and availability of Government broadband services for regional communities and businesses.

We will look at developing Regional Innovation Strategies. These focus Government attention on helping high-waged, high-skilled industries thrive in key regions of New South Wales, consistent with state wide innovation strategy.

The target attached to this priority is to develop measures and set targets for regional business growth, which will be an ongoing process. Priority 7 is better access to training in rural and regional New South Wales to support local economies. I have already read the target for this. We heard from the Hon. John Della Bosca in the House earlier today about this specific target. It is very achievable and something we are already working towards. That priority aims:

To attract and maintain highly productive businesses in rural and regional New South Wales, and give individuals more opportunity, relevant training must be available across the State.

None of this is waffle picked out of the air; it is very sensible, realistic, long-term planning. I continue:

Training now takes place in a number of areas—

[Interruption]

Members opposite want me to read the final sentence and I want to finish what I have to say. So I will try not to listen to them.

I continue to read from the document:

—at work, at university or at TAFE or other training institutions. From the Government's perspective, we need to ensure the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, including TAFE, plays its part by catering for the needs of the rural and regional population and of its businesses.

There will be more training places available across rural and regional New South Wales to promote sustainable developments. These will meet local business needs.

These are all very important priorities for country people. Because of the process and the extensive input by country people, in general the priorities match the requirements of country people. The Coalition has no plans for how to run New South Wales; it only has plans to stay in Opposition. The Nationals do not talk to the Liberals and vice versa, so how could the Coalition have a clue as to what is going on in country New South Wales? The totally planless rubbish the Liberal-Nationals are currently delivering can only be measured as political opportunism.

What has been achieved in almost a year since the State Plan was released? Since the release of the State Plan in November last year the Government has been working hard to improve service delivery. Every New South Wales agency is reforming programs and policies and reprioritising resources to support the achievement of the 34 priorities and 60 targets within the State Plan. The State Plan Cabinet Committee is meeting regularly with its two outside experts, John Stuckey, the former head of McKinsey Consulting, and

cardiothoracic surgeon Professor Brian McCaughan, and they are challenging the Government's thinking and performance. There has been some good progress on the 10-year plan already and I would like to refer to some of the highlights. The first I refer to is improved access to quality healthcare. The Government has made substantial new investments in the public hospital system, and service delivery reform has achieved substantial improvements in emergency department performance and elective surgery waiting times.

Since June 2007 the bed capacity in hospitals has been increased by 1,800. This has allowed for faster transfer of patients from emergency departments. Despite significant growth in presentations to emergency departments—some 6.5 per cent last year—more and more patients are being treated within the appropriate clinical time frames. The most serious cases presenting to emergency departments, triage category 1, were all seen within the benchmark time of two minutes. Significant improvements were achieved over the 12 months in triage categories 3 and 4; a 9 per cent improvement in triage 3, and a 7 per cent improvement in triage 4, which is now consistently well above the clinical benchmark. The number of people waiting longer than 30 days for urgent elective surgery was the lowest on record, at 117 people in June 2007, compared with more than 4,000 people two years ago.

The focus is now on reducing the number of hospital admissions of people who do not need to go to hospital and making more beds available for those who require care. I have gone through in minute detail the specific benchmarks for health services for a deliberate reason. The Government and the health services, which have worked incredibly hard to consistently deliver services pursuant to the benchmarks, have been subjected to politically opportunistic activities. Certainly nothing is perfect, but we are working towards better outcomes. However, political opportunism is constantly at the beck and call of the Coalition.

A further priority of the State Plan is improved health through reduced obesity, smoking, illicit drug use and risk drinking. Smoking places a huge impost on the community and the health sector. The Government's efforts to prevent the uptake of unhealthy lifestyles are achieving success, with smoking rates decreasing from 20.1 per cent in 2005 to 17.7 per cent in 2006. That is evidence that the work in this area is making a difference. Another priority is increasing levels of attainment for all students. The Government is focused on the key drivers of achievement for all children: quality teaching, successful early learning, high expectations and support from parents and carers. The education system is achieving excellent results. Earlier this year the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] found that New South Wales students had the second highest levels of literacy in the world, behind only Finland and ahead of the major developed nations. Government schools have been given accountability for student outcomes in literacy and numeracy and each school has an improvement target linked to State Plan targets. At the same time targeted programs are being used to help those student groups requiring additional support—for example, the Reading Recovery Program and personalised learning plans for Aboriginal students.

Another priority of the Government is that more students complete year 12 or recognised vocational training. As has been said in the House recently, the Government is opening 25 trade schools. These centres will be located across the State, not just in a little charming marginal area for political reasons or to receive kudos. These are planned programs in relation to need. As to the priority of safer roads, safety on New South Wales roads continues to improve with last year's annual toll of 504 being among the lowest figure since the mid-1940s when the number of vehicles on the roads was less than a tenth of the number today. The Roads and Traffic Authority has adopted a safe systems approach to serious crash locations and roadside hazards. This approach accepts that human error will occur and that roads and their surrounds need to be designed to minimise both crash likelihood and the severity of consequences. The adoption of this approach on sections of the Pacific Highway has yielded dramatic reductions in fatalities from 55 in 2003 to 25 in 2006. Of course, we want fatalities on roads to be nought, but we are working towards making our roads as safe as possible.

