

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday 26 August 2011

The President (The Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin) took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

The President read the Prayers.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

Membership

Motion by the Hon. Amanda Fazio, on behalf of the Hon. Luke Foley, agreed to:

That Ms Fazio be discharged from the Joint Select Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office and Mr Secord be appointed as a member of the committee.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY (Parliamentary Secretary) [9.32 a.m.]:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 179 outside the Order of Precedence relating to Nancy Wake be called on forthwith.

I think that it is important that this debate come on two weeks after the passing of Nancy Wake so that the House can properly respect her legacy and her history.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ [9.33 a.m.]: The Opposition supports the motion to debate the matter urgently as Nancy Wake is one of our most important war heroes.

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

Motion agreed to.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Melinda Pavey agreed to:

That Private Members' Business item No. 179 outside the Order of Precedence be called on forthwith.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY WAKE, AC, GM

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY (Parliamentary Secretary) [9.33 a.m.]: I move:

1. That this House:
 - (a) notes the passing of Australia's most decorated World War II servicewoman, Nancy Wake, also known as the "White Mouse", a leading figure in the Maquis group of the French Resistance who acted as both a courier and as part of an escape network, and
 - (b) pays tribute to the heroic deeds of Nancy Wake.
2. That this House notes that:
 - (a) Nancy Wake returned to France in 1944 as part of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) preparing for the Normandy Invasion,
 - (b) of the 39 female agents the SOE sent into the field 13 did not return,

- (c) Nancy Wake became the most wanted person by the Gestapo with a 5 million franc price tag on her head,
- (d) Nancy Wake was awarded the George Medal, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Medaille de la Resistance and the Croix de Guerre, but received no decorations from Australia until 2004 when she was made a Companion of the Order of Australia,
- (e) Nancy Wake was an important resident of the mid North Coast, moving to Port Macquarie in 1985, and
- (f) Nancy Wake became a patron of the Dorrigo Returned and Services League of Australia sub-branch and attended their Anzac Day service for many years.

I highlight that the motion set out in the *Notice Paper* relates to a motion—

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Point of Order. The motion is a very serious matter for the House. I cannot hear the member.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Nor can I. Members should not engage in audible conversation while in the Chamber. I remind members also that interjection is disorderly at all times, but particularly when a matter such as this is being debated.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: At the outset I highlight that that motion is a combined effort that involved the work of the Hon. Lynda Voltz. I incorporated many of her ideas in the motion, and I thank her for her assistance. Twenty-three days shy of her ninety-ninth birthday at the Star and Garter nursing home in London, where she was in residence at the generosity of Prince Charles, the Allies' World War II hero Nancy Wake died. The New Zealand-born Australian-raised citizen of the world can now have her final wishes met: her ashes being scattered over the mountains of the Pyrenees where she fought with the Resistance. Nancy Wake was always her own person. No-one owned her—no person or country. She was a free spirit defined by her sense of justice and righteousness.

How did the youngest of six children born in a weatherboard shack in Wellington, New Zealand, become the Gestapo's most wanted person in Europe, with a five million franc price tag on her head? It is an incredible larger-than-life story, but in essence it is a story of an outsider with a righteous and free spirit who spurned authority and control and who was on the side of freedom and liberty.

Nancy was the great-granddaughter of a beautiful Maori woman who was the first of her race to marry a white man. Her mother's people included Huguenots and French Protestants who had famously fled France to pursue their religion freely—a theme that no doubt resounded very deeply within Nancy. Her father was debonair and from solid English stock. He possessed extravert charm, was a dapper dresser, and worked as a filmmaker. But in the end he would bitterly disappoint her.

Family legend has it that when Nancy was born the Maori midwife commented on the thin layer of skin over the baby's head. She said, "It means your baby will be lucky wherever she goes, whatever she does. The gods will look after her." And look after her they did. But as highlighted by her biographer, Peter FitzSimons, the gods did not shine too brightly on her in her early years. When she was 20 months old her family moved to Australia and set up home in Neutral Bay. Sadly, her father returned to New Zealand to make a Maori film and never returned. She told the *Sunday Times* in recent years:

I adored my father, he was very good looking. But he was a bastard. He went to New Zealand to make a movie about the Maoris, and he never came back. He sold our house from under us and we were kicked out.

Nancy's independent spirit began to butt up against the authority of her mother and her siblings. At the age of 16 she ran away from home and went to Mudgee, where she worked under an assumed name as a nurse. She returned to Sydney at 18 and continued to live independently of her family. In 1932, aged 20, she travelled to London and Europe after an aunt in New Zealand sent her 200 pounds—a princely sum in those days. She then became a reporter for Hearst Newspapers and she ended up in Paris. Nancy was a reporter by day and by night, a ravishing beauty, she enjoyed all the delights Paris had to offer.

In the mid-1930s she went to Vienna, where what she saw horrified her. The homeland of Hitler and Nazism greatly impacted on her free spirit. She saw Jews chained to massive wheels, rolled around the streets, and whipped by Nazi stormtroopers in a city square. These scenes haunted her and ensured that, unlike many others, she would not turn a blind eye when she could help to make a difference.

After marrying the wealthy French industrialist and the love of her life, Henri Fiocca, and moving to a luxurious apartment overlooking Marseille city and harbour, the shadow of Nazism became too much to bear.

She could have been an observer and continued her life of indulgence, travel, dinner parties, French champagne and shopping, but she and Henry could not stand by. She became a courier and a smuggler of food, people and provisions. Her cover for the next three years was as the beautiful wife of the French industrialist.

After being put on the Gestapo's most wanted list as the White Mouse she was captured in Toulouse as she was trying to make her way to England. Nancy was interrogated for four days. She held out, with some help from Patrick O'Leary, and she tricked her captors into releasing her. She then continued her journey of escape over the Pyrenees and on to Britain. At the end of the war Nancy's worst fear was confirmed: the love of her life, Henri, had been captured and tortured by the Gestapo. But Henri never sold out Nancy or other Resistance members.

Nancy Wake first came to my attention in 1987 with the television mini-series *In Her Name*, starring Noni Hazlehurst. It was a great mini-series but Nancy, in her typical style, made the point that it really was not accurate in many respects. About the show's portrayal of her behaviour when she returned to England from Spain she said:

What do you think my bosses in England would have thought, all those thousands of pounds to train me and for me to go and have an affair. Really.

She also said:

The mini-series was well-acted but in parts it was extremely stupid. At one stage they had me cooking eggs and bacon to feed the men. For goodness sake did the Allies parachute me into France to fry eggs and bacon for the men? There wasn't an egg to be had for love nor money, and even if there had been why would I be frying it when I had men to do that sort of thing?

That is the type of woman she was in spirit and language. There has been much written about her political contribution to the Liberal Party in Australia following her return after the war. It is an important part of her life, but it is certainly not the most important part. The concerns she caused and the enemies she made at that time by standing for public office may have overshadowed her contribution during the war. She came within 243 votes of overthrowing the Hon. Dr Herbert Evatt for the seat of Barton in 1949. That was a formidable result which had a profound impact on the Labor Party in terms of its campaign. It is worthy of note that she contributed with her beliefs of freedom and liberty and supporting the individual while representing the Liberal Party in that and other elections. But after three election attempts she left politics, disillusioned.

In 1985 she moved to Port Macquarie with her second husband, English Royal Air Force pilot John Forward, whom she adored. It was during this time in Port Macquarie that she came to the attention of the people of Dorrigo. I will highlight her involvement with the people of Dorrigo because it is a great town and a great community on which she had a huge impact. The words of the people of Dorrigo deserve to be recorded, so I will read from a letter I received from Bob Denner of the Dorrigo RSL Club:

In 1995, the year of "Australia Remembers" the end of World War 2, the Dorrigo Plateau View Club invited Nancy Wake to attend their luncheon to celebrate the 50 years since the war ended.

My wife, Gwynneth and Maria Buist were active in making the arrangements but were unsure of Nancy's ability to attend and were pleasantly surprised when she accepted. She needed to be picked up from Port Macquarie by car, and so began my association with Nancy. She was a hero of mine from the time I was a small boy and because I had served 20 years with the Australian Army from the age of 17, I felt a real connection with her.

Nancy attended the View Club lunch on 28th September 1995 and captivated her audience with her stories and personality. She was billeted at our farm house for the duration of her stay. Something else happened during Nancy's visit; she fell in love with Dorrigo and its people.

Anyone who has been to Dorrigo will know exactly why. It is a magnificent town and community. It has the best soil for farming in New South Wales, if not Australia. And they grow great potatoes.

So when the Dorrigo RSL Sub Branch (of which I am the Secretary) was looking for a guest of honour for ANZAC Day 1996, it was an easy choice to invite Nancy to officiate.

She became a regular participator in our services over the next three years. Her attendance always involved great mirth and storytelling during fellowship over many a "blue" gin. Her inimitable presence was a highlight and she took great delight in perpetrating mischief at the ANZAC Day lunches, particularly if she could embarrass anyone in authority with boisterous interjections and practical jokes.

Each visit required Nancy to be collected and returned to Port Macquarie and she stayed at our farm on each visit. We became good friends and she must have enjoyed the country lifestyle because on a number of occasions when it was time for her to go back to Port Macquarie, she would hide or refuse to be ready on time for the vehicle one of her many endearing habits!

In 1999 the Dorrigo RSL Sub Branch asked Nancy to become our Patron and she accepted with delight. Her photo taken at a function has pride of place in the Dorrigo Memorial RSL Club, where she always threatened to become a member. I understand that she was not a member of any other Sub Branch or Club in NSW. She just found Dorrigo to be very special.

In October 1999, the Dorrigo RSL Sub Branch celebrated its 80th Anniversary and Nancy took pride of place and managed to heckle the then State President of the RSL, Rusty Priest, on a number of occasions to the great delight of all present. Nancy was not a person to behave herself when it did not suit her; I guess she had earned the right!

The Sub Branch sold copies of Nancy's autobiography "The White Mouse" to help her financially and she personally autographed the books with some very risqué annotations, which on reflection have probably made the books very valuable!

Previously, she had given me a copy of the book "Nancy Wake" by Russell Braddon (1956). She had given it to her late husband John Forward as a present and it contained an anecdotal letter from Russell Braddon to John as an insert. That book is one of my fondest memories of Nancy.

Financially, life was not always easy for Nancy. She had some support from Legacy but she could be difficult when dealing with service providers who did [not] meet her exacting standards or appreciate her feistiness. She had sold her medals to provide for her future, and was finding it very hard to receive recognition for her war service or receive an Australian Service Pension. She had a large number of people on her side who wrote to the Prime Minister and others to redress these issues.

In 2000, appeals were launched to help support Nancy. Peter Fitzsimons wrote her biography in 2001 but in 2003 she decided to return to the UK and France where she thought that she would be more at home and recognised.

Our contact with Nancy became very limited over the ensuing years with her declining health and access to her at the Star and Garter Nursing Home, where fortunately she had been supported by HRH Prince Charles.

The news of her death was not unexpected but very sad to say the least.

We, the Dorrigo RSL Sub Branch and the members of the Dorrigo Community will always have a special place in our hearts for Nancy Wake. She was a character, a hero, a friend and lots of fun and provided us all with challenges. She was one of a kind and not someone we'll ever forget. We were privileged to have known her and had her in our lives.

Nancy was a party girl. When she would go to Dorrigo club on Anzac Day, she was very good fun. My brother recalls with great humour the day that she made quite a play for him even though there was a 60 year age difference.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Did he take her up on it?

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: No, he did not take her up on it, Lynda, and I am sure my brother's wife, Monique, was quite happy about that. Peter FitzSimons did a really beautiful job in talking about Nancy in his book. He only wrote the book after meeting Nancy in around 2000 when a friend, a rugby contact and a pharmacist from Port Macquarie, Jim Cowley, who had been a wonderful support to Nancy Wake, rang Peter and said, "Mate, you've got to come up, interview this woman and write a book on her. This woman is worthy of a new book; her story needs to be told". To pacify his mate Peter agreed to do a feature for the *Sydney Morning Herald* or whatever paper he was working for at the time. It was after meeting Nancy that Peter decided that there was enough material for a book. It is worth putting on the record what Peter said about Nancy. He stated:

I came to know her well in the course of the writing of the book. If there was a lesson for me in the exercise, it was that the spirit of the woman who, in 1944, had raided the Gestapo headquarters at Montlucon and unleashed such carnage, was still entirely intact, even if it was now encased in rather fragile flesh.

His point was that he could still see in that elderly woman the same spirit that unleashed carnage and took lives. At her passing it was revealed that in many previous interviews Nancy had reflected that she actually enjoyed killing Germans during the war. It is a pretty gutsy thing for anybody to say but I can understand that somebody living in Europe during World War II could probably feel that way. Nancy Wake has bequeathed a lasting legacy. I do not think she was Australian; I think she was a woman of the world. Her heart, her spirit and her ashes will be scattered over the mountains in the Pyrenees where they belong. It is a story that all our children and future generations in this country deserve to know—a spirit that shone light on humanity.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ [9.54 a.m.]: I, too, support the condolence motion—and I thank the Hon. Melinda Pavey for moving it—highlighting the courageous and enterprising agent Nancy Wake who, because of her efforts, became one of the most highly decorated heroes of World War II. Wake, also known as the White Mouse—a term given to her by the Gestapo for her uncanny ability to run rings around them in occupied France—showed inspiring leadership, bravery and exemplary devotion to duty, contributing significantly to the success of the war effort against the Nazis.

Born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1912, but having moved to Sydney when she was one year old, Wake was independent and resourceful from a young age, moving out of home at 16 to train as a nurse. Nancy

used a 200 pounds inheritance from an aunt to travel, first to New York, then London where she studied journalism until she had the chance to transfer to Paris in the 1930s. It was here and in Vienna she witnessed the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi movement and witnessed the violence toward Jews, gypsies, blacks and protesters on the streets. Convivial, and not averse to a drink, Wake enjoyed a bohemian lifestyle and could often be found cheering up a cocktail bar. In 1938 she married Henri Fiocca, a wealthy French industrialist. They were living in Marseille when France fell and it was a chance encounter in a bar with an English officer, interned by the French authorities—but that day on parole—which led to her membership of the resistance.

Wake went on to join the Special Operations Executive, a clandestine body formed by Churchill to train agents in guerrilla warfare against the Nazis and to bolster local resistance groups in occupied France. Inevitably during her resistance operations, she was arrested, beaten up and questioned for four days, but revealed nothing. It was this steadiness and loyalty to her comrades that most appealed to the British officers, who agreed to train her to become a Special Operations Executive member. Beforehand, as part of the French resistance movement, she was helping to get similar Allied airmen, refugees and escaped prisoners of war out of occupied France and into Britain.

Of the 39 female Special Operations Executives who infiltrated into France, 13 of whom died while on active duty, 11 of those were in concentration camps. Nancy Wake was surely the Germans' most formidable member of the Special Operations Executive. She took a flat, ostensibly for a lover but in fact for the resistance. She sheltered men on the run and became a crucial part of the southern escape line to Spain, travelling all over southern France from Nice to Nîmes to Perpignan, with clothing, money and false documents. On the night of 29 April 1944 Wake was parachuted into the Auvergne region where she coordinated a 7,000-strong resistance group and headed successful attacks on German forces in the area.

From April 1944 to the liberation of France her 7,000 maquisards fought 22,000 SS soldiers, causing 1,400 casualties, while taking only 100 themselves. Wake believed the most useful of her wartime exploits was the time she cycled 500 kilometres over 71 hours, passing through several German checkpoints, to replace vital codes her wireless operator had been forced to destroy in a Gestapo raid. Without the codes, there could be no fresh orders or drops of weapons and supplies. Nancy said:

I got there and they said: 'How are you?' I cried. I couldn't stand up, I couldn't sit down. I couldn't do anything. I just cried.