[Interruption]

I said we want the death toll to be nil. Everyone in the world wants the road death rate to be nil. As to improved outcomes in mental health, the New South Wales Government's Housing and Support Initiative for people with a mental illness has been expanded, with over 1,000 people expected to be placed in the program by the end of 2007. A two-year independent evaluation of the Housing and Support Initiative has demonstrated a positive impact for participants. Those positive outcomes include: the time spent in hospital psychiatric units and emergency departments by Housing and Support Initiative participants has decreased by 81 per cent, 73 per cent of participants were involved in social and community activities, 43 per cent were working and/or studying, and 85 per cent of all participants remained with the same housing provider. They are exciting outcomes from very innovative programs. I add that acute health services are not the only area where persons with mental illness arrive on the doorstep as a result of other social issues. The justice system is also affected.

The State Plan is subject to constant review. The Government will revise the plan every two to three years. This update will involve an expert, in consultation with the community and peak organisations. A new round of community consultation will be held during 2009. Like all plans, the State Plan will grow. It is not a pretty piece of paper with pictures that sits on a table. The public sector organisations and non-government organisations know it is a growing tool and all of us must contribute to make sure it remains relevant and continues to deliver for the people of New South Wales. The Government's commitment to provide annual progress reviews and independent scrutiny will ensure that the State Plan will continue to have everyday relevance to the workings of government over the next decade. I note that the Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee has established an inquiry to report on the State Plan to ensure that New South Wales has the best possible reporting and review processes. This is an encouraging indication of healthy checking on the progress of the State Plan.

I would like to conclude with comment about the planning process. The State Plan process has been, is and will continue to be a planning process, not a politically opportunistic process. The Government will work hard to get real input from the New South Wales community. The hospital at Davenport is a wonderful example of political opportunism, with no planning to provide the right care at the right place and at the right time for acutely ill people. This State Government has carefully considered priorities for acute care, chronic care, geriatric care, neurosurgery and so on. The Prime Minister plops into a State and says, "You poor things, we will not take away your big tertiary hospital. We will give you some money. You can have whatever you like." That is called political opportunism.

The Hon. Marie Ficarra: For the community.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: Not for the community. It will result in people not going to the right place or receiving the right treatment. People could end up in Tingha for treatment for a head injury. The Federal Government did not make an assessment as to whether it was the appropriate health service to receive the funding. During the last election campaign there was no evidence of any plans from the Liberal-National parties. The Liberals and Nationals in New South Wales could not even agree on priorities. Amazingly, during the campaign they had competing plots. The people of New South Wales showed their concern about that by endorsing the Iemma Government to deliver its State Plan. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX [4.37 p.m.]: It is a pleasure for me to speak in this wonderful debate on the State Plan. The Hon. Christine Robertson has moved a motion endorsing the State Plan, which was delivered by the Government as a re-election ploy. Let me go back through the history of the State Plan. The State Plan came into place after a change in leadership in the Labor Party. Our beloved Bob Carr, the former Premier of New South Wales, disappeared in a puff of smoke. Realising that the ship was sinking very fast, the hierarchy of the Labor Party stepped in and said, "We are going down. We need to change the leadership. We need to do something different. We need to break the cycle of what is going on in the news. We need Carr to go." So Carr jumped off the sinking ship and then Morris Iemma, through backroom deals in the Labor Party, appeared as their saviour and the hard heads of Sussex Street said, "What are we going to do differently with this guinea pig? How are we going to market Morris?" That is what the State Plan is all about: marketing Morris.

They said, "We need somebody different so we have to cast Morris in a different light. He smiles—that is a nice difference to Bob Carr; he has got four beautiful children, and that is a massive plus; he actually likes football, so he is starting to speak the language of the working class and he might be able to connect on that front. But we don't have a plan. Maybe if we found a plan we could sell it, promote this guy and we might get re-elected." Hence, the moment in time came when they decided to launch themselves on a new course, and that was to discover a plan for New South Wales. Midway through an election cycle they said, "Let's go out there and find this plan." It became the Holy Grail of New South Wales politics.

Off they set on this cause for the Holy Grail, like the dreaded Knights who say Ni, hand clapping their way across the State of New South Wales, and they found a State Plan in every little town and every little city across this great State. They had wonderful little forums. They sat people down and said, "This is what we are going to put in the State Plan. Don't you agree? Isn't it a great idea? Thank you very much." End of story. Then they said, "Let's call that community consultation and let's bring it all together and produce for you a lovely glossy brochure."

This very, very pretty brochure cost the taxpayers of New South Wales an enormous amount of money, but, in reality, the search for the Holy Grail was a complete political con job. There was no Holy Grail found; it

was a con job to ensure they could market their dear little Premier and ensure they could keep their grubby hands on power. Let us have a look at what the Hon. Christine Robertson referred to as a non-political document—a document within which lies the solution to all our problems in New South Wales. Let us have a look at the solution and let us see how it is not a political document. I thought I would look at one area of New South Wales that is going to be saved by this State Plan and I thought why not the area that I come from?

So, let us have a look at the south-east New South Wales region. According to the State Plan—and I have not had time to check this—the region stretches 52,138 square kilometres south from Crookwell, where the Hon. Duncan Gay has his home property, to the Victorian border, east along the far South Coast and west to Young, where the Hon. Mick Veitch comes from. The State Plan says over 200,000 live in the region's 13 local government areas. Let us have a look at the actions the Government committed to in relation to this wide geographical area. There is a \$2 million investment to turn the automotive shed at Queanbeyan High School into a state-of-the-art trade school. Great. There is a commitment to implementation of the Australian Capital Territory-New South Wales regional management framework, impacting on the very marginal seat of Monaro. There is the finalisation and implementation of the South Coast, Sydney, Canberra corridor and New South Wales alpine regional strategies, impacting on the very marginal seat of Monaro held by the Labor member Steve Whan. But we are told this is not a political document at all!

The Hon. Duncan Gay: What is there for Crookwell in the safe seat of Burrinjuck?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: There is nothing for Crookwell in the safe seat of Burrinjuck, which I am very, very sad to report. Let me go on: Implementation of the south-east infrastructure projects identified in the State Infrastructure Strategy. I bet the people of Queanbeyan put that one in! But I wonder if the average man in the street understands what that means. I am sure the community consultation has brought that to the fore. There is working with local governments and the Australian Capital Territory Government to address the current shortage of water and assisting in the development of strategies for the longer-term management of water in the region—all impacting on the seat of Monaro, which they realised was the only seat in south-east New South Wales that the Labor Party held and was desperate to hang on to at the upcoming election. There is the establishment of the Bateman's Bay Marine Park—again adjacent to Monaro, impacting on the voters of Monaro who like to go down to have a fish on the weekend, as we all do when we can.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: But that's not a positive.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: It is not a positive, it is an absolute travesty. We will leave that for another time.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: I think they made a mistake putting that one in.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I think so; I agree with the honourable member. There is also the redevelopment of Queanbeyan Hospital—the only hospital mentioned—which happens to be in the marginal seat of Monaro held by the marginal member for Monaro, Steve Whan. There is the establishment of a government service centre in Queanbeyan to ensure easier access, better delivery and coordination of government services—again in the marginal seat of Monaro. Finally, there is a commitment to support the Capital Regional Development Board, which is centred in the marginal seat of Monaro.

Of the 10 actions the Government committed to in the State Plan for the whole south-east region of New South Wales, nine relate to the marginal seat of Monaro. Yet the Hon. Christine Robertson says, "No, this is not a political document; this is the plan that is going to save New South Wales. This is the Holy Grail that we spent years searching for and this is the document that we are going to be held accountable to." It is worth about as much as the round filing bin in my office. It is a bit of promotional puff and nonsense that does nothing to address the challenges of New South Wales and only promotes the political whims of this tired State Labor Government.

Let us have a look at the real challenges facing New South Wales and how the State Government has performed. I thought I might start with a very problematic project, which exemplifies the appalling management of this Government and the appalling failure to deliver by this Government over time. It is, of course, the T-card project. We all know it very well; it is a wonderful ticketing system for public transport for the whole of Sydney. It was first promised by Minister Langton on 15 July 1997 to be implemented in the year 2000. Time went by, the Government realised it could not deliver and had not actually done anything about it, so it decided to re-promise it for 2004.

Then Carl Scully got his hands on the Transport portfolio and we know what an absolute disaster that was. In the end he was pushed out of Parliament by members on the other side. In 2003 Carl Scully promised implementation of the T-card in 2006. Since then, of course, it has been promised by Costa for 2007.

The Hon. Michael Veitch: The Hon. Michael Costa.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: The Hon. Michael Costa. Here we are 10 years on from the initial promise and we still do not know where we are. On Monday this week it was rather illuminating to be in a Budget Estimates hearing with Minister Watkins. I asked the Minister a series of questions about where the T-card project was up to and the Minister was not willing to respond to any of the questions: he took them all on notice. He would not tell me what the project was going to cost; he would not tell me when the project was going to be implemented; and he would not even tell me whether the project was ever going to be implemented.

I asked the Minister, "Given it's been 10 years since we had the project first promised to us, will it be promised to us in the next 10 years? Maybe if you could just name a decade we could expect the project to come along and that would suffice." He would not even do that. He said, "I will take that on notice. I do not want to say anything here that will end up being another promise in a long line of promises with no delivery that show the Government's inability to manage the State's transport infrastructure." Let us consign the T-card project to the rubbish bin.

Let us have a look at a couple of other things that the Hon. Christine Robertson mentioned. If we just go to the motion before I go to specific examples. To me this motion is an attempt by the Government to hoist the white flag. It is a mea culpa from a Government saying, "We have these challenges. Please forgive us. We are doing our best to find a way through. We have a State Plan." And we are all expected to go home, have a cup of tea and feel safe and secure in the knowledge that the Government has a plan. The Opposition has exposed the fact that this plan is a promotional gimmick that the Government has used to con the people of New South Wales to give it another four years in office. Members on this side of the House realise that the next 3½ years will be no different from the past four years. However, the Government will be held to account at the next election for this promotional puff that it calls the State Plan.

Health was the number one area of concern as ranked by the limited focus groups used by this Government to justify this plan. The health system presents a sorry picture, but I ask members to bear with me while I present some parts of it. Shellharbour Hospital was stripped of its teaching status in August 2007 because of excessive workloads. A leaked report from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians written after a visit on 31 May stated:

- Trainees are currently operating in a fashion which compromises patient safety, through excessive workload demands, limited consultant supervision, and a lack of comprehensive clinical support services.

That deserves a big tick. It continues:

- Shellharbour Hospital is not an appropriate Basic Physician Training site and its accreditation should be withdrawn.

We are succeeding on that front and we face some challenges! It further states:

- There are no full time senior medical staff at the hospital.
- Extreme patient loads are common.