In England she had been trained in the spying necessities of codes, night parachuting and silent kills. She would employ all these skills in France where she became a liaison between London and the local maquis group, which was headed by Henri Tardivat. When she was parachuted into the Auvergne and got tangled in a tree, Captain Tardivat greeted her, remarking "I hope that all the trees in France bear such beautiful fruit this year," to which she replied, "Don't give me that French shit." Here was a woman one could truly admire. Her fighting companions, including Henri, praised her fighting spirit, amply demonstrated when she killed an SS sentry with her bare hands—to her own surprise, with a karate chop—to prevent him raising the alarm during a raid. "She is the most feminine woman I know until the fighting starts. Then, she is like five men," one French colleague said of her. Tragically, the Gestapo tortured her husband in 1943 for refusing to disclose her whereabouts. It cost her husband, Fiocca—whom she described as "the love of my life"—his life. Afterwards she would declare:

In my opinion, the only good German was a dead German, and the deader, the better. I killed a lot of Germans, and I am only sorry I didn't kill more.

Little wonder she topped the Gestapo's most-wanted list. Her perilous work placed her at the top of the Gestapo's wanted list and a five million franc price tag was put on her head. Wake was appointed a Chevalier, or Knight, of the Legion of Honour in 1970 and was promoted to Officer of the Legion of Honour in 1988. Nancy has been awarded several honours, including the George Medal, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Médaille de la Résistance, but until recently had not received any decorations from Australia or New Zealand. It was only in 2004 that she received the Companion of the Order of Australia, and, in 2006, the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association Badge in Gold. Before this, her courageous actions bore no decorations from those countries. In 1985 Wake published her autobiography, entitled *The White Mouse*. The book became a bestseller but it was not until the Peter FitzSimons book *Nancy Wake, A Biography of Our Greatest War Heroine* and later a movie based on her, *Charlotte Gray*, that public consciousness in this country was raised. FitzSimons told Australian radio:

She was a woman who was always a hair-trigger from being in a rage and that rage within her was wonderful during the war, [but] it could be problematic when the war was over. She was a force of nature.

Wake found post-war life uneventful. She said:

It has all been so exciting and then it all fizzled out. I had a very happy war.

Wake returned several times to live in Australia, making unsuccessful attempts to get elected to Parliament. But she had an uneasy relationship with the country of her childhood, feeling unrecognised and underappreciated. This led her to refuse decorations from the Australian Government. With characteristic bluntness, she said they could:

Stick their medals where the monkey stuck his nuts. The thing is if they gave me a medal now, it wouldn't be given with love so I don't want anything from them.

In February 2004 she relented and was made a Companion of the Order of Australia. She eventually moved to London after her second husband, John Forward, died. She became a resident of the Stafford Hotel in St James's Place, near Piccadilly, formerly a British and American forces club during the war where she was introduced to her first "bloody good drink" by the general manager at the time, Louis Burdet. He had also worked for the resistance in Marseilles. In the mornings she would usually be found in the hotel bar, sipping her first gin and tonic of the day. She was welcomed at the hotel, celebrating her ninetieth birthday there, where the hotel owners absorbed most of the costs of her stay. In 2003 Nancy Wake chose to move to the Royal Star and Garter Home for Disabled Ex-Service Men and Women in Richmond, London, where she remained until her death on the evening of Sunday 7 August 2011 at the Kingston Hospital after being admitted with a chest infection. She requested that her ashes be scattered in central France. Wake's medals are on display in the Second World War Gallery at the Australian War Memorial Museum in Canberra. Nancy Wake was our greatest female war hero, and should be recognised across the country as such, alongside all our other great war heroes.

Dr JOHN KAYE [10.02 a.m.]: I will briefly add the voice of The Greens to the commemoration of Nancy Wake, and I thank the Hon. Melinda Pavey for moving this motion. I also thank the Hon. Melinda Pavey and the Hon. Lynda Voltz for their excellent speeches that captivated our imaginations and took us back to an age of heroism and commitment to fighting fascism that is a signature in the lives of those of us who were born after the war and who grew up with those stories. An era has truly passed with the death of Nancy Wake. I will not revisit the life of Nancy Wake because it was excellently outlined by the Hon. Melinda Pavey and the Hon. Lynda Voltz. However, an outstanding event for Nancy Wake—as it was for many people of her generation—was a trip to Europe in the 1930s. It was a life-changing experience.

Those who travelled to Europe and saw the appalling treatment not just of Jews but also of gypsies, blacks, homosexuals, dissidents, socialists or anybody who stood in the way of the Third Reich were motivated to dedicate their lives to stopping the onslaught of Nazism. In almost every case they put their lives at risk, and we owe them an extraordinary debt that we can never repay. I speak with respect of my father, and of the fathers of many other members, who went to war and who were motivated purely by a sense of outrage at the idea of fascism, the destruction of democracy and the inhumane treatment of minority groups. They gave up their ordinary lives and engaged in activities that as children they would never have dreamt of doing, and afterwards returned to Australia to try to build ordinary lives.

Nancy was probably a bit different from my dad in that she did not really try to build an ordinary life. Nancy came back to continue an extraordinary life. We owe a debt to Peter FitzSimons for putting into language that we can all understand the extraordinary feats of Nancy Wake during World War II and the wonderful life she lived afterwards. I thank the people of Dorrigo and the Dorrigo RSL for doing what we all should have done: make Nancy feel a lot more at home in the country of her childhood. Nancy is a highly decorated individual but, much more than that, she is a highly appreciated individual. The courage and strength she displayed in leaving behind her ordinary life and putting everything on the line is singular and quite remarkable. We are all better off for being Australian and for having had Nancy stand up to the onslaught of fascism.

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA (Parliamentary Secretary) [10.06 a.m.]: Today we express our respect and admiration for the late Nancy Wake, AC, GM, our beloved Australian war heroine, and we extend our sincere condolences to her extended family and many friends. Nancy was born in Wellington, New Zealand, on 30 August 1912 and shortly after moved to Sydney with her family where she grew up and was educated. Unfortunately, Nancy did not have an ideal childhood. As has been written by many historians, Nancy ran away from home at the age of 16, which is quite sad. For the next two years she worked under an assumed name as a nurse near Mudgee until her eighteenth birthday, when she returned to Sydney to get a job with a shipping firm and lived independently of her family.

A fortunate bequest from her aunt in New Zealand enabled Nancy to raise the money necessary to realise her dream and travel to the United States of America and to England. She arrived in London in 1932 and began a journalism course. This career led to her living in Paris for a little over a year, as she recorded the events of Europe for the readers of the Hearst newspaper chain. She reported on the violent rise of Nazism, which she detested. Throughout the 1930s Nancy Wake lived two lives. By day she was a hardworking journalist; by night she was on her way to becoming the beautiful secret agent who lived the Parisian nightlife to the full. We watch films about such lives—very romantic, dangerous and patriotic—and we are enraptured. Here was our Nancy Wake actually living that life.

The Hon. Rick Colless: You could see yourself in that role, couldn't you?

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: I would like to think I could see myself in that role, but I do not think I would be as courageous as Nancy was when threatened and under fire. I would love to think I could do it for my country. Nancy had everything: extraordinary guts, determination, patriotism, beauty and intelligence.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: She was gutsy.

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: Yes, she just did it so well. I only hope that they will make a beautiful movie of her life.

The Hon. Melinda Pavey: They are.

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: That is wonderful. It will be a great memorial and a tribute to the life of Nancy Wake. In 1936 she met her future husband, Marseilles millionaire Henri Fiocca, and they were married just after World War II broke out. As the Nazis crossed the French border, Nancy was angry at the "collaborationists" who advocated living as comfortably as possible with the Nazis—something that she could never agree to. She regarded this as treachery and so became a courier for the local Resistance movement, shifting everything from simple messages and high-tech radio parts to well-secreted cells of partisans. By 1943 she was the most wanted person of Nazi Germany's secret police, the Gestapo. Nancy regarded her beauty as her major asset, and so it is recorded that she openly flirted with many Germans. Using her charms and a native cunning, she was so successful with the Resistance that she soon started helping groups of refugees—especially Allied pilots who had been shot down, or Jewish families. Nancy took them to safe houses until they reached the base of the Pyrenees, where other guides would get them across into neutral Spain.

Her remarkable exploits as a British agent with the French Resistance during the Second World War made her one of the most decorated servicewomen of that conflict. Known as the "White Mouse" because of her ability to evade German capture, Nancy coordinated resistance activity and, with the Maquisards she recruited, led attacks on German installations. Nancy is credited with saving thousands of Allied lives through her actions during the war. Thankfully, when the Gestapo came for her she narrowly escaped before they appeared on the scene, before crossing the Pyrenees herself. Her husband however, after being arrested by the Gestapo, refused to divulge her location or give information as to her activities and was executed—a true act of selfless love. Meanwhile Nancy, back in Britain, undertook 16 weeks of training in explosives, weaponry, hand-to-hand combat and surviving behind enemy lines. She was parachuted back behind enemy lines in France and assisted the Allied intelligence in many ways, mostly in life-threatening situations. Nancy Wake's life became filled with ambushes of Germans, narrow escapes, full-blown attacks, bridge blowing and train wrecking—she was regarded as fearless.

For her courage during the war, Nancy was awarded nine bravery medals, including the Medal of Freedom from the United State of America, the George Medal from Britain and the Medaille de la Resistance from France. Disappointingly, as has been said by previous speakers, she had not received a medal from the Australian Government many years after her heroic deeds, on the simple grounds that she was not fighting for any of the Australian services during the war—clearly a stupid and unfair position to take. In her later years, the Federal Government did contact Nancy from time to time to see whether she would accept a medal. The offer was consistently rejected. It is with sadness that this is noted; it is very difficult to right the wrongs of others, even with the passage of time. In 2004, Nancy was awarded the Companion of the Order of Australia for her outstanding actions in wartime.

Upon her return to Australia, Nancy joined the New South Wales Liberal Party. She served as a member of the party's State Executive and was known to address many branch meetings and talk about her experiences during the war. Many of us were lucky enough to hear her and see the vigour, passion and energy

she had in her later years. She came to life when recalling some of the stories from the war. Nancy stood as a candidate at the historic 1949 Federal election. She contested the seat of Barton—near to my heart, in the St George area—which was then held by the Chifley Labor Government's External Affairs Minister, Dr Herbert "Doc" Evatt, achieving a quite admirable 13 per cent swing. Although Nancy was unsuccessful, the Liberal Party, led by Robert Menzies, won office at a national level at that election for the first time. In 1951, Nancy stood again and further eroded Labor's margin, with Dr Evatt—by then the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—winning the seat by just 243 votes. So Nancy came extremely close. After a period living overseas, Nancy contested Kingsford Smith for the Liberal Party at the 1966 Federal election. She recorded a 6.9 per cent swing against Labor incumbent Daniel Curtin, but Nancy fell short of winning the seat. It is a shame and a great disappointment that my party could not have given her a safer seat to contest. We still see these problems today.

On the domestic front, Nancy Wake married her second husband, larger than life former RAF pilot John Forward, whom she had met in the 1950s. They shared many years together in Port Macquarie until John died in 1997. In November 2001, Nancy Wake returned to Britain in the hope of meeting up with her surviving friends from the war. No-one could criticise her for that. Nancy will be remembered for her great tenacity and courage during the darkest hours of World War II. Nancy Wake passed away on 7 August at her London home, aged 98. She was a courageous and decorated wartime hero who was prepared to stand up for the values she believed in and fight for the freedom we enjoy today.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [10.15 a.m.]: The Christian Democratic Party supports this well-articulated and honourable tribute to Nancy Wake made by honourable members, and supports the motion. The full honour due to her will be the legacy she leaves the living. May she rest in peace.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN (Parliamentary Secretary) [10.15 a.m.]: I congratulate the Hon. Melinda Pavey on bringing this motion before the House. I support the motion and pay tribute to the extraordinary life of our most famous war heroine, Nancy Wake. In researching her life I was reminded of a conversation I had with another remarkable man, the late John Saunders, who founded Westfield with Frank Lowy. After telling John how much it was going to cost to stage an event at the Opera House to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of concentration camps, he said:

We must do this, Charlie. You know, at the end of the day all you have are your memories.

It was a powerful statement from a bloke who had lost his family in concentration camps, arrived in Australia as a refugee from Europe, could not speak English, had no money and no networks and went on to become one of our country's greatest businessmen and most generous philanthropists. So if we want to have exciting memories in old age we have to do interesting things—meet interesting people, venture off the beaten track, take risks, dump your hang-ups, ride a Harley, laugh loudly, and do not take things too seriously. Well, that is what I reckon anyway. This certainly seemed to be Nancy Wake's philosophy, as she created enough memories to sustain an entire nation.

Nancy Grace Augusta Wake was born in Wellington, New Zealand, and was six months old when her family moved to Sydney. She attended the North Sydney Girls Domestic Science School, became a clerk, taught Sunday school for three years at Neutral Bay, and decided in 1937 that she must have wider horizons. Off she went to England, met Henri Fiocca, who did business in steel, married him in 1939, and became mistress of a pleasant home in Marseilles. Three years later her husband was shot by Nazis. As the German army ground over France, Madame Fiocca turned her private car into an ambulance and became a voluntary ambulance driver. When France collapsed, this young woman, who was to endure so much unflinchingly, shut herself in her room for three days, and cried. England seemed very far away. During that time Winston Churchill, First Lord of the British Admiralty, set the scene in Europe with a radio address from London on 20 January 1940. The situation was dire, but Churchill was a great wartime leader. He was a man of his time. He could easily have begun to prepare his nation for defeat, but he chose to pluck the positives from a sea of negatives and inspire his people with his radio broadcasts during their darkest hours.

After the fall of France, a remarkable Anzac woman turned her mind to helping Allied servicemen escape from the Nazi German occupiers. Nancy Wake's remarkable story was encapsulated in a *Sydney Morning Herald* article on 30 March 1949. It began after the collapse of France when she saw a man in a hotel lounge doing a strangely daring thing. He was reading an English book. He turned out to be one of the British soldiers left behind after Dunkirk, and was trying to escape to England. That soldier, with his four companions, was the first of many to be sheltered, fed, clothed and smuggled out of France by Nancy and Henri Fiocca. That is how an organisation started that for more than two years helped British soldiers and airmen escape the Germans.

The British intelligence services sent help. Nancy had unlimited money to buy black market food and clothing for the constant trickle of escapees. She spent up to £500 a day shopping for them—£500 pounds in 1942 is equal to about \$30,000 today, a marvellous contribution. She travelled constantly with a short-wave transmitter to keep in touch with London. Broadcasting more than once from one place would have been too dangerous, so the transmitter—for five months the only one in France—in a conspicuously bulky case, travelled with her in trains. But that was a sideline. She told the reporter, "My main job was conducting the airmen through France and over the border to Spain". Again and again, for more than two years she crossed the Pyrenees on foot with escaping men. There was a funny episode involving a haystack on a Spanish farm when Spanish police came looking for black-market goods. "They drove a pitchfork into the haystack and into me", she said. "I let out a terrific yell and landed in prison". She had eight days starving and thirsting in prison until the British Consul rescued her.

The end came through a French trader who denounced the underground organisation. Warned of police waiting at the next station, Nancy and four escaping men jumped from a train. They ran through the fields with bullets flying around them and got clear into the mountains. Another underground worker on the train was captured and died later in a concentration camp. For three days, Nancy and the four airmen hid in a deserted mountain hut, living on snow. They then walked 250 miles to Toulouse. In three weeks Nancy obtained false papers for them all and, with these, they escaped to England. About 20 leaders of the organisation started by Fiocca were captured, and 12 died in concentration camps. It was months later that she learned that her husband Henry had been shot. In England Madame Fiocca joined the FANYs, the First Aid Nursery Yeomanry, as Ensign Nancy Wake. First aid and nursing were far from the total scope of the FANYs. Ensign Wake told the intelligence authorities that rescue work had grown too monotonous and asked to be trained as a saboteur and went forthwith into a sabotage training camp. In a four-month course, she learnt a great deal about explosives, how to handle guns and how to kill men silently, with her bare hands. "I only put silent killing into practice once" replied Nancy to the obvious question. She explained:

On my first mission, when a group of us were trying to blow up part of a factory, I must have made a noise because a sentry turned and saw me. I stepped up to him and broke his neck. I was glad to find that method worked out all right.