The list goes on. The Greater Southern Area Health Service experienced a 50 per cent increase in elective surgery lists from 1995 to June 2007 despite the fact that this Government came to power promising to halve waiting lists. That is a shameful performance. Elective surgery lists at Queanbeyan Hospital increased fourfold from March 1995 to June 2007. That presents a few challenges. The Cooma Hospital and Health Service has suffered a fivefold increase and Dubbo and Forbes hospitals have suffered twofold increases in elective surgery lists from 1995 to June 2007.

The Greater Southern Area Health Service has not been able to pay its bills, and small businesses are suffering as a result. Maternity patients have been asked to bring nappies for their babies, and staff have been instructed not to change sheets in an attempt to save money and cut corners so that the hospital can pay its bills.

That is another example of this Government's shameful management. Members opposite should be hanging their heads in shame. I would leave the Chamber too if I were a member of this Government. The Illawarra Area Health Service is facing the same challenges. New mothers have been forced to leave Wollongong Hospital early to free up beds. Documents reveal that 50 per cent of local rostered ambulance officers are trainees, and after three years the hospital has been unable to find a permanent orthopaedic surgeon.

I could talk for another five hours about the problems at Royal North Shore Hospital, but I will deal with them quickly. The hospital is deeply in debt and constantly over budget, and it has 100 nursing vacancies. It has clinical rooms that are nothing more than storerooms. In addition, 45 per cent of patients wait longer than the eight-hour benchmark to be admitted to wards through the emergency department. Doctors have quit, complaining that budgets are the top priority, not patients, and staff have been harassed and bullied. The coroner has had to conduct an inquiry into the death of Vanessa Anderson and there are ongoing problems because of lack of maintenance and cleanliness. We all know about the horrific treatment of a pregnant woman at the hospital by nurses who for more than two hours ignored her need and her desperate pleas to see a doctor. I could go on and on, but all members know about the disaster that has beset this hospital and that is now the subject of a parliamentary inquiry. We look forward to the Government's appearance before that committee to explain its behaviour.

The issue is that these problems are endemic in the State's hospitals and the Government does not have the answers. It simply resorts to spin in an attempt to minimise the damage. It is keeping the Minister for Health, the "Grim Reba", in the seat until it finds a replacement. It will reshuffle the Cabinet when the dust has settled to limit any future fallout during a more sensitive period in the political cycle.

The T-card debacle is not the only problem in the Transport portfolio. The high-speed rail link to Newcastle and the Central Coast has been axed; the Hurstville to Sutherland link has been axed; the Sutherland to Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts link has been axed; the Bondi Beach link has been axed; the Epping to Parramatta link has been axed; and the CBD rail link has been axed. The axe is also being sharpened for the north-west rail link. However, we have the Government's State Plan to deal with those challenges! Like the Hon. Christine Robertson, I would be leaving the Chamber in disgust if I had moved this motion. It is simply a puffy piece of puppetry that underscores the debacle that is the product of this Government's inability to manage resources and to deliver on its promises. We face more of the same.

The Hon. Christine Robertson: I did not leave the Chamber. But, of course, that will not be recorded in *Hansard*.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I am glad to see the member back in this place. CountryLink fares increased by 4.8 per cent on 1 September 2007 for little or no improvement in services and the Government has imposed a booking fee on pensioners' free travel vouchers. That is appalling and it will have a dramatic effect on pensioners who otherwise cannot afford to travel around the State. The Government has also cut fare discounts during low seasons. Patronage has decreased by 460,000 since 2003, and that is not surprising given that the Government has not invested in rail infrastructure.

Investment in infrastructure is also an issue. The Port Kembla development—which is close to the Hon. John Ajaka's heart—is long overdue. The F6 extension and the Maldon-Dombarton rail link projects are also overdue. The Hunter has needed the third coal loading facility for years. No plans have been made to progress the project and we will have to wait until the facilities start to fall apart before anything is done. The Government might look at doing something when the infrastructure is creaking, and it will then call it part of the plan! The project should have started 10 years ago. The Government waits until everything is falling apart and then says that it should do something.

Housing affordability has gone down the drain in New South Wales. No wonder the Minister for Housing is buying property outside New South Wales. I would, too, if I could afford it. That is shocking. The latest BIS Schrapnel report confirms sharp rises in land prices due to a shortage of land releases for subdivisions. That requires planning, so it is a challenge for this State Government. Future metropolitan strategy land releases are still below 1990 levels. In 1995, more than 9,000 lots were released compared with 2,800 in 2006. We are going backwards; no land is being released in Sydney. When it is released, this Government imposes massive infrastructure levies. It is more interested in money than planning for the future of this State. The people of New South Wales will have to put up with this bumbling State Government for another 3½ years. It has many challenges, but they are challenges of its own making and we know that it cannot fix them. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN [4.58 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Hon. Christine Robertson. As members know, the State Government is facing many challenges as we head into the future. It is of the utmost importance that we develop long-term, sustainable plans that address the priorities of our State both as a whole and at a local level. This need has been recognised by the Iemma Government and the development of the State Plan provides a blueprint for our future. It offers direction and recognises that plans that fit into four-year election cycles are not sustainable.

The draft State Plan was launched in August 2006 and builds on measures already put in place by the State Labor Government to set priorities and offer long-term goals over 10 years. It has been developed to deliver outcomes and to strengthen accountability across government. The 10-year State Plan introduces targets, lead Ministers and agencies, the publication of data as it becomes available, the inclusion of two independent people on the State Plan Cabinet Committee providing private sector expertise on improving performance, a State Plan annual report, and a review of the plan involving the community every two to three years.

Of course, that is an extremely important part of the plan process. Things need to be reviewed, and the community certainly needs to be involved otherwise the process is not inclusive. Such a review at two to three year intervals is a good way to go about it. Community reviews are an important process, and for the State Plan to be effective it must not be a static document. It must continue to review, update and change as the needs of our community change. The current State Plan was developed in conjunction with an extensive community—

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted to permit a motion to adjourn the House if desired.

The House continued to sit.

Item of business set down as an order of the day for a future day.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by the Hon. Tony Kelly agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 23 October 2007 at 2.30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. TONY KELLY (Minister for Lands, Minister for Rural Affairs, Minister for Regional Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [5.00 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

HOME IN QUEANBEYAN ACCOMMODATION SERVICE

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX [5.00 p.m.]: Tonight I wish to draw the attention of members to Mental Health Week and, in particular, a groundbreaking community mental health initiative launched in Queanbeyan last Wednesday night, namely, HOME in Queanbeyan, a long-term community-based accommodation facility for homeless people with a mental illness. By way of background, members would all be aware of the implementation of the Richmond report in the early to mid-1980s, which saw the mentally ill moved from institutional to community-based care. Sadly, a paucity of Government funding, particularly at the State level, has, over time, resulted in this group of vulnerable people being increasingly marginalised, despite the well-meaning intent of these reforms. In many cases these people have been abandoned, their plight seemingly invisible to government. Many have been left to fend for themselves in public housing, in boarding houses, in jails or, most sadly, on our streets, bereft of the services and support they so urgently need. In this way they continue to be trapped by their condition and are denied the opportunity to play a meaningful role in our society.

Both State and Federal governments have recently recognised the crises in mental health and promised to invest much-needed resources over the coming years. Whilst this is welcome, sadly it does not go far enough and fails to address some of the more intractable problems in this neglected area. One of the most intractable is the plight of homeless people with a mental illness. Recent research has shown that about 70 per cent of all homeless people have a mental illness. It is this group of severely disadvantaged people that HOME in Queanbeyan seeks to assist. Last Wednesday night my wife and I joined just over 420 people in Queanbeyan to

raise funds for the building of HOME in Queanbeyan. HOME is the brainchild and driving passion of local Catholic priest Father Peter Day. It is supported by a committed board of community volunteers led by Tony Carey. Its patron is Sir William Deane and its vision is best summed up by its greatest advocate, Father Peter Day, who stated on the night:

Beyond providing 20 attractive, self-contained, one-bedroom units, HOME in Queanbeyan will offer daily, caring, human contact for people who would otherwise be left isolated, unmedicated and unseen. In doing so, HOME will address the relational poverty that pervades this crisis: a poverty that only regular, loving, human presence can relieve.

In a nutshell, HOME will gently and persistently love people back into life.

The price of such a compassionate, inspirational vision does not come cheap—over \$3 million initial capital cost and recurrent funding of over \$150,000 per annum. HOME in Queanbeyan approached the New South Wales Government for funding but was told that this would not be forthcoming, as the project did not accord with existing mental health policy. Father Peter Day responded to this rejection last Wednesday night in the following way:

There is an irony here: the very fact the bureaucrats don't embrace our vision is the very reason HOME must be built. You don't have to look too hard to see that current policy doesn't have the heart or the legs to venture into the places where the need is greatest—the places of homelessness and abandonment. HOME will go there and, in doing so, will fill a big gap: we are seeking to become part of the solution—HOME certainly won't be duplicating or replacing anything similar: because there isn't anything similar to duplicate or to replace.

It is clear this crisis is well beyond the scope of governments and mental health professionals alone. In fact, they desperately need our help—but not nearly as desperately as the sick young man living under a bridge in Goulburn, or the sick woman eating cat food in a bed-sit.

So for HOME to become a reality—and it will, it must—it is up to us. But this is a good thing, because in our collective desire for change, we make for an irresistible force for good. Indeed, I believe this remarkable community of ours has a wonderful opportunity to provide national leadership on this issue: leadership that we hope will create a cultural-shift, and inspire other communities to attend to the dignity of their most vulnerable citizens.

Herein lies the challenge for policy makers in this nation. I commend this compassionate, community-driven initiative to the House and implore our State and Federal governments to get behind Father Peter Day, the board of HOME and the wider Queanbeyan community, who are determined to see things change. Indeed, Father Peter Day's battle cry on the night still rings in my ears:

The homeless mentally ill don't need us to be reasonable if things are to change: they need us to scream-out on their behalf: no more, no more, no bloody more!

Rest assured, HOME will be built, despite the obstacles. HOME will be built, despite the bureaucrats. HOME will be built. The community has spoken.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT VENUE LICENSING

The Hon. MICHAEL VEITCH [5.05 p.m.]: Today I address the House on the live entertainment industry in New South Wales. I believe live music is an important cultural activity that should be promoted and supported at all levels throughout New South Wales. Nonetheless, it must be noted that for too long the live music industry had a number of bureaucratic impediments that hindered the profitability of the industry. One hindrance was the complexity associated with past licensing arrangements. For example, prior to 2006 before live music could be sanctioned in a hotel, club or restaurant—any licensed venue—not one but two development applications were required to be submitted and processed. Inconsistencies with the previous legislation meant that a live performance of any kind, in any venue—for example at a cafe, a restaurant, a club, a hotel or even a church—were subject to the place of public entertainment licensing process, otherwise known as POPE, while television, poker machines, disc jockey sound systems and jukeboxes required no such submission. There is little doubt in my mind that the former regulation regime placed undue burden on the New South Wales music industry.