For that first special mission in central France, Nancy Wake was dropped by parachute and picked up later by plane. For a second spying assignment she came and went by Lysander, a little plane that could land and take off in small fields. The third time she returned to France, now as a lieutenant, it was with the biggest and toughest mission ever. The citation for her George Medal begins with the following story:

This officer was parachuted into France on 29th November 1944, as assistant to an organiser who was taking over the direction of an important circuit in Central France. The day after their arrival she and her chief found themselves stranded and without directions through the arrest of their contact, but ultimately reached their rendezvous by their own initiative. She worked for several months helping to train and instruct Maquis groups.

In three departments of France—Allied, Puy de Dome and Cantal—Lieutenant Wake became responsible for organising, arming and training the partisans in hiding until the day Britain and America would strike on the second front. The Maquis called her Madame Andre. The George Medal citation puts it like this:

Lieutenant Wake took part in several engagements with the enemy, and showed the utmost bravery under fire. During a German attack due to the arrival by parachute of two American officers to help in the Maquis, she personally took command of a section of 10 men whose leader was demoralised. She led them to within point-blank range of the enemy, directed their fire, rescued the two American officers and withdrew in good order. She showed exceptional courage and coolness in the face of enemy fire. When the Maquis group with which she was working was broken up by large-scale German attacks and wireless contact was lost, Lieutenant Wake went along to find a wireless operator through whom she could contact London. She covered some 200 kilometres on foot and by remarkable steadfastness and perseverance succeeded in getting a message through to London. It was largely due to these efforts that the circuit was able to start work again. Lieutenant Wake's organising ability, endurance, courage and complete disregard for her own safety earned her the respect and admiration of all. The Maquis troops, most of them rough and difficult to handle, accepted orders from her, and treated her as one of their own male officers.

In Allier she was with 4,000 Maquis who were surrounded by 22,000 SS troops. All but 100 got away to fight again. By D-day, Mrs Wake was a captain, although she did not know it then. As Maquis cells sprang up throughout the country, striking the German supply lines, she could feel triumphant. Then she spent two years in the British Foreign Office, working in Paris and Prague. When she came home, in January 1949, Mrs Wake vowed that she wanted a quiet life with a nine-to-five job and a weekly pay envelope. But she said:

At first I didn't realize what was happening in Australia. When I came down to earth, seeing exactly the same sort of things happening here as caused all the trouble in Germany and Europe, a gradual gathering together of controls, centralisation of power in the hands of a few power-hungry fanatics. A few people have actually set out to rule the country without Parliament, certainly without taking proper notice of the Opposition. That is why I decided to take up politics.

So at the age of 36 Mrs Nancy Wake, George Medal, Croix de Guerre with Palms, Croix de Guerre with Star, Medaille de la Resistance, and Medal of Freedom with Bronze Palm, stood for Liberal Party preselection to contest Dr Evatt's seat of Barton. After she won preselection for the seat, the Liberal Party sent Dr Evatt a telegram that read, "Nancy Wake, Liberal candidate, parachuted into Barton tonight". She pounded the pavements of the electorate and reduced Dr Evatt's margin from 11,112 to 2,644—a remarkable effort against the incumbent deputy Prime Minister. At the next Federal election, in 1951, she reduced that margin to just 127 votes. Nancy obviously found it difficult to settle after such an action-packed life of high adventure. There were no cures for adrenaline withdrawal in those days. "It is dreadful", she told the reporter from the *Australian* in 1983, "because you have been so busy and then it all just fizzles out". She returned to England in 1957 and married Flight Lieutenant John Forward, a bomber pilot who was shot down in 1942 and spent the rest of the War as a prisoner in Stalag. He was a big bloke, liked a joke, loved a drink, and was hearty and bluff—just the way she liked her men, according to her biographer, Peter FitzSimons. He wrote, "She adored the way his huge moustache twitched at both ends every time he roared with laughter, which was often".

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Is that why you grew a moustache?

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: We would have got along well. The French never forgot her bravery in the underground resistance movement during the war. In 1970 she was honoured with the award of the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur and in 1988 she was awarded the second-highest French honour that can be bestowed on a foreigner, the Croix d'Officier de la Legion d'Honneur. Ironically, the Australian Government could not see its way clear to award her such a declaration in recognition of her bravery and self-sacrifice because she was not fighting in an Australian uniform. When they finally mustered the will to consider one, she told them they could, "Stick their medals where the monkey stuck his nuts". "The thing is", she said, "if they gave me a medal now, it wouldn't be given with love so I don't want anything from them". She was eventually made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2004.

Nancy and John returned to Sydney and settled down to live as quietly as Nancy, who was now in her fifties, could manage. She was as energetic as ever and only a hair-trigger away from hilarious laughter or high-octane indignation. She did what she wanted, said what she felt and let the devil take the hindmost. "That's the way I've always been", she told FitzSimons "and John never seemed to mind". They later retired to Port Macquarie, where they lived until John's death in 1997. She returned to England in 2001, where she lived until she passed away last week—and there is no doubt she had enough memories to sustain her until the end. Nancy Wake is our most decorated war heroine and, whilst her life has ended, her memory must be perpetuated. I will certainly be trying to see that this happens by seeking to establish a post-graduate scholarship in her name in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Veterans Affairs. Lest we forget.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR [11.39 a.m.]: I rise to make a brief contribution to the motion. I thank the Hon. Melinda Pavey, the Hon. Lynda Voltz and previous speakers for their contributions to the debate. I want to speak on behalf of my generation. I mean no disrespect to anyone else in the Chamber, but today I am the youngest here, as the Hon. Sarah Mitchell is not present. So I thought I would take this opportunity to touch on a couple of things that have been said. First, I will pick up on the point that the Hon. Charlie Lynn made about the memory of the "White Mouse" and her contribution to this country. It is important my generation ensures that the memory never fades. We need to understand the contribution and the sacrifices of Nancy Wake and appreciate that we are the beneficiaries of her great courage and sacrifice. It is important that people such as my son and future generations understand the character and the bravery that she displayed during a time that many today cannot imagine.

I hope that, because of people like Nancy Wake, in this country we will never see the like of what has occurred throughout Europe over the decades. Previous speakers mentioned Peter FitzSimons, who wrote Nancy Wake's biography. By recording the life and heroism of Nancy Wake and enabling us to retell her story to future generations, he has left us a fantastic legacy. Although Nancy Wake is no longer with us her bravery will live on in our memory. I believe there is good in all of us, but many of us lack the sort of courage shown by Nancy Wake. Many only dream of being able to do what Nancy did for her fellow human beings. Other members have thoughtfully articulated her life story, and on behalf of my generation I simply say, "Thank you Nancy". We are able to take a seat in this House of democracy today because of the courage and actions of a person who would not countenance the atrocities that she saw being committed around her. Nancy Wake stood up and although she was one person she changed the lives of many. Rest in Peace.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [10.30 a.m.]: Today I honour Nancy Wake not merely for her service during World War II but also for her post-war service. At the end of World War II Nancy found herself without

a husband and a job. Despite having no means, she was fortunate enough to get a position with British intelligence and was attached to the British embassies in Paris and Prague. It was during that time that she developed a loathing of communism that was almost as great as her hatred for Nazism. People of that time were confronted with totalitarianism in various shades. Nancy saw firsthand the betrayal at Yalta, the suppression of the east European nationalists and the Berlin blockade. She found out about the Katyn Forest massacre and learnt about atomic espionage of the time. We honour Nancy Wake for her war service in the fight against Nazism but we also honour her prescience and other war service when many were all too willing to collaborate with, or were wilfully blind to, the evils of communism.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY (Parliamentary Secretary) [10.32 a.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their wonderful contributions in highlighting the spirit and individualism of this amazing woman. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps spoke of Nancy Wake being against totalitarianism, whether communism or fascism. As the wife of a very wealthy man in the Marseilles region of France she could have led the most amazing life. But she was not one to stand by and watch people being persecuted or to allow atrocities to be committed against them. I thank Nancy Wake for her bravery and courage. I agree with the Hon. Lynda Voltz: Nancy Wake is probably the bravest Australian fighter this country has ever had. It is of paramount importance that her legacy continues in order that our children are told about the life of this amazing woman.

As the Hon. Marie Ficarra pointed out, Nancy Wake stood for election on three occasions for the Liberal Party in New South Wales. That she did not win a seat was not because she did not deserve to do so; indeed, she was responsible for some amazing swings without actually winning. It says something about politics and gender of the time that such a deserving and amazing woman could not win a seat in the Parliament. In a sense that was a shame for democracy, but time has moved on. Nancy was not a feminist; nor was she a person whom anyone could associate with being a feminist. She led by her actions, her bravery and her spirit. I thank Nancy Wake for what she did for the people of the world.

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

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE [10.35 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 165 outside the Order of Precedence, relating to an order for papers regarding the impact of carbon price legislation on public transport, be called on forthwith.

This matter is urgent. The O'Farrell Government has been scaring the people of western Sydney about the impact of a carbon price on transport fares—contrary to the advice that has been given by the Federal Government. The Federal Government has been open and transparent. It has released its modelling on this issue. If the O'Farrell Government is serious, it would release these papers immediately. I ask the House to support my request for urgency so that this motion can be fully debated.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (Parliamentary Secretary) [10.36 a.m.]: The Hon. Penny Sharpe has raised this issue many times before. Many other items of business are listed before this notice of motion on the *Notice Paper*, and the Government looks forward to discussing those matters within the Order of Precedence. The Government opposes urgency.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 17

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| Ms Barham | Dr Kay | Mr Shoebridge |
| Mr Borsak | Mr Moselmane | Mr Veitch |
| Mr Brown | Mr Roozendaal | Mr Whan |
| Mr Buckingham | Mr Searle | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Mr Donnelly | Mr Secord | Ms Fazio |
| Ms Faehrmann | Ms Sharpe | Ms Voltz |

Noes, 14

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mr Blair | Mr Khan | Mrs Pavey |
| Mr Clarke | Mr Lynn | Mr Pearce |
| Ms Ficarra | Mr MacDonald | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Mr Gay | Mrs Maclaren-Jones | Mr Colless |
| Mr Green | Mr Mason-Cox | Dr Phelps |

Pairs

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Ms Cotsis | Mr Ajaka |
| Mr Foley | Mr Gallacher |
| Mr Primrose | Miss Gardiner |
| Ms Westwood | Ms Mitchell |

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Penny Sharpe agreed to:

That Private Members' Business item No. 165 outside the Order of Precedence be called on forthwith.

CARBON TAX

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE [10.46 a.m.]: I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 14 days of the date of passing of this resolution all documents created since 10 July 2011 in the possession, custody or control of the Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and Services, the Minister for Transport, the Minister for the Environment, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Treasury, the Department of Finance and Services or the Department of Transport relating to the assessment of the impact of the Federal Government's proposed carbon price legislation including:

- (a) any document relating or referring to the impact on public transport costs and fares,
- (b) any document relating or referring to modelling of potential impact of carbon pricing on public transport costs and fares,
- (c) any correspondence between the Minister for Transport and the Department of Transport and/or the Premier, the Treasurer and/or the Minister for Finance and Services and/or the Minister for the Environment in relation to transport costs and fares, and
- (d) any document which records or refers to the production of documents as a result of this order of the House.

I do not intend to take up much time of the House as this is simply a call for papers. We are seeking to get from the Government copies of papers relating to its so-called modelling on the impact on public transport fares of the carbon price proposed by the Federal Government. It is time for the O'Farrell Government to come clean on its unfounded claims about the impact of the carbon price on public transport. The Premier spent a lot of time in western Sydney scaring local commuters by saying that transport would cost an extra \$150 a year. He was waving around some sort of Transport or Treasury modelling. We have not seen any modelling and it is not available. It is time for the Government to put up or shut up in relation to this matter. The Federal Government has been open about this.

[Interruption]

The Federal Government has been very open and has provided considerable information. If members opposite care to read it, they might understand it. The carbon price will have little impact on the cost of the daily commute, with an expectation of a 0.5 per cent rise in fares, which is significantly less than the 8 per cent increase that occurred when John Howard introduced the GST. What is more, the Federal Government estimates that nine out of 10 households are expected to be no worse off and to be compensated for any proposed impact in relation to carbon pricing. I could go on. It is clear that this is simply about the Government showing us its

costings. It is unfortunate that we have had to go down the route of calling for papers. However, I ask members to allow some light in and let us see the documents. The Government should be made to put up or shut up in relation to its unfounded claims on this matter. I urge members to support the motion.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE (Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra) [10.48 a.m.]: Mr President—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call Government members to orders. I call the Hon. Scot MacDonald to order for the first time.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Today is private members' business day and members have prepared for a number of items in the Order of Precedence. This motion is not an urgent matter.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: We've dealt with urgency. It's been brought on.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Indeed. And because the matter has been brought on without any discussion with us we have not had an opportunity to make a valid decision as to whether we should support the motion. As members know, the Government and I are generally supportive of providing information, but only after we have had an opportunity to evaluate what we are being asked for. We have not been given that opportunity today. In those circumstances the Government will be opposing this motion.

Dr JOHN KAYE [10.50 a.m.]: The Greens support the motion for the release of these papers. We are in the grip of carbon price hysteria being brought on by the O'Farrell Government. This hysteria will damage jobs.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: It is being fuelled by the O'Farrell Government.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I stand corrected. It is being fuelled by the O'Farrell Government. It has been brought on by a Government in another city, Canberra, but it is being fuelled by the O'Farrell Government, which is playing politics with the future of the economy of New South Wales for nothing but short-term political advantage. The Government is out there inflating the impacts of a carbon price. It has been caught out already on electricity, and it is highly likely that it will be caught out on the issue of transport as well, with Mr O'Farrell in western Sydney, with no evidence whatsoever, talking about massive impacts on family transport budgets. It is time for the O'Farrell Government to put up or shut up. If Barry O'Farrell, Gladys Berejiklian and Chris Hartcher are serious about these impacts, they should release all this material. Three weeks ago we were given appendix C. What happened to appendix A and B and the body of the document? Oh no, we were not going to get those.

[*Interruption*]

I am sure that if the Hon. Eric Roozendaal were still the Treasurer he would have released them gladly. We have a debate that has been corrupted by misinformation coming from the State Government. The State Government is playing politics. If we accept the reality of a carbon price and look seriously at how we protect households, how we engage the Premier and how we generate jobs from that carbon price, we can move forward and create a strong and robust economy. Instead the State Government is determined not to release any information. Why is it that the Minister for Finance and Services says in response to a very simple motion, "Oh, I can't possibly release that because I haven't had warning"? This notice of motion has been on the *Notice Paper* for two weeks and there has been public debate on this matter for four weeks; there has been ongoing debate. The Government should hand over all the papers. There is nothing commercial-in-confidence about them; there is nothing here that should be hidden. The Government should be open and honest. If the Government has a case, it should make it in public by opening up its books. The Greens support the motion.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.52 a.m.]: The position advanced by the Government is ridiculous. The Premier has advanced government policy on the basis of so-called modelling. If that is so, let us see it. In opposition the members of the Government said that they would be open and transparent if they won government, yet each time they are tested on that claim, they fail the test. I ask the House to pass this motion so that we can see what this modelling is and whether it stands up to any kind of proper scrutiny.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [10.53 a.m.] I support this motion also. It is important that we see the basis of the press releases that have been put out by this Government on the impact of the carbon tax. On previous

occasions I have spoken in this Chamber about the documents that have been released by the Government highlighting only the negative impacts of carbon tax. Government members have very selectively quoted from a study provided to them by a Melbourne-based company that claims that its modelling is based on the same assumptions as that of the Federal Government. Yet we saw totally different outcomes and totally different assumptions. There was no effort by the Government to refer to any positive impacts from the development of alternative technologies and jobs growth that will occur in some areas. It has failed to point out that a number of the assumptions were based on international material relating to the introduction of carbon taxes and carbon pricing. In particular the impacts in the Hunter, about which the Government talked so loudly, were based on those international assumptions. The quoting was very selective. Yesterday's edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald* summed it up in an opinion piece that compared this Government to shonky advertisers. It reported that even shonky advertisers would be ashamed of what was put out by this Government. It is important that the people of New South Wales get this information and I support the motion.