It is important to remind honourable members that in 2003 the New South Wales Ministry for the Arts in conjunction with the music board of the Australia Council commissioned "Vanishing Acts"—a detailed report that confirmed that there were fewer opportunities for live music to operate in New South Wales licensed venues. In a similar vein, and quite appropriately, the Musicians Union also made numerous representations to the New South Wales Government about these and other issues. The Musicians Union provided a detailed presentation to the Country Labor parliamentary group during the budget sitting weeks on this very issue. Both

the commissioned report and the Musicians Union called on the Government to rationalise and simplify the place of public entertainment licensing process.

As a great supporter of live music, I am proud to be part of a government that listens to key industry players and responds accordingly for the benefit of New South Wales citizens. With entertainment now transferred from the Local Government Act to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act a number of tangible benefits apply to the live music industry. These include the capacity for hotels, clubs and restaurants to receive a streamlined approval process when standards for noise, building safety and patron numbers are met. In addition, public entertainment in many existing public halls are now exempt from planning approval, place of public entertainment planning approvals are generally faster, and one of the previous two development applications for consent has been removed.

To reiterate, I believe these developments are a particularly good example of how the Iemma Government continues to consult with the wider community and industry representatives, like the Musicians Union, for better outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Not only do these legislative changes result in musicians being given greater opportunity to perform and of course contribute to the New South Wales economy, they also give the people of New South Wales a greater opportunity to listen and enjoy the many and varied talents New South Wales musicians have to offer.

Whilst planning Minister Sartor and Premier Iemma should be commended for consulting, researching and implementing practical solutions for the music industry, the Musicians Union should also be commended for its consistent and frank representation to government on behalf of its members. As a consequence, I take the opportunity to wish its members ongoing success as the cultural life of New South Wales continues to be enhanced by these and other legislative changes.

TAIWAN UNITED NATIONS PARTICIPATION

Mr IAN COHEN [5.10 p.m.]: In the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics I wish to discuss the role of China with its neighbours, particularly given its oppressive attitude towards Taiwan. Since 1993 Taiwan has been requesting the United Nations General Assembly to consider the question of participation of Taiwan's 23 million people in the United Nations. However, due to the obstruction of China, the United Nations has yet to hold any open and fair debates. Taiwan's application for United Nations membership has been rejected by the United Nations on more than 14 occasions.

Taiwan has a population of 23 million and a democratically elected government with jurisdiction over the islands of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu. It maintains formal diplomatic ties with 23 United Nations members and has an observer relationship with one other. Since Taiwan has all the qualifications for a sovereign state—a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, the capacity to enter relations with the other States—as laid out in the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, it has the right to apply for full United Nations membership, as per Article 4 of the United Nations Charter.

Membership universality is one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations. As the preamble of the United Nations charter stresses the principle of equal rights for all, Taiwan's 23 million people clearly have the right to participate on an equal footing in United Nations affairs. Taiwan ranks as the world's eighteenth largest economy and the sixteenth largest trading nation. Taiwan's democratic achievements are also recognised worldwide.

Cross-strait relations between Taiwan and China have remained strained in recent years. China has consistently refused to give up using military force against Taiwan and has deployed tactical missiles along its coast aimed at Taiwan. China has also bullied other nations and international organisations into accepting that Taiwan is one of its provinces, and this severely erodes the status quo across the Taiwan Strait and threatens Taiwan's security and existence. It is a difficult challenge for Taiwan and its people facing this unequal relationship with China. For many years China has striven to claim Taiwan as a province of China and to delegitimise the Taiwan Government. Moreover, China has relentlessly squeezed Taiwan's space in the international community.

The development of cross-strait relations has been hampered by the 988 missiles that China has aimed at Taiwan and its enactment of an anti-separation law to authorise the use of non-peaceful means. Recently China even exploited the route of the Olympic torch to localise Taiwan and, in return, Taiwan had no choice but reject such a humiliating arrangement. Obviously China's move is contradictory to the spirit of the Olympic

Games. The bullying of Taiwan by China is an act of international hypocrisy and, dare I say, international bastardry.

To protect Taiwan's political and economic development, as well as its peace and security, the Taiwan Government should be allowed to join the United Nations. Excluding Taiwan from the United Nations not only deprives Taiwan of its right to participate in and contribute to the work of the United Nations and its specialised agencies, it also infringes upon the basic human rights of the 23 million people of Taiwan. United Nations agencies cover a variety of areas closely related to the wellbeing of people, including economics, culture, education, health, social affairs, communication, environmental protection, human rights, drug control and anti-terrorism. In the age of globalisation, many issues can only be effectively resolved through the collaboration of all nations. No country should be excluded from the important matters that influence these types of matters.

Taiwan, under the name Republic of China, was one of the countries that established the United Nations in 1945, with a seat in the United Nations Security Council. However, on 25 October 1971 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758, paving the way for the People's Republic of China to become a member of the United Nations. This does not grant the People's Republic of China the right to represent Taiwan, nor does it state that Taiwan is a part of China. The resolution is often misapplied to justify the exclusion of Taiwan in bidding for United Nations membership. The United Nations and its agencies have since barred Taiwan's Government, non-government organisations and citizens from participating in United Nations meetings and activities.