The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL [10.54 a.m.]: I listened carefully to the brief but eloquent response of the Minister for Finance and Services suggesting that the Government did not have enough warning and that more time was needed. I can appreciate the challenge the Government faces. I recall the Deputy Premier busy on his Blackberry ordering solar panels at five minutes to midnight and that he attacked others for doing the same thing. Government members have also attacked the solar bonus scheme. We have of course seen them dismantle or attempt to frustrate the Parliamentary Budget Office. We have seen this transparent Government turn opaque overnight as it attempts to hide and cover up. We have seen the appalling performance of a cover-up of the Stockton Orica spill, and here today we see another attempt to not release modelling upon which the Government has based its whole attack about the future of the national economy and the carbon tax. The Government refuses to release the modelling. As was pointed out by a member of The Greens, the Government has released only a small part of that modelling and has hidden the rest. One has to ask why it proceeds to deliberately block and hide information? One can only come to the conclusion that Barry O'Farrell, the Premier of this State, is basically a blancmange. He stands for nothing; he is basically shapeless and refuses to be honest.

It disappoints me as a member of Parliament that a Government that received such a strong mandate at the last election has already betrayed the people of this State in so many ways with so many cover-ups and attempts to be untruthful. When the *Sydney Morning Herald*—"that left-wing paper" as the Hon. Peter Phelps calls it—describes their attempts to attack the carbon tax as basically misleading advertising, the dark underbelly of this Government is really exposed. This consistent pattern of cover-ups and deceit gets worse by the day. That is why we need to look at this information as quickly as possible to allow the people of this country to look at the information in front of them and make their own judgement about the pricing of carbon. Mistruths and deliberately misleading the people of this State and the people of this country is an irresponsible way to govern this State. Perhaps if the leadership of the Government had spent less time covering up chemical spills and ordering solar panels and more time being honest, we would have a better Government today. I say let us flip the rock over and let us see what little secrets are hiding underneath in relation to this carbon tax debacle.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Ports) [10.58 a.m.]: The Government opposes this call for papers under Standing Order 52, and the reason for that opposition is that the modelling behind our carbon numbers is already on the transport website. It is already out there in the public domain. This is the laziest Opposition in the history of this State. The members opposite were part of the laziest Government in the State's history, and they are now part of the laziest Opposition in history. The Greens, who have twice the staff of any other member in this Parliament, are not using their resources properly. The Opposition just does not know. There are some duffers among them; they should be more careful in the future about trusting The Greens. The Opposition is just bone lazy. The information that it seeks is already on the website. We will not waste the time of our public servants searching for information that is already available on the transport website. We oppose this motion.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [10.59 a.m.]: I place on record that the Shooters and Fishers Party will support the motion, not necessarily because if we did not say anything we would be accused of being cowards but because, in our view, the carbon tax is positively canine and the Government deserves the opportunity to put all the information in the public domain that will prove it is a dog. We will assist the Government to do that, even if it means supporting the Opposition's motion.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE [11.00 a.m.], in reply: As I said, I did not mean to take up time by commencing a lengthy debate on this matter. It is a simple call for papers. If there is nothing to hide, the Government should provide the information.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 17

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|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Ms Barham | Dr Kaye | Ms Sharpe |
| Mr Borsak | Mr Moselmane | Mr Shoebridge |
| Mr Brown | Mr Primrose | Mr Whan |
| Mr Buckingham | Mr Roozendaal | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Mr Donnelly | Mr Searle | Ms Fazio |
| Ms Faehrmann | Mr Secord | Ms Voltz |

Noes, 15

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mr Blair | Mr Khan | Mr Pearce |
| Mr Clarke | Mr Lynn | |
| Ms Cusack | Mr MacDonald | |
| Ms Ficarra | Mrs Maclaren-Jones | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Mr Gay | Mr Mason-Cox | Mr Colless |
| Mr Green | Mrs Pavey | Dr Phelps |

Pairs

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|-------------|---------------|
| Ms Cotsis | Mr Ajaka |
| Mr Foley | Mr Gallacher |
| Mr Veitch | Miss Gardiner |
| Ms Westwood | Mrs Mitchell |

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Dr JOHN KAYE [11.08 a.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 38 outside the Order of Precedence, relating to the indexation of public sector superannuation pensions, be called on forthwith.

This motion relates to New South Wales being the only State or Territory in Australia that does not index defined benefit pensions twice a year, according to the Consumer Price Index. This matter is urgent because the current situation disadvantages retirees who are on defined benefit superannuation schemes. I declare my interest in this motion as a member of a class of persons who would materially gain from the Government acting on this motion.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Ports) [11.09 a.m.]: The Government opposes the motion.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 15

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|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Ms Barham | Mr Primrose | Mr Veitch |
| Mr Buckingham | Mr Roozendaal | |
| Mr Donnelly | Mr Searle | |
| Ms Faehrmann | Mr Secord | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Dr Kaye | Ms Sharpe | Ms Fazio |
| Mr Moselmane | Mr Shoebridge | Ms Voltz |

Noes, 17

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mr Blair | Mr Gay | Mr Mason-Cox |
| Mr Borsak | Mr Green | Mrs Pavey |
| Mr Brown | Mr Khan | Mr Pearce |
| Mr Clarke | Mr Lynn | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Ms Cusack | Mr MacDonald | Mr Colless |
| Ms Ficarra | Mrs Maclaren-Jones | Dr Phelps |

Pairs

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Ms Cotsis | Mr Ajaka |
| Mr Foley | Mr Gallacher |
| Ms Westwood | Miss Gardiner |
| Mr Whan | Ms Mitchell |

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: Order! I draw the attention of members to the presence in the President's Gallery today of Mr Bachir Bakhti, the Consul-General of France in Sydney.

TRUTH IN LABELLING (FREE-RANGE EGGS) BILL 2011**Second Reading**

Debate called on, and adjourned on motion by the Hon. Amanda Fazio and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (LOCAL DEMOCRACY—WARD REPRESENTATION REFORM) BILL 2011**Second Reading**

Debate called on, and adjourned on motion moved the Hon. Amanda Fazio and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.20 a.m.]: I move:

1. That this House congratulates the O'Farrell Government on its decision to fast-track the North West Rail Link.
2. That this House notes that:
 - (a) a project team has been established to accelerate work on the North West Rail Link line,
 - (b) the North West Rail Link will serve a population of 360,000 and it is estimated that by 2036 Sydney's north west will be home to more than 145,000 jobs,
 - (c) the 23 kilometre line will serve the needs of passengers from areas including Rouse Hill, Castle Hill and the Norwest Business Park to and from the city,
 - (d) the Sydney Lord Mayor, the Centre of Independent Economics and major business groups have thrown their support behind the North West line, and
 - (e) the O'Farrell Government has opened a community information centre in Castle Hill and has already called sixteen tenders to begin work on fast-tracking this important link.
3. That this House calls for the Federal Labor Government to recognise the North West Rail Link as Sydney's number one transport priority and divert funding to this critical piece of transport infrastructure.

The motion before the House is vital for the large population living in north-west Sydney. Indeed, the community at large congratulates the O'Farrell Government for fast-tracking this vital rail line, neglected for 16 years by the incompetent Labor Government. The north-west rail line is vital not only for those in the north-west region but also for the economic growth of Sydney and New South Wales. The New South Wales Labor Opposition should get on board regarding the North West Rail Link and stop bagging the project. The community wants it, the business community wants it and the local councils want it. But it would appear, from press releases, media reports and verbal exchanges across this Chamber and in the other place, that the only group opposed to the North West Rail Link is the New South Wales Opposition. One could say that the Federal Labor Government is in the same position as it has not as yet committed, through Infrastructure Australia, its rightful share of funding for this vital project.

Labor's last attempt to derail the project was its recent suggestion that trains travelling from the north-west on the new rail line would not go to the Sydney central business district. That is absolutely wrong, and it was a bizarre claim by the now Labor Opposition, which promised when it was in government 12 new rail lines in 16 years, but failed to deliver on a single one. Now they have the audacity to question this Government's progress—in fact, even the need for the north-west rail line. Labor has failed to outline its position on the North West Rail Link since the State election. I hope that through this debate we will hear exactly where Labor stands.

The North West Rail Link together with the South West Rail Link will deliver the public transport options that western Sydney has been crying out for following 16 years of Labor neglect. The project is vital for Sydney as a whole, and for the prosperity of New South Wales. The State Opposition, through this debate, should join with the O'Farrell Government and lobby the Federal Government for funding support for the North West Rail Link. Even the Leader of the Opposition's campaign director, it has been said, believes the line is a great idea. He is one of the Blacktown councillors who unanimously endorsed the North West Rail Link at a council meeting on 20 July this year. Councillor Stephen Bali and his council colleagues decided to:

... write to relevant Federal and State members requesting their support for a commitment for joint funding for the North West Rail Link from both the State and Federal Governments.

The Leader of the Opposition needs to get on board with the North West Rail Link because the train is about to leave the station. Labor members need to show the people of New South Wales that they understand the importance of this project. Even though they have been humiliated in a massive defeat, not to acknowledge such is compounding their difficulties. The O'Farrell Government has done more work on public transport in the last four and a half months than Labor did in 16 years. I will say more about that later.

The North West Rail Link was first promised in 1998, to be opened by 2010, at a cost of \$50 million a kilometre. It was cancelled, and resurrected as the North West Metro. It was cancelled again, and re-announced in Labor's discredited Transport Plan. In Labor's last plan, the North West Rail Link was to have commenced in 2017, and would not have opened until 2024 at a cost of \$300 million a kilometre. That was obviously a joke, and electors knew it. Under Labor's plans, commuters who travel daily to the city from the north-west will have spent \$65,000 on road tolls over 14 years, before they have any public train alternative. That is certainly not good enough, and the people told Labor so at last March's State election, giving the Liberals and The Nationals the largest political swing, on average, in the electorate history of New South Wales.

As I said, under Labor 12 rail lines were promised, and not one was delivered. Even the Auditor-General in his Barangaroo report, which was released in June this year, highlighted the poor public transport planning of the previous Government, which announced grand plans for Barangaroo without bothering to work out the detail. Labor's promises included a 2005 commitment to build a new harbour link to the central business district, which Labor axed after the 2007 election. Labor announced, and then scrapped, two metro projects that would have served the Barangaroo precinct—the North West Metro and the Roselle Metro. We all recall that financial fiasco and more than \$500 million going down the gurgler. Let's not talk about the scrapped T-card, and more millions of dollars poured down the drain.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: No, let's talk about it. It's one of my favourites.

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: It is too depressing to think about it, so I move on. But Labor has never had any credibility in the area of public transport. They spent years promising, and then axing, the North West Rail Link. Really, they should hang their heads in shame. Recently the Urban Taskforce Chief Executive, Aaron Gadiel, said the former Government did not appreciate the importance of the central business district for Sydney's economic future, and did not appreciate that people in the north-west and south-west of Sydney had little faith that Labor understood the importance of their regions to the economic future of Sydney. That is part

of the reason that Labor was punished so severely last March—and will be at the next Federal election, if Federal Labor does not stop caving in to The Greens in Canberra and does not get on with the job that mainstream communities elected it to do.

The O'Farrell Government's commitment is to build these essential rail links, to restore investor confidence in New South Wales and to improve the choices and quality of life of New South Wales residents and commuters. Let us look at the situation in north-west Sydney, where more than 300,000 people live. The north-west growth centre is expected to expand rapidly. By 2036 it is estimated that more 400,000 people will be living in that region. The North West Rail Link will be a 23-kilometre rail line—the biggest expansion of Sydney's rail system since the 1930s, with at least six stations, including three major park-and-ride areas, with commuter parking for 3,000 cars. The project has planning approval for the route, the alignment and the station locations, and the project scope will be confirmed later this year following community consultation. Detailed environment impact statements will then be required before construction can commence, and project cost estimates will be available later this year. These will be transparent, and will be tabled once the project scope and the delivery strategy are determined.

Let us look at some of the Government's North West Rail Link announcements just to make clear the time frame in every decision made and every move made. Because we want to be transparent and accountable and want to show that the first thing we did was get on with this project, we will continue to report all time frames regularly. It is very important to get on with it. People want to see action; they do not want announcements about projects, then dropping of projects, only for them to be announced again. We are not going to get into that situation. On 6 April we announced the strategy to fast-track the rail line and the project team was established, to be headed by Rod Staples. On 13 May the first tender was released for engineering and rail systems and architecture services. Then, on 7 June, a tender was called for the financial and commercial services. On 8 June we announced the location of the community information centre in Castle Hill. I will say a little more about that in the future. On 9 June tenders were called for geotechnical services, integrated transport and land use services, legal services, master planning and urban design, and then scheduling and program management.

On 16 June tenders were called for land survey and noise and vibration advisory services, on 23 June tenders were called for planning approval services, on 27 June tenders were called for management services, and on 29 June the Community Information Centre was opened in Castle Hill and the public website went live. This interactive public website has been incredibly popular with constituents who are deeply interested in progress. They are submitting requests for information and receiving responses rapidly. That is a credit to the Minister for Transport, who is certainly one of our finest members of Parliament. She was one of our finest shadow Ministers and, as time will show, will become one of the finest Ministers that this Government and this Parliament has seen. On 30 June tenders were called for a project definition report and a constructability service provider report, on 13 July 453 people visited the information centre during its first fortnight of operation, and on 21 July the first information centre session was run in Rouse Hill and tenders were called for the management services, phase 2.

On 28 July industry sounding began with an industry forum in Castle Hill in the Castle Hill Towers building. From 28 July to 3 September information sessions with the public were held throughout the north-west region. Importantly, the Government has established the new integrated transport authority, Transport for NSW. It is vital to refer to that when talking about the North West Rail Link and how it will be coordinated with the State's other transport services. The agency will ensure that transport projects are built on time and on budget, and both the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Roads and Ports are driving the process. They will ensure that the people of New South Wales can see that the O'Farrell Government honours its election commitments.

The authority will ensure that planning and policy across all modes of transport, including roads, are fully integrated for the first time. This will involve policy and planning experts from all transport agencies working together, rather than in silos. Transport agencies will be free to focus solely on delivering quality service to customers. This has heralded the start of real reform in the transport sector, and I am honoured to be part of the O'Farrell Government that has initiated this process and will drive it in the years ahead. RailCorp, Sydney Buses, the Roads and Traffic Authority and the other transport agencies will no longer be responsible for major procurement or long-term planning and policy and instead will be able to focus on service delivery. Fewer people will be employed in the back office and more will be on the front line as our State grows and our public transport services expand with it.

This Government is getting rid of the previous dysfunctional structure, involving duplication and poor communication, and replacing it with a streamlined agency, Transport for NSW, which plans and delivers on all transport modes. The Roads and Traffic Authority workers will be able to concentrate on delivering core services to the motoring public. Instead of operating in silos, the Roads and Traffic Authority will be at the core of an integrated system that will ensure that planning for the State's future roads and transport systems will be done in a strategic and holistic way. The new system will be the opposite of the piecemeal approach that we saw in the past and that people vigorously voted against. For the first time, a Minister will coordinate freight movements—from the paddock to the port, from the ship to the shop.