According to polls, the vast majority, some 77 per cent of Taiwan's population, supports using the name Taiwan rather than the Republic of China and to apply for membership to international organisations including the United Nations. Taiwan has a proven ability to make good use of foreign aid to achieve economic growth and democratic development. It is ready, willing and able to engage constructively in various foreign assistance, humanitarian and relief programs. In a time of increasingly serious resource gaps in many important world programs, it is unfortunate if a country like Taiwan is locked out of the United Nations process and does not serve the interests of the broader international community. I shall read some excerpts of a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, from the President of Taiwan, Chen Shui-bian. The letter states, *inter alia*:

In accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, and in compliance with rule 58 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council and rule 134 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honor, on behalf of Taiwan's 23 million people and in my capacity as President, to request the admission of Taiwan as a member of the United Nations

Whereas globalization draws nations and peoples around the world closer—

[Time expired.]

YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD [5.15 p.m.]: Recently I attended a great graduation ceremony for young women in Western Sydney that was attended also by Minister Verity Firth and Minister Barbara Perry. I wish to share some of my observations of that ceremony with the House tonight. Local communities in Western Sydney are currently benefiting from the Young Women Leadership Program run by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils [WSROC]. The young women leadership pilot partnership project was launched in August 2005 under the auspices of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils and funded by the Office for Women and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The partnership project built upon and extended the leadership development work with women that commenced in Western Sydney in 2004 through the culturally and linguistically diverse women's leadership project known as Speak Out, as well as some other projects that help young women develop leadership skills. The Speak Out project was auspiced by my local council, Bankstown, and I was proud when that council won the Federal Department of Local Government's inaugural award for increasing women's participation in local government.

The aims and objectives of the Young Women's Leadership Program are to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes of young women in leadership and decision-making roles and to encourage young women to raise and address issues in their community. Evidence demonstrates the need for strategies that give

women from Western Sydney access to positive role models, networks, relevant training and opportunities to gain experience.

Historically, there is a low level of participation and representation by young women in Western Sydney in raising and addressing issues within their community. The Young Women's Leadership Program aims to improve the capacity of young women to be effective leaders and positively contribute to their community, both now and in the future. I was delighted to have been present at the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils when we developed this great initiative, together with our key partners, the Office for Women, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, TAFE Western Sydney Institute, South Western Sydney Institute, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils member councils and various charitable foundations. I also thank the Richmond council for its support through the Community Development and Support Expenditure Scheme.

To date, 92 young women have successfully completed the program and graduated. They are from the 11 councils in the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, as well as Campbelltown, Hurstville, Canterbury and Wollondilly. Another 25 are halfway through the current program. They all come from diverse backgrounds and reflect Western Sydney's cultural and socio-economic diversity. To participate, the young women must be nominated, live in Western Sydney, be aged between 16 and 25 and have demonstrated or display leadership potential.

The program has five key components: a TAFE accredited leadership course and a series of workshops that feature female guest speakers from various sectors, mentoring by established female leaders, networking with participants and organisations, opportunities to gain practical experience, and ongoing support and personal development activities. Approximately 60 per cent of the participants are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including eight refugees, and a large majority of these young women are the first in their families to attend a university or undertake TAFE courses. As a result of this program, they gain greater understanding and appreciation of cultural and social issues in Western Sydney and a greater connection and engagement with their community.

Last year as a mentor I saw firsthand how valuable and rewarding this innovative program is for everyone involved. I believe that many young women in Western Sydney lack the opportunities and sometimes even the confidence to live up to their full potential. This important program offers the opportunity to improve their confidence and develop valuable skills and experience.

There have been a number of outstanding achievements to date, and I will give some examples. Eleven participants attended the 2007 National Student Leadership Forum in Canberra. One of the young women raised \$3,000 to ensure that four other young women could attend the forum. A number of young women have received the award of Young Citizen of the Year for their local government area, and a number have joined local government youth advisory committees. Indeed, last month five of the graduates addressed the Young Women's Leadership Seminar held here in Parliament House. This is a very successful program, and I am sure honourable members will acknowledge the vast benefits of it. [*Time expired.*]

FOXTEL STREET TV YOUTH FILM PROGRAM

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY [5.20 p.m.]: On 27 September 2007 I had the great privilege to award a series of certificates to people involved in the Foxtel Street TV film screening, which ended up being one of the most fulfilling things I have done since becoming a member of this place. Six very special young people from the Salvation Army Oasis Centre, an organisation established to assist youths in crisis, completed a six-week television production course for disadvantaged young people run by Foxtel. They all produced inspirational short films, which were showcased on the night.

Three Street TV films were shown, and they demonstrated the amazing talent of the young people who were living on the streets and supported by Oasis. One of the films, titled *Mums & Bubs*, depicted young mums struggling to cope. It gave the message "There is help". In the film Sonya Boterill talks to young mums about their experiences and finds some people that can offer support. From my personal experience I am aware that many of the issues faced by young people having babies are very similar to those faced by older people having babies. I can very much relate to the experiences of young single mums at 16, even though I had my children at around 30. The raw emotion and feelings very much came through the screen.