The integrated transport agency will feature six key divisions, including for the first time one that will focus on customer experience. Why am I talking about this during a debate about the north-west? It is important that people know this project will be part of a holistic plan. The divisions of Transport for NSW are: Customer Experience, Planning and Programs, Transport Services, Transport Projects, Freight and Regional Development, and Policy and Regulation. These six main areas will come under the new single agency. The establishment of an independent advisory board will ensure that the Government has access to independent advice on planning, delivering and managing the transport system for the New South Wales community.

I turn now to some specifics about the North West Rail Link. On 6 April this year the Premier announced in a media release that the strategy of the New South Wales Government was to speed up the planning and construction of the North West Rail Link. He announced that fast-tracking the link was a top priority of this Government—and we will deliver on it. The project team was established to accelerate work on the line and announcements were made about the community consultation period. We expect that the geotechnical work will begin later this year in line with project timelines. The project team has been directed to determine the planning approvals needed to proceed with the line, to put together a full costing of the rail line, to begin planning as to the best way to integrate trains on the North West Rail Link with the rest of the rail network—that is most important—and to open discussions with communities and stakeholders along the route.

Families in Sydney's north-west have been denied a good public transport system for too long. Almost all of them bought in the area because the previous Government promised that infrastructure would be built. Residents paid high land prices. I was amazed at the time—and I have always lived in the St George and Sutherland Shire region—at the price of blocks of land in the north-west region. People moved to the area with their families and built substantial homes on the expectation that the Government would deliver on its promises. That is why they are filled with anger. People are forced to drive to the city—families often have two or three cars—battling terrible traffic chaos and paying tolls. The money this costs them every week affects their quality of life. No wonder the anger was palpable in the north-west.

The Government is mindful of the fact that the population of north-west Sydney exceeds that of Canberra. The North West Rail Link will serve a population of 360,000, which is conservatively estimated to grow to 485,000 by 2021. The 23-kilometre North West Rail Link will take passengers from areas including Castle Hill, Rouse Hill and the Norwest Business Park to and from the city and make life easier and cheaper for the people of north-west Sydney who were forgotten by the previous Government. It is unbelievable that people have been waiting for so many years for a government to take action. This Government is determined to deliver on its promises, to abide by the timeline and to be transparent and accountable. We will be proud to take our achievements in our first four years to the people of this State at the next election. I am confident about that. The Minister for Transport, in consultation with the Minister for Roads and Ports, will make sure that the integrated authority, Transport for NSW, keeps things on track and accountable.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE [11.40 a.m.]: What an interesting motion this is. The Government is seeking to congratulate itself on the North West Rail Link, but it is yet to work out the cost of the North West Rail Link. The Government is yet to finalise the route. The Government is yet to put in a submission to Infrastructure NSW actually seeking funding for the North West Rail Link. Its rush to congratulate itself is embarrassing. The hubris of this Government knows no bounds. Instead of congratulating itself, it should get its house in order, do its homework and put together the details that will form the basis of a submission to Infrastructure NSW. The Government also has no plans to deal with the ever-increasing congestion in the Sydney central business district. It has dumped the city relief line. It has nothing to say about a second harbour crossing.

There is no plan to deal with the huge increase in the number of people who will live, work and play at Barangaroo and the impact they will have on congestion at Wynyard and in the city. Instead of issuing more press releases about the north-west, the Government needs to tackle the issue of congestion. Failure to do so will relegate commuters from the north-west to the city to a shuttle service twice an hour from Chatswood. It is not only the north-west but also all the promised new services in western Sydney, the additional services from the

Blue Mountains, Penrith, Campbelltown, Central Coast—all that expectation but no plans to create additional capacity on the network. Failure to tackle congestion will affect the one million commuters who use the CityRail system every day, while city stations like Wynyard will become dangerously overcrowded.

Labor supports the North West Rail Link. Labor supports increased public transport for New South Wales. It was Labor that did the original planning for the North West Rail Link and funded much of the land acquisition for the corridor. The project was an integral part of our Metropolitan Transport Plan. We also did the essential preparatory work and allocated the funding that would build the capacity of the rail network in the central business district through the city relief line. Labor committed to this project. Labor is committed to the North West Rail Link—we want it built. But the Government has to get its house in order before it starts moving motions congratulating itself. Failure to include Transport representatives on Infrastructure NSW is a recipe for duplication and conflict, and cracks have started to appear between the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure NSW. Infrastructure NSW has been reported in the media as complaining that less focus on media would be good and more focus on doing the work would be better. On 9 August it was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* that:

Infrastructure NSW is concerned that neither a cost nor a route has been sorted out on the project—

that is the North West Rail Link—

... despite continuing press appearances by Premier Barry O'Farrell and Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian ... failure to do a proper analysis is a major stumbling block to winning Commonwealth funding for the project.

Infrastructure NSW is understood to want Mr O'Farrell to slow down, organise the route properly and to consult with them more.

Sources revealed to the *Daily Telegraph*, and I quote:

They have got all these bloody press conferences (on the link and we don't know yet whether) this is a \$12 billion, \$8 billion or \$10 billion project.

Infrastructure NSW is worried that the Government does not know how much the project will cost, or even where it will go. Under the O'Farrell Government, the North West Rail Link will essentially be a shuttle service between Rouse Hill and Chatswood, forcing passengers to get off at already congested Chatswood Station and wait for a service to the city. The Sydney Harbour Bridge can accommodate only 20 trains per hour, and it currently has 18 services per hour during peak periods. The Government knows this but it has not as yet outlined any plan to deal with it. A new harbour crossing is needed to allow for more capacity. A new rail crossing would require two new tunnels—most likely west of the Harbour Bridge—which, at last estimate, was costed at around \$3 billion to \$4 billion. The Government remains silent on this.

Failure to tackle this issue will leave tens of thousands of extra passengers at Chatswood Station in the morning and afternoon peaks trying to get to the city, but there can be only two extra train services across the Harbour Bridge to accommodate them. This will leave a pretty ordinary service for commuters from the north-west. Scrapping the central business district relief line and introducing the North West Rail Link and the South West Rail Link will only exacerbate congestion at central business district stations for all commuters. Advice from the experts is clear that in order to introduce trains from the north-west cuts will be required to services on other lines. How will the Government explain cuts to services for other commuters because the Minister and the Government has failed to plan for proper integration of the new rail lines?

Let us look more closely at the funding for this project. How much will this project actually cost? Will it be \$7 billion, \$12 billion, \$8 billion or \$10 billion? Barry O'Farrell went through an entire election campaign promising the North West Rail Link without once saying it was subject to Federal funding. Now the Liberal-Nationals Coalition is in government and can see how complicated and expensive these projects are, it is demanding that the Federal Government fund the project. Yet the O'Farrell Government has not even put a submission to Infrastructure Australia for Federal funding. Securing Federal funding is absolutely vital to the construction of the multibillion dollar North West Rail Link. Failure to do so could mean that commuters from the north-west will be forced to pay double the normal CityRail fare. The Government has talked about replicating the Airport Rail Link financial model, where commuters are forced to pay the normal CityRail fare plus an extra fee to use the station. If this is the case, under the Government's proposal commuters from the north-west will be forced to pay more than every other rail commuter in Sydney.

But let us talk about the most ridiculous part of this motion. The final paragraph of the motion wants this House to support the diversion of a funded project to one with no finalised route or cost. It wants to divert funding from the people of western Sydney. The Parramatta to Epping Rail Link is the only rail project in Sydney that is fully funded and ready to go. This Government wants the funding pulled from that project. The Parramatta to Epping Rail Link was the Liberals' idea in the first place. It was first proposed by Bruce Baird and

now Mike Baird and his good friend Gladys Berejiklian are killing it off. The 14-kilometre Parramatta to Epping Rail Link will directly link Sydney's second central business district of Parramatta with centres in the north-west such as Macquarie Park, North Ryde and Chatswood. It will cut travel time between Chatswood and Parramatta by about 25 minutes. It will improve the development of the western express services between western Sydney and the city by increasing capacity on the western line.

The project is important for the people of western Sydney. It is the missing link between Parramatta and Chatswood. It will improve capacity on the western line, with more seats for workers in western Sydney travelling to the city. The Parramatta to Epping Rail Link is the only rail project in Sydney that is ready to go. It also has lots of support. The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils is strongly supportive of the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link. It said:

Building the Epping to Parramatta Rail Link is good for jobs, good for easing road congestion, good for work life balance and good for the environment.

Fast-tracking the completion of the Link from Parramatta through to Chatswood is a smart, value for money investment which builds on previous investments in transport infrastructure and industry precinct development over twenty years.

It opens a direct, convenient public transport route for thousands of Western Sydney residents to work and study at Macquarie University, the Macquarie Park industrial precinct and the expanded digital corridor in Sydney's north west.

Currently people living in the West have to either drive their cars or endure a long hard train journey in and out of the CBD to access employment and education opportunities in the Epping-Chatswood region.

This initiative will take thousands of cars off the road saving people time, reducing stress, and cutting tons of carbon emissions.

It is also interesting to note the support that has been given from the other side of the House. The Federal Member for Bennelong supports the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link. This is what John Alexander had to say about it:

Both the Epping-Parramatta and North-West Rail Links are vital pieces in the puzzle to improve the woeful public transport situation and traffic congestion endured by Bennelong residents ...

The construction of the Epping-Parramatta Rail Link is set to proceed, which is welcome news for the people of Bennelong.

And what did the member for Parramatta have to say about it in the other place this week? I quote:

We are still missing the Epping to Parramatta rail link—about which many people in my electorate have expressed a concern. I share those concerns, and will take up their fight by putting a case for funding to the Minister and Infrastructure NSW, emphasising the benefits such a link will have for those using the service and the benefits that will result from tying Parramatta to Chatswood by rail and offering an alternative to the radial system that requires people to pass through Central station to move to the North Shore. Parramatta, as the capital of western Sydney, will be regarded by managers of businesses on the North Shore as a desirable place at which to locate their head offices.

That is very interesting given that the motion moved in this House today basically says the Government wants to divert funding from the Epping to Parramatta Rail Link. It is good to see that the member for Parramatta is being heard by the O'Farrell Government—he is clearly not being heard at all. The Federal Liberal Member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke—a very good friend of many in this Chamber—has also supported the project, as has the State Liberal member for Granville, Tony Issa, the former member for Castle Hill, Michael Richardson, and a number of other figures, including the Lord Mayor of Parramatta, John Chedid. The Federal Government has recognised the importance of the Epping to Parramatta Rail Link and has committed the funding for it to be built. The O'Farrell Government wants to dump this funded project. That says a lot about its commitment to the people of western Sydney and its commitment to its own members of Parliament.

The Opposition is seeking to move an amendment to the motion so that instead of congratulating the Government the House supports the building of the North West Rail Link and the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link. This will deliver increased rail services to people in western Sydney and the north-west. All members in this Chamber should support that. I move:

That the motion be amended as follows:

1. In paragraph 1 omit "congratulates" and insert instead "notes".
2. Omit paragraph 3 and insert instead:
3. That this House notes that the Government has failed to finalise the route, the cost or the issues of access to the Sydney CBD for the North West Rail Link.

4. That this House calls on the Government to:
 - a. get on with the job and put forward a submission to Infrastructure Australia for the North West Rail Link, and
 - b. start building the Epping to Parramatta Rail Link.

This motion is an own goal from a government that is full of hubris. It should stop congratulating itself and get on with the job.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN [11.49 a.m.]: The Greens support fast-tracking the North West Rail Link as an important priority for New South Wales transport and for the people of New South Wales. However, this motion is not very interesting or well thought through—copied almost directly from a Coalition press release, it seems rather empty. The Greens will be supporting the Opposition's amendments because we think it is a bit rich to criticise the Commonwealth for not funding the North West Rail Link when the New South Wales submission to Infrastructure Australia has not been worked out, including costings and routes. There is no mention in the motion—or, I believe, in the contribution of the Hon. Marie Ficarra—that Infrastructure NSW is reported to be concerned by the rushed pace of progress. There is no mention of where this funding should be diverted from and no context to explain why the North West Rail Link is more important than the Parramatta to Epping link or any other vital funding priority.

Transport planning experts will be looking at this motion and asking, "Why is this so absolutely the number one priority?" There is no mention in the motion that a second harbour rail crossing is essential in order to increase the capacity of the network to allow for frequent services from the north-west to the central business district. The Government does not appear to have any plan to address this serious capacity problem, which must be addressed urgently, rather than in 15 or 20 years, and looks set to steam ahead with the North West Rail Link regardless. As we know, Labor first pledged to construct the North West Rail Link in 1998, to be opened by 2010. Since then, not only has there been an extraordinary blowout in terms of time but in cost as well. While The Greens will be supporting the Opposition's amendment, we find it extraordinary that Labor can criticise the Government so much over the North West Rail Link.

The Coalition now says that the North West Rail Link is the number one priority, and most likely it will be built through a public-private partnership. The Greens argue that both State and Federal governments should fund and build the North West Rail Link, just as they have made major investments in national infrastructure in the past. This would continue to pay dividends to the State for many years. As I said, The Greens support the fast-tracking of the link. The north-west has the lowest rates of public transport usage in Sydney because residents have not been given a viable alternative to travelling by car. Construction of the North West Rail Link is fundamental to providing access to education and employment opportunities across the global economic arc that stretches from North Ryde to North Sydney, and it must be the number one infrastructure priority of a new government.

A recent Senate inquiry into transport found that in the 30 years to 2004 the Commonwealth spent \$58 billion on roads and only \$2.2 billion on rail, much of it for freight purposes, and another \$1.5 billion on public transport. Meanwhile congestion costs Sydney alone \$4.58 billion in 2009 and will cost \$8 billion a year by 2020. This is more than any other Australian capital city. While these figures are reduced to dollar figures, to a large degree they represent people's time. I am sure we have all had recent experiences of wasting countless frustrating hours while trying to move around the city. No doubt for the majority this was probably the case every day last week—perhaps it is today. Yet what has not fallen off the new Government's priority list is the continued construction of tollways and roads, effectively at the expense of additional rail links.

Public transport in general must be the number one infrastructure priority of this Government, not just the single link in the north-west. The Greens believe the rail link needs to be built by the Government, not only for the taxpayers of the present but, importantly, for the taxpayers of the future as well. A study by Lateral Economics for the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils found that the State would have been \$4.6 billion better off if it had built and operated the M5, the M2, the Eastern Distributor, the Cross City Tunnel, the M7 and the Lane Cove Tunnel, rather than going down the path of public-private partnerships. The study found that if those toll roads and tunnels had been built by the Government it would now have assets worth about \$12.8 billion. Take away the approximate \$7 billion cost of borrowing, and it still leaves a healthy \$5.8 billion. The study states that sometimes allowing the private sector to build this type of infrastructure means that constituents end up paying.

The massive increase in cost estimates for the North West Rail Link are unreal. I know I am not the only one who is concerned that these inflated costs are being used by New South Wales Treasury to support its

preference for roads over rail. To get to the bottom of this, The Greens successfully referred to General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 an inquiry into how rail projects are costed in New South Wales. The public has a right to know why rail seems to cost so much more here than elsewhere. Public scrutiny is important for many reasons, but certainly to restore confidence in government and the relevant agencies. I look forward to that inquiry. I commend the committee chair, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, for her recent press release, in which she made the following points:

A thorough investigation is needed into the cost methodologies used by the Transport Construction Authority, NSW Treasury and other government agencies in regard to rail and road projects lead the inquiry.

We need to determine whether we are paying more than we should in New South Wales. The Inquiry will look closely at the cost estimate methodologies, "concept estimates" and tendering processes and compare them to the methodologies used in other jurisdictions, to see if costs are indeed over-inflated.

Taxpayers are entitled to know exactly how the costs of building significant rail infrastructure in New South Wales are calculated and the Committee welcomes all interested stakeholders and individuals to make a submission.