My personal favourite was titled *Leaving Home*, by Fletch, otherwise known as Jason Fletcher. It is his personal story about making a rash decision to leave home in very difficult circumstances. I connected strongly

with his story because he was a country boy, from Parkes. He was living with his grandparents. Something happened at home and he decided to leave his home town and travel to Sydney. Again, it was a raw story, depicting the struggles and problems he had when he arrived in Sydney at Central railway station—including having his wallet stolen almost the moment he got off the train. Oasis came to Fletch's assistance. He is now doing some architectural landscape work. I suggested to him he should go back to Parkes and work there, but he said, "No, I am going to stay here and work in the movies." Whatever he does, Oasis has certainly helped to put his life back on track. It is a beautiful story.

The third film shown was titled *Streets Apart*, a story about Jess Spicer. Jess was meant to be here tonight. However, because the House will adjourn a little earlier than I had anticipated she will not be able to make it. She left work at Kensington at 5 o'clock. I apologise to her. Jess Spicer went to the Philippines with 11 other disadvantaged or homeless kids from Sydney. They were able to see what it was like to be homeless and on the streets in the Philippines. It was very confronting for her, and her film shows her being confronted with some very difficult circumstances in the Philippines, where young children live a lot tougher on the streets, as I think everyone would agree.

Kicking off on Monday 6 August, Foxtel Street TV ran over six weeks as the youths from the Oasis Centre studied every facet of television production, including writing, sound, video, scripting, location planning and direction, as well as editing and postproduction. The Street TV course is part of the Foxtel Connecting with the Community initiative, which since 2002 has supported youth, including long-term unemployed and those who live on the streets. The staff-run program aims to equip students with new skills, as well as help build their self-esteem, confidence and sense of responsibility.

What was most encouraging about the project was seeing our non-government sector, the corporate world, working with the community to give these kids an opportunity like no other. Captain Mouldes, the Director of the Salvation Army Oasis Centre, is also meant to be with us tonight. I apologise to him for the poor timing. He was held in such high esteem by everyone gathered there the other night, and he received a round of applause from the young kids, which was great to see. Danny Caretti from Foxtel is also supposed to be here tonight, and I apologise to him also. I acknowledge that the non-government sector—including the Council of Social Service of New South Wales, Youth Accommodation Australia, the New South Wales Women's Refuge Movement and Homeless New South Wales—would very much like to see the New South Wales Government develop a 10-year homelessness strategy for New South Wales. They believe it is an issue that needs to be addressed as part of the State Plan. I encourage the Government to move in that direction. [*Time expired.*]

CARETAKERS COTTAGE YOUTH ACCOMMODATION

Ms SYLVIA HALE [5.25 p.m.]: At lunchtime today I had the great pleasure of attending the thirtieth birthday celebrations of Caretakers Cottage, a youth service in Bondi. Caretakers operates three different accommodation services in Sydney: a crisis refuge at Bondi for homeless children aged 12 to 17 years; Options Youth Housing, a medium-term accommodation service with properties in south-eastern Sydney for children and young people aged 15 to 24 years; and Entity, an out-of-home-care accommodation service in Hurstville for children under the care of the New South Wales Minister for Community Services.

The Greens believe in a holistic approach to homelessness. That is, it is not just about providing people with a home—although that is a basic prerequisite for moving on to education, employment, meaningful activity, and positive relationships with others. Homelessness is a physical state, but it is also a state of mind. Caretakers Cottage assists young people not only with accommodation but with all their issues, whether they be educational or legal. These homeless young people need assistance with sorting out what they want to do with the rest of their lives, and it is essential that they have a stable, affordable place to live while they are doing that. Several years ago Laurie Matthews, who 30 years ago was the founder of Caretakers Cottage and is currently the chief executive officer, described the activities of Caretakers Cottage. He said:

When young people come into our care we set about establishing, with them, a case plan that targets all significant aspects of their lives. We deal with basic survival issues such as health and safety, and family relationships, legal matters, education, employment, and training, etc. A number of these young people are able to continue their current school attendance, while we try to re-enrol others who are not long out of school ...

His report goes on to outline the difficulties that young children often experience in being re-enrolled, the reluctance of some principals to take them, and the discrimination they may experience because they cannot afford school uniforms and so on. Importantly, Caretakers Cottage provides accommodation and assistance for

many young children. Indeed, over the last 30 years it has assisted some 6,000 homeless young people. Studies have shown that when people have stable, affordable accommodation they are more likely to apply themselves in other areas, such as in education or employment, and their physical and mental health improves as a result. A study by Phibbs and Young found that after being housed tenants felt more stable, their stress levels decreased, and they had additional disposable income. The findings indicated that overall 64 per cent of respondents rated their public housing as a great deal better than their previous situation.

The other day I heard a report on ABC radio that recent Melbourne research indicates that although many people with mental health problems are likely to be homeless, being homeless in itself can precipitate psychiatric disorders. Also in attendance at the birthday celebrations today was the Federal member for Wentworth, Malcolm Turnbull. It is ironic that he should attend a celebration of homeless young people in his electorate. Wentworth contains some of the most advantaged postcodes not only in this State but also in this country. Indeed, the Woollahra local government area has the highest average incomes of any local government area and is home to some of the most grossly overresourced people in Australia. Yet Caretakers Cottage is only a stone's throw away from these Point Piper millionaires.

Interestingly, Malcolm Turnbull spoke about the importance of charity. During the celebrations a comment was made about how expensive it is to provide supported accommodation and assistance programs. But I think the issue to remark upon is how expensive it is not to provide those programs. If we look at the long-term cost of imprisonment, being without education, being jobless, the drain upon the social welfare system—

[Time for debate expired.]

Question—That this House do now adjourn—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m. until Tuesday 23 October 2007 at 11.00 a.m.