What a breath of fresh air. Hopefully, the inquiry will get to the bottom of the huge costings that the community has been trying to work out for so long. The people of New South Wales look at the costings in frustration when rail links have been promised, the promises have been broken and then the rail links have been promised again. I return to the intent of the motion. I have questioned why the Government expects the House to sign off on this link being the number one priority without any analysis of the alternatives. The Hon. Penny Sharpe spoke about the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link. The Greens agree that the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link is essential as it connects to key employment centres. Many people who reside in western Sydney tell of their frustration with the lack of connectivity between major areas of Sydney's west, south-west and north-west, not just from western Sydney into the city.

This is an essential link and The Greens will be supporting Labor's amendments to the motion. We believe it is imperative that the Federal Government's offer through Infrastructure Australia of funding towards the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link be taken up by this Government and that the North West Rail Link be built. It is true that the North West Rail Link will be a true test for the new Government's ability to deliver big infrastructure projects on time and within cost. This requires earnest and diligent planning work to secure funding for the project. It seems that such planning has eluded New South Wales governments for a long time. In these early days of this new Government we are reading reports such as the one published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 9 August, which stated:

Infrastructure NSW is reportedly concerned that neither a cost nor a route has been sorted out, and that failure to conduct a proper analysis could be a major stumbling block to winning commonwealth funding for the projects.

We in this House and the community are still waiting for detailed plans for the North West Rail Link. The detailed environmental impact statement is yet to be lodged. As I said, a proper cost estimate of the project is not yet available. There are wildly divergent estimates being reported in the media of \$7 billion and \$12 billion. If the current Government is struggling to source funding for this crucial piece of infrastructure for Sydney's north-west growth area, one must wonder how that affects other projects across the State. As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2009:

Infrastructure Australia sources said the NSW Government's submission still lacks detail on the benefits and costings for its key projects and the state was at risk of being sidelined from early funding when the first round is announced, probably next month.

That was in 2009. Is that still the case, or is the Government grappling with large vital projects still in the planning stage? We have no idea or clue. Can the Government assure us that the new agency, Infrastructure NSW—and, for that matter, Transport for NSW—is capable of delivering such crucial projects on time? A competent submission by the Government to Infrastructure Australia that builds on a strategic integrated, sustainable vision for Sydney and New South Wales would be a welcome change. Building the North West Rail Link on time and at good value to the taxpayer would be an even more welcome change. The Greens will support the motion, but only as amended by the Opposition.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [11.58 a.m.]: This Government delivers on its promises. I have in front of me a booklet entitled "First 100 days. Real change", issued by the New South Wales Government. Under the key heading "Renovate infrastructure" it states:

We will build the infrastructure that makes a difference to both our economy and people's lives—

that is a social and economic benefit for all—

In the first 100 days—

it is important to note this—

we will:

Introduce legislation for the creation of Infrastructure NSW and appoint its board—

well done—

*Seek an immediate meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss funding of infrastructure, particularly the *North West Rail Link, health reform* and the future of *COAG*—*

the North West Rail Link will be delivered—

*Start work on planning and budgeting for the *North West Rail Link*, and set up project teams.*

Again, I repeat that the North West Rail Link will be delivered. In 16 weeks we have done more than the Labor Party did in 16 years—let that not be forgotten. And what did the Labor Party do on the North West rail link? We have to remember that the North West Rail Link was first promised in 1998. Not 2010, not 2008, not 2005, not 2004, not 2000: it was promised in 1998. At the time it was promised it was to be fully delivered by 2010. Last year apparently people were supposed to be riding on the North West Rail Link, but they were not, and they were not because the Labor Party failed to deliver on its promises. In 2005 the project was delayed and it was supposed to be completed by 2017. It has been continually pushed back. Labor made lots of promises, but it has not delivered. Then finally, perhaps in a moment of frankness and honesty, Labor axed the project in February 2008. It was promised in 1998, delayed 2005, and axed 2008.

There is no greater exemplar of the nature of the Labor Government than the North West Rail Link. Labor has been all talk and no action. Not surprisingly, in the final year of the Keneally Labor Government the project was revived, but construction was not going to start until 2017, and commuters would not be riding on it until 2024—that is 26 years after it was first promised. Oh dear! It took Moses less time to come out of the wilderness than it did for the Labor Party to get people coming in from Rouse Hill on a train. That is a classic example of the Labor Party's infrastructure failures over the last 16 years.

Then we have the South West Rail Link, which still has not been built. There is also the Western Metro and the Chatswood to Parramatta rail link. I wish to say something about the Chatswood to Parramatta rail link. It is my understanding that the company that constructed the tunnel did not want to disassemble the mining equipment when it got to Epping so it offered the Government at the time to continue the tunnel all the way to Carlingford. The Government rejected this offer. There is nothing to say that the Government necessarily had to fit out that tunnel with a proper rail line, but an offer was on the table to extend the tunnel so that it would be there as a resource in the future. But that was rejected. And so what did the contractors have to do? They had to disassemble the tunnelling equipment and bring it out.

A vital component of the Epping to Parramatta rail link is a tunnel between Epping and Carlingford. It was there to be built, but the former Labor Government said no. So now we know the exact level of sincerity displayed by the Opposition when its members talk about how they were going to build that missing link. Then there was the Penrith fast rail, the North West Metro, the Hurstville to Strathfield rail link, the Bondi Beach rail link, the high speed rail service to Newcastle and the high speed rail link from Sutherland to Wollongong, the new CBD-Harbour crossing and the CBD to Rozelle Metro. That project was \$500 million worth of hot air—\$500 million of squandered taxpayers' money by a government that did not know and did not care, and that deservedly got booted out at the last State election. Some of my friends say to me "Phelpsy you are a libertarian. What are you doing supporting government investment in infrastructure?"

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: So the member does have some friends?

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: I will take that interjection. Some of my acquaintances say to me "Phelpsy, what are you doing as a libertarian supporting Government investment in infrastructure? Shouldn't it be left to the private sector?" Personally I believe it should. However the simple fact of the history of infrastructure in New South Wales is this: while it would have been nice to have great turnpikes built through the countryside of New South Wales by private investors in the nineteenth century, that did not happen. While it would have been nice to have had the J. P. Morgans and the John D. Rockefellers building railway lines in the nineteenth century, that did not happen either. And it did not happen for a series of reasons, one of which was the lack of a large-scale capital base within Australia. But it was also because of labour issues. However, more importantly, it was also because of a sort of Tory paternalist intervention; the idea that governments are there to

help—the classic, capital "C", British Conservative tradition that people cannot look after themselves so therefore government has to look after them. That view melds quite nicely with certain socialist views of how society should be organised but it is not one that I subscribe to, and hence the reason that I do not describe myself as a conservative.

It would have been nice had all this private infrastructure been built in the nineteenth century, but it was not. The first railway line in Australia was started in the 1850s by a private company, the Sydney Railway Company. After a few years, however, it was in a bit of trouble because of the goldfields. Many workers decided they could get better rates of pay by heading off to the goldfields. And I strongly approve of the notion of freedom of labour: the ability to take your labour wherever you want to, unencumbered by union restrictions. When the Sydney Railway Company had trouble with labour so it went crying home to mama, as most companies normally do, and it asked the Government to do something. So the Government brought out 500 or so navvies from England, but in the end it proved to be unprofitable. Large distances and low population densities made it generally uneconomical for large-scale infrastructure. In that instance what happens? Well, we could choose to still have dirt tracks everywhere or, alternatively, the Government could take over. This is a case in the nineteenth century of a genuine market failure. I am not averse, when there is genuine market failure, to government stepping in. But what I do not agree with is government stepping in when there is no sign of market failure or, alternatively, stepping in so that the market can deliberately fail. On this occasion, however, there was market failure and government stepped in. It gelled quite nicely with the Tory paternalism of the time—that governments do things and build things.

That we cannot build a railway in New South Wales these days without a specific Act of Parliament for that purpose is absolutely disgraceful. But that is one of our historical legacies. So the system in New South Wales for effectively one hundred years was government advantage towards rail; government deliberately advantaged rail. In times of Labor governments that was good because with train drivers all being solidly unionised—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: As opposed to rail just being there. Do you say rail is not a good idea?

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: I think transport is a good idea. But then from about the 1950s onwards rail became progressively less advantaged and roads more advantaged. The reasons for that are again historical: greater mobility and greater post-war wealth, which leads to less need—in the true sense of need—for public transport and a greater use of private vehicles. Private capital buys vehicles and people want roads to drive on. They do not want rough roads, they want paved roads; when they get paved roads they want highways, and when they get highways they want dual carriageway lanes. Essentially, for a hundred years in New South Wales rail was advantaged and then, in the last 60 years, roads have been advantaged.

One would say, "Why not allow the market to decide; have a completely laissez faire arrangement? If people want to build railways or roads, they should be able to do so." There is some attraction to the argument but, as I said previously, one cannot build a railway in New South Wales without a specific Act of Parliament authorising it. There are also instances of transport corridors being sold, as the Wran Government was noted for doing. Over the past 60 years we have also witnessed the gradual reduction in influence of the left-wing Rail, Bus and Tram Union in favour of the right-wing Transport Workers Union. As a result, today roads have been advantaged, and we are trying now to correct that situation.

Anyone who has recently driven to Rouse Hill, as I have—and I had not visited the area for many years—would be surprised to see the massive level of development that has taken place there. The roads, which are clearly little more than parking lots for most of the morning and afternoon-evening peak times, simply cannot cope with the capacity of north-west Sydney. A rail link will provide an alternative means of transport. It will cost taxpayers money but without it it will be necessary to fix roads in the area to ease the current traffic congestion and that would come at a cost. We have the choice of fixing the roads or to adopt a transport model that allows for public transport on railways. I believe that in this instance the Government has made the right decision.

There is a need for a high-speed North West rail link for mass transit to allow people to travel from that area. It is not necessary over Sydney Harbour Bridge into the city because, as the Hon. Cate Faehrmann stated, the economic corridor between Parramatta and North Sydney stretching across the north side of the harbour is already accessed by a reasonable public transport route. However, we need to get people onto those routes; we do not want people driving from Rouse Hill station to Parramatta station, trying to find somewhere to park and then catching the train. They should have the advantage of staying on a rail network to get to these locations as this will benefit our economy and society.

Reduced commuter time will mean that people can spend more time with their families, should they choose, or they can spend more time at work. This will improve the productivity of this State, as they decide to work harder, longer, more efficiently and more effectively. Now that they realise they have a government in New South Wales that cares for them, and cares about economic benefits, productivity and economic growth, they will get on trains every morning saying, "I want to get to work quicker to make this State greater; to make this State number one again."

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE [12.13 p.m.]: At the outset I make it clear that I strongly support construction of the North West Rail Link. Like the Liberal member for Parramatta I also strongly support construction of the Parramatta to Epping rail link, which was first proposed by Bruce Baird and is now being opposed by Mike Baird. The construction of this \$2.6 billion, 14-kilometre line between Parramatta and Epping would link Parramatta with the commercial and residential growth areas around Macquarie Park, North Ryde and Chatswood. The new link will consist of a tunnel from Parramatta to a new station at Rosehill-Camellia. The existing single track from Rosehill to Carlingford will be made a two-way line. Carlingford will then be connected to Epping by a new tunnel.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. This motion is specifically about the North West Rail Link. There is no reference to the link that the Hon. Peter Primrose is mentioning.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Helen Westwood): Order! There is no point of order. The Hon. Peter Primrose was being generally relevant.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: The stations at Parramatta, Rydalmere, Dundas, Telopea and Carlingford will be upgraded. As a regular rail commuter in north-west Sydney, I believe that both the North West Rail Link and the Parramatta to Epping rail link are needed. The most recent addition to the rail network on the northern line was the completion of the link between Epping and Chatswood stations via twin underground rail tunnels and the three brand new stations at Macquarie University, Macquarie Park and North Ryde. This was a major step forward for commuters in north-west Sydney. The link allowed the introduction of a new timetable in October 2009, which integrated the link into the northern line. Integration of the new link meant that the northern line now receives four suburban services an hour for the majority of the day. All suburban trains on the northern line now operate as eight-car trains.

In February 2010 then Premier Kristina Keneally announced the Metropolitan Transport Plan: Connecting the City of Cities. The rail related portions comprised, firstly, a Western Express CityRail service consisting of a new tunnel between Redfern and Wynyard with new platforms at Redfern, Central, Town Hall and Wynyard; secondly, the North West Rail Link from Epping to Rouse Hill, with six stations at Franklin Road, Castle Hill, Hills Centre, Norwest, Burns Road and Rouse Hill, to commence construction in 2017; and, finally, expansion of the current light rail system to Dulwich Hill, Circular Quay and Barangaroo.

The central business district relief line would have joined the main suburban line at the Illawarra Junction. The main pair of tracks can currently be accessed only by suburban trains by means of a flat junction from the suburban pair of tracks, creating a bottleneck and meaning that mains are not used to their full capacity. By removing the need to cross the flat junction, more suburban trains would have been able to use the mains, and that would have freed up capacity on the suburban and existing central business district lines.

The Western Express concept envisaged limited stops trains commencing from Wynyard, then utilising the central business district relief line, the main pair of tracks on the main suburban line and the Western and Richmond branch lines to provide faster and more frequent travel between the Sydney central business district, the Parramatta central business district and the outer western suburbs. This would have enabled a five-minute reduction in travel time, a 90 per cent capacity improvement between Wynyard and Parramatta, a 10-minute reduction in travel time and a 50 per cent capacity improvement between Wynyard and Penrith or the Richmond branch line. Of course, it is now history that both the Western Express and central business district relief line have been axed by the O'Farrell Government and commuters will pay dearly for this short-sighted decision for decades to come.

There is of course a long way to go before the North West Rail Link becomes a reality. As other speakers have said, we do not yet know the final route. We do not know how many stations it will have or where they will be located. We are told that 3,000 park and ride spaces will be required, but we do not know when these will be provided or where. Currently only every second station is planned to get a parking facility, so there

is uncertainty about where people will park at the other stations. This has been identified as of particular concern to surrounding residents. As the motion indicates, with the rail link expected to serve a current population estimate of 360,000, residents are concerned about whether 3,000 parking spaces, to be provided at some point, will be sufficient.

I note also in the Area 20 Precinct Plan, which was recently released by the Department of Planning, that 1,200 of these proposed parking spaces will be located at Cudgegong Road. This area is planned to expand to accommodate tens of thousands of people. Indeed, the total population will be well over 400,000 by 2021, so I am not sure where commuters coming to the other stations will park. I look forward to a number of other critical issues being addressed. These may be highlighted in the submission, if it is ever made, for funding for the line to Infrastructure Australia by the Government. Of course, no such submission has yet been made.

There are other issues that include the number of stations and their location. The planning team has already told local businesses and The Hills Shire Council that a second station could be built at Norwest and another beyond Rouse Hill at Cudgegong Road, that the Burns Road Station at Kellyville could be scrapped, and that another will be built at Samantha Riley Drive. We are also concerned that the road networks in the vicinity of and feeding into each station will need to be carefully considered and upgraded to prevent traffic chaos. The large-scale, high-density housing proposed for and around the stations will dramatically change the nature of The Hills forever, and any planning will have to take the needs of new residents into account, including roads and other amenities. Cycleway facilities are proposed for each station. That is a fantastic development and I look forward to reading about the time line for its implementation.

Staffing and security at each station will, of course, be paramount, as will security for commuters travelling to their cars or buses. The July-August 2011 Community Newsletter for the rail line indicates that a minimum 15-minute frequency will be the norm across the day, including on weekends. This will be very welcome because so far the Government has only talked about two services every hour. Of course, when challenged by the shadow Minister, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, to do so, the Minister has not confirmed yet whether passengers on the North West line will have to change at Chatswood, effectively making it a shuttle service.

In that regard I am pleased to advise the House of the information being given to residents in The Hills as part of the current consultation. On Thursday 18 August I called in as a resident in the area to the North West Rail Link Community Information Centre at Old Northern Road, Castle Hill. The office was staffed by one young man who was very helpful and offered to assist me in any way he could. I thanked him and gathered a number of documents to make sure that, as a local resident and a commuter, I was fully up to speed. After about 15 minutes when I had gathered material I asked him only one question: Will the link be a shuttle service where passengers have to get off the North West link train and board a connecting train to get to the city, or are trains going to be able to go direct to and from the city without having to change? The young man at the information centre assured me, on behalf of the department, without hesitation that trains would be travelling to and direct from the city. He stated that given that there may not be the demand, some trains may terminate at the end of the North West line, but that trains would definitely be able to travel direct to and from Sydney. I thanked him, and left to read my documentation.

While the Minister is not sure, the information being provided as part of the consultation to local residents, including me, is that there will definitely be through trains. I ask the Hon. Marie Ficarra in her reply to confirm that information that is being given to local residents as a fact. I look forward to her reply, on behalf of the Minister. I also look forward to having information ultimately—I accept it is still in the planning stages—about land acquisition, the proposed new road network that will be required, and management of issues such as biodiversity, flooding and stormwater. During construction there will obviously be considerable disruption to a number of locations for many years, and I will read with interest the proposals to minimise those disruptions. I will also be interested to read how issues regarding noise will be dealt with when the line is operational for those sections that will be above ground, such as at Kellyville and Rouse Hill.

Of course, there are issues of city stations and facilities for passengers that will also be critical: not only questions about congestion but also about how the increased number of trains from the north west will be moved without a second bridge crossing. The cost of fares is another issue. I note the calls by the Government Whip to privatise the line but we know what happens in terms of train fares—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: At no time did I call for the privatisation of the line. I said that in the nineteenth century it would have been preferable if privatisation had taken place.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Helen Westwood): Order! There is no point of order.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I am very pleased that the Government Whip has clarified that he—and, I presume, others—favour privatisation. We all know what happened on the airport line in relation to fares. That must be clarified so that it is clear that commuters, such as myself, will pay no more than they pay on any other line. I am reading from a preliminary, short list of issues to be dealt with. But as the mover of this motion and the shadow Minister have both said, it is time to get on with it. I am pleased that the Hon. Marie Ficarra has reiterated the Premier's promise to speed things up. As a member of this House and a resident of The Hills I sincerely hope that the North West Rail Link is a great success. I genuinely hope that soon commuters, myself included, will be travelling on that much-needed line.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Parliamentary Secretary) [12.25 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Hon. Marie Ficarra and I congratulate her on moving it. The Hon. Penny Sharpe raised two matters. She implied that the Government will look at station access fees in relation to the North West Rail Link. That is nonsense and I rule it out completely. I state at the outset that the Government has never mentioned access fees. That is scaremongering of the worst kind. It seems that the Hon. Penny Sharpe is willing to make assumptions that have no factual basis or foundation. In her usual clever manner, the Hon. Penny Sharpe implied also that the Premier went to the election stating that the Government will build the North West Rail Link. That is right. She now says it is not true because the Government has sought funding from the Federal Government. Well, that is not correct. This Government will build the North West Rail Link, and this motion congratulates the O'Farrell Government on that commitment. Of course, a priority of any government is to seek assistance if and when it can. The former Labor Government's failure to secure Federal funding for public transport is there for all to see. It is a joke. In 2009 the member for Toongabbie boasted about securing \$91 million for planning and feasibility studies for the West Metro. Then the member for Heffron, when she became Premier, cancelled the West Metro and handed back \$80 million to the Federal Government.

The former Labor Government's Infrastructure Australia submissions were appalling. In fact, they were so bad that sources in the Federal Labor Government told the media, as reported on 6 February 2009 in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, that the submission from those opposite looked like it was done on the back of an envelope. The article continued:

There's a lack of integrated planning in the NSW submission.

And further:

This NSW Government hasn't been able to prioritise or articulate what their problems are.

The member for Heffron had to hand back the \$80 million because Labor could not get the planning right. There is nothing to stop the Federal Government from making a commitment to the North West Rail Link today. While the Hon. Marie Ficarra has moved this motion, Anthony Albanese has tweeted, "Dropped in at North West Rail Information Centre at Castle Hill and enjoying talking to locals." I hope he is doing more than just talking. I hope he is making some real commitment. Unfortunately, we do not know what he was talking about; he does not clarify that. He merely says he was enjoying talking to locals. But it is good that he dropped in at the information centre. Unlike Labor, this Government is committed to doing the detailed public transport planning required to get New South Wales back on track. I inform the House that detailed planning work is being done right now. I hope that answers the question asked by the Hon. Penny Sharpe. The planning will improve the quality of the New South Wales submission to the Federal Government for funding—planning that New South Wales Labor in 16 years failed to do.

We have told the Federal Government time and time again that the North West Rail Link is a public transport priority for New South Wales. The Minister has met with the Federal transport Minister and informed him of our determination to deliver the North West Rail Link as a priority. The Minister also wrote to the Federal transport Minister asking him to join us and find a way for the Commonwealth to fund the North West Rail Link. The Minister wrote to the Chairman of Infrastructure Australia informing him that the North West Rail Link is a priority. The chair of Infrastructure NSW met with the chair of Infrastructure Australia and outlined that the North West Rail Link is a priority. The Premier met with the Prime Minister to outline how the North West Rail Link is a priority. The Premier also wrote to the Prime Minister requesting she directly fund the North West Rail Link. The Director General of Transport met with the chair of Infrastructure Australia and outlined how the North West Rail Link is a priority, and the Director General of the Premier's Department wrote to the Federal Infrastructure Co-ordinator, stating that the North West Rail Link and the South West Rail Link are a priority.

In all those meetings and letters it has been made very clear that the North West Rail Link is a priority project for the New South Wales Government. There is nothing to stop the Federal Government making a commitment to this rail line today. There is nothing to stop members opposite from speaking to their Federal colleagues about ensuring that happens. Indeed, we have seen the Federal Government make a promise of funding for a project that was far, far less advanced than the North West Rail Link. The Federal Government promised funding for the Parramatta to Epping rail link on the basis of just five pages of information from the State Labor Government—five pages.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Helen Westwood): Order! The level of interjection from both sides of the House is such that it is difficult for members to hear the contribution of the Hon. John Ajaka. The member with the call should be heard in silence.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Thank you, Madam Deputy-President. I was having difficulty hearing myself. We understand information about that proposal did not even go to Infrastructure Australia until after the announcement by the Federal Minister. However, the North West Rail Link had 78 pages of detailed planning documents. But, as we all know, just days before the Federal election the Commonwealth announced it would fund the project based on five pages of planning instead of funding a project with 78 pages of planning. That is, the Federal Government found \$2.1 billion because it suited that Government's political purposes. So, based on the Federal Government's method of assessing projects for funding, there is no reason that it could not commit to the North West Rail Link today.

Any argument that the Federal Government cannot commit to funding the North West Rail Link today because it is waiting for a piece of paper is simply ludicrous. As the Premier has said before, work on a new submission for Infrastructure Australia, which reflects the New South Wales Government's priorities, is continuing. We are doing our homework—something the former Government failed to do time and time again. In the meantime, there is nothing to stop Federal funding for the rail link today. The North West Rail Link is the most important piece of infrastructure to support Sydney's growth, and we will continue to lobby the Federal Government to turn its attention to funding this most critical project. I congratulate the Hon. Marie Ficarra on this motion. I urge all members to support it.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ [12.34 p.m.]: This motion is more bluster than building and is indicative of the Government's light-on-detail approach to the North West Rail Link. Since the election, the Government's rhetoric on this issue has significantly outpaced the detailed work required to get it off the ground. Let me say from the start that Labor supports the building of the North West Rail Link. Our concern is that under Premier O'Farrell the basic work required is not being done. Giving central priority to the North West Rail Link was the hallmark of Barry O'Farrell's election campaign; yet, so far, under the O'Farrell Government, there is no plan, there is no costing, there is no route and there is no request for Federal funding. So far, this Government talks a good game but exhibits a general sloppiness and overriding laziness, and that is consistent with the Coalition's approach over 16 years in opposition and when in government prior to that.

Following the O'Farrell Government's election, Infrastructure Australia wrote to the Premier giving the State Government the opportunity to update the New South Wales submission to Infrastructure Australia. This offer was consistent with offers made to newly elected governments in Victoria and Western Australia. It is an offer taken up by the Western Australian Government to indicate their new priorities and plans. Infrastructure Australia set a deadline of 9 August for the New South Wales submission—a date which has now come and gone without a murmur from the Government. Infrastructure Australia since has confirmed that no updated submission was received from the New South Wales Government. As a result of this tardiness the North West Rail Link has been left off the 2011 National Priority List of Infrastructure Australia. In response to criticism about this failure of the Government to submit any new plans, Minister Berejiklian said:

... a submission by the previous (Labor) Government listed the North West Rail Link as a priority, producing 78 pages of information.

I would say to the Minister that this excuse really is on a par with the dog ate my homework. After talking so much about a new approach during the election, to then only fall back on the previous Government's planning is really sloppy. How should the New South Wales public reconcile this gap between what the O'Farrell Government says and what the O'Farrell Government does when a hallmark of their election was the new priority they said they would give to the North West Rail Link? Then they fail to submit any request for Federal funding assistance. They even fail to submit any basic update reflecting their supposed new priority on the North West Rail Link. Unfortunately, the New South Wales public must conclude that this is a familiar pattern of sloppiness seen before from the Liberal Party. After all, Minister Berejiklian did spend eight years as shadow

Transport spokesperson before she got around to releasing any public transport plans or policy. Also, Minister Berejiklian was the shadow Transport minister who sent the New South Wales Liberal Party to the 2007 election without a transport policy.

Furthermore, the New South Wales public must conclude that when it comes to public transport infrastructure the Liberal Party has a consistently poor record on planning and delivery. The Liberal Party in government has managed to deliver only one piece of major public transport infrastructure over the last 30 years and that is the Airport Rail Link. The Airport Rail Link is widely regarded as the most disastrous public private partnership in Australian history. It was an airport line built by the Liberals without any dedicated rolling-stock or provision for passenger luggage. Despite the expensive taxis and the cancellation of bus services, this line attracted virtually no customers—until the company that was contracted to run it went into receivership, exposing the Government to cost of approximately \$800 million. Infrastructure Australia and I are not the only ones who are concerned. Infrastructure NSW, Barry O'Farrell's pet project, is now criticising the Government for failing to do its homework on the North West Rail Link. Reports in the *Daily Telegraph* of 9 August suggest:

Infrastructure NSW is concerned that neither a cost nor a route has been sorted out and that failure to conduct a proper analysis could be a major stumbling block to winning commonwealth funding for the project.

So there we have it—full and frank advice. The independent body that Premier O'Farrell set up to oversee infrastructure delivery has serious concerns about the lack of basic planning being undertaken by the O'Farrell Government. All those things add up in people's minds: The Liberal Party's abysmal record in government and opposition, their failure to even communicate with Infrastructure Australia, and now their own organisation, Infrastructure NSW, saying the Government is not doing enough work to get this job done. I hear the howls from the Government side—from the people who for 16 years were so hopeless and so lazy that they spent 16 years in opposition. That is a pretty good indication of how lazy and sloppy this mob on the other side is. I think the public have good reason to harbour grave misgivings about O'Farrell Government's capacity to deliver. And all of this is before we even get to the question of how they pay for it.

Let us give the Coalition the benefit of the doubt on planning and imagine that down the track they formulate a plan, a route and a cost. Even in that scenario, the questions about their funding models are as big as the doubts over their attention to detail. The O'Farrell Government said it will fund its infrastructure commitments through the establishment of a \$5 billion Restart NSW Fund and that the money for this fund will come from three sources: windfall tax revenues, Waratah bonds, and leasing the desalination plant. The problem is that they are three highly questionable sources of revenue. Windfall tax revenues occur when the Government collects in the budget more tax than expected. As Labor pointed out during the election campaign, funding infrastructure through windfall tax revenue is like a problem gambler promising to pay back a loan shark with next week's pokie winnings. Such a strategy is unprecedented in Australian fiscal policy. I know my associate Phelps will be interested that I did find one precedent for that model. Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez, shares the O'Farrell Government's approach. Last week he commented on Venezuelan national television that he would use windfall tax revenues.

The Hon. Marie Ficarra: What a role model.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: No, he is your role model. He said he would use windfall tax revenues to fund social and economic infrastructure investment in the Venezuelan economy. That is a glowing endorsement—Barry O'Farrell and Hugo Chávez. That is the economic modelling we have going here. I am sure my associate the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps will share my concerns on that.

The second source of revenue earmarked by the O'Farrell Government is Waratah bonds. Essentially, Barry O'Farrell will encourage everyday New South Wales families to buy his Government's debt. The problem is that infrastructure bonds are considered high-risk investments, so much so that major superannuation funds historically have refused to invest in them. So large corporations will not invest in them but Barry O'Farrell wants to put everyday folks' retirement savings into them. The introduction of Waratah bonds is simply an admission by the O'Farrell Government that their financial credentials are so half-baked that the private sector will not invest in them.

Finally, the O'Farrell Government has suggested it will raise funds for the North West Rail Link by leasing the desalination plant. The problem there is that, apart from being a form of backdoor privatisation, the desalination plant is yet to be paid for by the New South Wales Government. More than \$1 billion is still owing to the construction company that built the plant. After that is paid off, there will not be much left for the North

West Rail Link. The holes in the infrastructure funding model are as big as their planning is sloppy. Labor supports the North West Rail Link, as we did in Government. The O'Farrell Government needs to focus less energy on talking themselves up and more on getting down to the job of working out a route, building a plan and costing the project. The Government should worry less about starting the change and worry more about starting the work.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary) [12.45 p.m.]: I congratulate the Hon. Marie Ficarra on this outstanding motion, which notes the positive steps initiated by the O'Farrell Government to finally get the North West Rail Link underway. I am particularly interested in the last part of her motion:

That this House calls for the Federal Labor Government to recognise the North West Rail Link as Sydney's number one transport priority and divert funding to this critical piece of transport infrastructure.

That is code for saying that the Federal Government has been sucking plenty of money out of the people of north-western Sydney and they want some of it back and some assistance with building it. The Federal Government talks: we heard from the Hon. John Ajaka about Anthony Albanese. The hills are alive, not with the sound of music but with the sound of tweeting from Anthony Albanese, who is visiting and having a wonderful time. Has he come with a cheque to assist in building this link? No, he has not. Labor is out there pork-barrelling with our money in other parts of Australia, but there is no money for north-western Sydney and there has not been for 16 years.

For 16 years Labor—this lot on the Opposition side of the Chamber—failed to deliver when in government. They made promises to build the North West Rail Link and then put them on the backburner and forgot them. Then they revived them, took them off the backburner, repackaged them and presented them as new policy. It started 16 years ago with Bob Carr who made promises and then got out while the going was good. Morris Iemma made promises and was backstabbed. Nathan Rees made promises and was backstabbed. And then Kristina Keneally—probably the most pitiful of all the Premiers New South Wales has had—at least had the honesty to tell the people of New South Wales it was being cancelled. There was never an intention to build the North West Rail Link. Then Carl Scully announced his Action for Transport Plan 2010. It was subtitled "*A Brighter Future for Western Sydney*", but nothing came of that. Then in November 2005 John Watkins announced the biggest expansion of Sydney's rail network since the 1930s. What did he do? He gave it seed money of \$5 million. Nobody can build a rail line with \$5 million. And what did we see? We saw zilch, zero. At the end of the day, nothing eventuated. The last infrastructure built in north-western Sydney was the M2 Motorway. And it was the Coalition that built it.

Labor opposed the building of the M2. Let the people of north-western Sydney remember that a Coalition government built the M2 motorway and Labor opposed it. Now Labor is out of government, it has plenty to say. They have these spinny speeches—all this is spin. We have the Hon. Penny Sharpe moving an amendment to the motion moved by the Hon. Marie Ficarra. She wants to record that the Opposition supports building of the North West Rail Link. Well, big deal. Another part of the motion is basically, "Get on with the job." What a cheek, what a nerve, what gall and what a joke for these people to tell us to get on with the job. We have been in Government for a few months and already have started on this project yet they have the nerve to be slouched on the Opposition benches and telling us to get on with the job. Sixteen years Labor was in government and did nothing. I do not know how the Hon. Penny Sharpe can keep a straight face when she tells us to get on with the job.

The Hon. Peter Primrose said, "I support the building of the North West Rail Link". But he was part of the Kristina Keneally Government that announced it would not build it and in fact that Government cancelled it. Now he is telling us, "I support it". The Hon. Lynda Voltz gave the Government a spray, yet she was part of the Labor outfit during the past 16 years. For 16 years Labor in government misled the people of north-western Sydney. That is why they got a swing against them in the seat of Riverstone of nearly 31 per cent. That is why they lost the seat of Londonderry. That is why they lost seat after seat in western Sydney. And that is only the beginning.

In March the State Labor Government was defeated and in the not-too-distant future, the Labor Government in Canberra will be next. That day is coming. That day is getting closer and it will soon be here. Ordinary men and women in the street in north-western Sydney will tell Labor members that Labor is on the nose. They have had a gutful of Labor. Over 16 years New South Wales has experienced explosive population growth, but what did the Labor Government do about the people of north-western Sydney? It did nothing. We have had whole new suburbs mushrooming, and what did they do? They did nothing. We have had whole new

commercial zones emerge, and what did they do? They did nothing. The Hon. Penny Sharpe is smirking away and smiling. She thinks it is a joke, but the people of north-western Sydney do not think it is a joke. It is a living hell for commuters.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: I understand that the member is trying to verbal me. I wish to indicate to the House that I am smirking at the evangelical zeal he has for this issue.

TEMPORARY CHAIR (The Hon. Helen Westwood): Order! There is no point of order.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: If I am showing evangelical zeal, it is for building the North West Rail Link. It is a pity that the former Government did not show any evangelical zeal for building it in the past 16 years. Commuting is a living hell for the residents of north-western Sydney. Those opposite now have come alive and want to amend the Government's motion. What a cheek. When they were in government they had many failures, such as in health and law and order. People have been crying out for something to be done about graffiti. What did Labor do about it? Labor wants to derail any strong resolutions. They always want to dump and scuttle projects: They cannot help themselves. That is why Labor is on the nose with the people of New South Wales.

But the centrepiece of failure for the former Government was transport infrastructure, and principally its failure to build the North West Rail Link. The Hon. Lynda Voltz has plenty to say now. She is all for it now, but what did she do in the past? She could have made her voice heard when her government refused to build the North West Rail Link. For 16 years the Australian Labor Party promised to build the North West Rail Link. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition went to the March election promising to build the North West Rail Link. What has happened? The Coalition Government has started it and we are going to finish it. The O'Farrell Government will stand or fall on whether it builds the North West Rail Link. It will build that and also rebuild this State. Labor left this State in a shambles after 16 years in office.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [12.51 p.m.]: On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party I will speak briefly to the motion moved by the Hon. Marie Ficarra about the North West Rail Link. I congratulate the Government on fast-tracking the design and delivery of the 23-kilometre North West Rail Link, which will create a network from Epping to Rouse Hill in north-western Sydney and link the region with more than 300 other CityRail stations. The North West Rail Link is a major project by world standards. It will require the longest rail tunnelling project ever undertaken in Sydney. The tunnels also will be the deepest rail tunnels in Sydney, reaching depths of up to 70 metres below ground level.

The new rail link will provide approximately 300,000 residents in north-western Sydney with rail access to Epping, Macquarie Park, Chatswood, St Leonards, North Sydney and the Sydney central business district and new rail services to existing suburbs in The Hills District, as well as future growth areas planned for the north-western areas of Sydney. It also will improve travel time reliability compared with bus and private car, produce significant travel time savings for those travelling from many north-western areas to the Sydney central business district and Macquarie Park, reduce bus congestion in the long-term in the Sydney central business district, provide a major increase in services to the Macquarie University and the Macquarie Park area, and provide more sustainable public transport and decreased greenhouse gas emissions.

The Christian Democratic Party notes that community support for this project has been strong and that industry input and endorsement have been equally encouraging. However, the Government must not forget regional infrastructure such as rail services to the South Coast. Rail services on the South Coast line always have been a pain for commuters. I do not refer to that service as a rail line. Perhaps it might more aptly be referred to as a bus route because buses often provide more services than trains. It is good that the Government is looking at the bigger picture by implementing this visionary infrastructure, but in doing so it should not lose sight of getting the basics right. I have no doubt that the people of the South Coast would reiterate that thought. The community is sick of talk. It wants traction.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: And action.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Traction and action. I must give credit to the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox for the second part. The people want traction and action, no matter who is in power. The North West Rail Link initiative is part of a broader solution. There is a backlog in asset and maintenance infrastructure across New South Wales in the order of some \$8 billion. Currently New South Wales has two million people who are over the age of 65 and by 2050 the State will have more than seven million people in that age category, which

represents five million more people. We need to be smart with our bulk carriers and make sure they go north, south, east and west along major arteries. I applaud the motion for the reasons I have mentioned, but we are a long way from where the people expect us to be.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (Parliamentary Secretary) [12.55 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I support the very important motion moved by the Hon. Marie Ficarra, but I will not be speaking with the evangelical zeal of the Hon. David Clarke, who gave a great presentation. I do not think I have seen a better demolition job of Labor members. The utter rank hypocrisy of members opposite in view of the absolute disaster they were for the past 16 years is breath-taking. However, I will reflect on a couple of points mentioned by Labor members that I thought were rather telling. I could not help but be somewhat amused by the Hon. Lynda Voltz trotting out a range of new instruments to display to the House. I was particularly interested in the Waratah "buns". No doubt they will be a very innovative idea for the New South Wales Opposition going forward. I am not sure how it all works but in the debate of the Restart NSW Fund Bill we saw that the financial literacy of the Australian Labor Party leaves something to be desired. I understand there are plenty of half-baked ideas coming from the other side. Certainly the dough they are looking for is not what one finds in an oven; it is dollars required to invest in infrastructure over time.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Show us your submission.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Let us talk about submissions. It is very instructive to note, and I remember it well, when "Albo the Good" came to the people of New South Wales with the Prime Minister during the last Federal election campaign and made it very clear, on a moment's notice, that the Federal Government would provide \$2.1 billion for the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link.

The Hon. Marie Ficarra: Tweet.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Tweet, tweet. We were all rather bemused at the time. All of a sudden, out of the blue, \$2.1 billion comes along for an infrastructure project that happened to be in a marginal seat in the Federal election campaign. We were quite aghast that suddenly \$2.1 billion could be pulled out of the air to fund this project. Interestingly, the first part of that project, the Epping to Chatswood Rail Link, was one the former Government did fund—and I give them credit for that. But the cost of that rail link was double the projected cost estimate, and the time taken to build it was double the projected time estimate. Out of the blue, in the middle of an election campaign, "Albo the Good" and the Prime Minister turned up to say they would provide \$2.1 billion for the extension of that important rail link.

Let us have a look at the basis put forward for the funding of \$2.1 billion. No doubt the former Parliamentary Secretary will remember the estimate hearings that took place when members delved deeply into the documentation to justify the investment of \$2.1 billion. As we started to work through the timing of the announcement with Treasury officials, the Transport officials and the Minister responsible at the time, we found that they had been advised of the announcement the day before. They heard of the Prime Minister coming to talk about the most important transport infrastructure project only the day before. We said, "So you found out the day before? How did you find out?" They said, "Well, we got a call from the Premier's office." We then asked, "How did the Premier's Office find out?" They said they had got a call the night before from the Prime Minister's Office saying, "We want to come to Sydney. We want to announce \$2.1 billion for a project we have no information on. We have got no projections, no business case, no financial case, but we are going to do it because the reality is we have got to make sure we put a project in place to save our skins in western Sydney." That is what it was about—no more, no less. That is the record of the Labor Government in relation to any transport project. It not only happens at a Federal level, but also at a State level. We have seen that time and again.

[The Temporary Chair (the Hon. Helen Westwood) left the chair at 1.00 p.m. The House resumed at 2.00 p.m.]

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted at 2.00 p.m. for questions.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I inform the House that in the absence of the Hon. Michael Gallacher I will be representing the Premier; the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice; the Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast; the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research; the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western

New South Wales; the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; the Minister for Sport and Recreation; the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts; the Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services; the Minister for Transport; the Minister for Education; and the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

NEWCASTLE GAS STORAGE FACILITY

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Finance and Services. Does the Government share Hunter Water's concerns regarding the threats to the lower Hunter's drinking water supply if the Newcastle gas storage facility project is approved?

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: That is a good question from the Leader of the Opposition. Five months in, and we get a good question from the Leader of the Opposition. I think I have mentioned previously that one of the first things I did when I was sworn in as a Minister was—

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Turn off the tap.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Boom, boom. One of the first things I did was visit WorkCover in Gosford, which is one of my areas of responsibility, and visit Hunter Water in Newcastle.

The Hon. Luke Foley: You're just padding until the bloke finds the answer for you.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: No, this is the answer. I visited Hunter Water because prior to the election the previous Government had spent an enormous amount of money on developing plans for Tillegra Dam. We considered the issue and took advice; we were opposed to Tillegra Dam. The previous Government, in its death throes while trying to hold on to its heartland in Newcastle and the Hunter, finally got around to cancelling the Tillegra Dam proposal. That proposal was a significant issue for the Hunter, so I was keen to visit Hunter Water to talk about the water supply for the lower Hunter region in particular. Hunter Water is concerned that its dams are relatively shallow.

The Hon. Robert Brown: Unlike Tillegra would have been.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Tillegra Dam would have been a nice deep dam.

Dr John Kaye: This is nonsense; most of their water comes from aquifers.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I am simply telling members that Hunter Water is concerned—

The Hon. Luke Foley: Don't give him the answer, John—he doesn't have a clue.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Dr John Kaye has a significant interest in this matter. In the next day or two I will happily give him some documents, and he will have an opportunity to spend days and days wading through them. He will discover that all the information is already on the public record. Currently I am considering how we move forward on water planning for the Hunter. I look forward shortly to being in a position—Dr John Kaye and I have not yet had this conversation but we want to do so—to announce how we will move forward on planning for the future water supply in the lower Hunter. I look forward to making that announcement in due course. I also look forward to a great many more questions on this issue when Dr John Kaye gets many boxes of documents.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer with particular reference to the concerns expressed by Hunter Water regarding this project?

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I am pleased to elucidate my answer because I am talking about the broader question of water planning in the lower Hunter and consideration of all the relevant issues going into the future. As I said, it has been a great pleasure to have a good question from the Leader of the Opposition and to provide a clear and direct answer.

ILLAWARRA AND SOUTH COAST COMMUNITY CABINET

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: My question is directed to the Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's recent community Cabinet meeting in the Illawarra?

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: That is a good question. Indeed, that is two good questions consecutively. It is a pleasure to report on the success of the Government's recent community Cabinet meeting held in the Illawarra-South Coast, which I hosted as the Minister for the Illawarra. Members keep asking me what I do as the Minister for the Illawarra. I hosted a Cabinet meeting there. The Illawarra and South Coast Community Cabinet meeting was held on 15 August. Approximately 300 people attended the public forum, which was held in the evening, and approximately 100 community group meetings were arranged with Ministers. These were one-on-one meetings. At the beginning of the public forum a local year 7 student, Rachel Murray, gave a very good speech on the topic of leadership.

The Cabinet meeting was a first-hand opportunity to meet local members of the community and address the concerns of the stakeholders in the Illawarra region with my fellow ministerial and parliamentary colleagues. I had the pleasure of meeting with representatives from the Shoalhaven Business Chamber of Commerce, the Kiama and District Historical Society, the Illawarra Community Housing Trust, RDA Illawarra and the KidzWish Foundation, as well as the Urban Development Institute, to discuss regional economic growth, heritage and urban development. Many of these community and business groups reminded me of how rare it was to have such access to Cabinet. They never had such an opportunity under the former Labor Government, mainly because the last Government took the Illawarra region for granted.

The Illawarra and South Coast Community Cabinet provided an opportunity for local groups to meet and raise matters of importance to them, their families and their community. In particular, the Shoalhaven Business Chamber is an example of an organisation consisting of members from business, government, education and not-for-profit sectors who are keen to develop sustainable growth in the region. In total, the Shoalhaven Business Chamber represents 1,000 members and acts as a key interface between business and government across the Illawarra region. I was also pleased to meet the KidzWish Foundation in the Illawarra. KidzWish is a non-profit charity that is self-funded through the generosity of individuals and businesses. KidzWish provides support for sick, disabled and disadvantaged children and their families.

Some of the services it provides are the KidzWish Therapy Program, which commenced in February 2010. The program provides therapy—speech, physiotherapy and occupational therapy—for eligible children. The Love and Laughter Program assists with supportive, educational and beneficial equipment and services. Examples of equipment or services provided are wheelchairs, standing frames, home modifications, swimming lessons and medication. The Music and Dance Program is a weekly class aimed to help improve health while assisting children's motor skills and communication. I am sure the Hon. Eric Roozendaal would enjoy participating in one of those weekly programs. Our recent community Cabinet meeting has reinforced the Government's resolve to promote investment in the Illawarra and the South Coast. The Government has worked, and will continue to work, with community groups in order to promote long-term investment into the region.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Don't improvise your lines; get your staff to write them.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I simply thought I should mention that to the Hon. Eric Roozendaal. Unlike the Labor Party, this Government is devoted to achieving economic growth and prosperity in the Illawarra and South Coast.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: You should role play.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I am coming to the Hon. Eric Roozendaal. While the former Minister for the Illawarra, the Hon. Eric Roozendaal, concerned himself with massively devaluing the State's electricity assets—and giving the Coalition a much larger win at the State election than we ever expected—and consistently neglected to hear the concerns of the people of the Illawarra, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals will continue to engage with community groups and voice their concerns.

GREY NURSE SHARK PROTECTION

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Primary Industries. On 29 April this year the Minister for Primary Industries

announced a revocation of the recreational fishing closures introduced at Fish Rock and Green Island in January with the excuse that it was so that the Government could "put the closures back out to public consultation for a further three months". As today is the last day of the three-month consultation process for the grey nurse shark discussion paper and given that divers, me included, have seen grey nurse sharks at Fish Rock with fresh hooks in their mouths in recent weeks and months, will the Government reinstate the fishing closures at Fish Rock and Green Island to protect these critically endangered species while it is assessing submissions and finalising a report, knowing that this process is likely to take many months?

The Hon. Melinda Pavey: Did you see the fishhook, Cate?

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes. There's a photo.

The Hon. Luke Foley: Of Cate—she's more over the top than Gladys with the photo shoots.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I have to defend both the ladies; I thought they were both good shots. I thought the Hon. Cate Faehrmann's was a great action shot and the shot of my friend and colleague Gladys Berekikian was just outstanding. It still had no effect on our colleagues from other parties yesterday, mind you, but we will work on that. The member mentioned that we made an excuse—

The Hon. Cate Faehrmann: No, I didn't.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Hon. Cate Faehrmann said that in her question; she called it an "excuse".

The Hon. Cate Faehrmann: Yes, I did.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: This is not an excuse; it was a definitive election policy. We were quite clear in the lead-up to the election that we were going to proceed in this way. There is mixed use at Fish Rock: the Hon. Cate Faehrmann is a diver at Fish Rock, as is one of my colleagues, and other members of this House fish there. That is quite appropriate. It is about coming up with a sensible option that addresses the issue of protecting the grey nurse sharks but not unnecessarily stopping fishing. That is what we are about, because the former regime—

The Hon. Steve Whan: After months of consultation.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: They talked in the office for three days, they passed a letter around the desk in the office, and they said "Steve, are you great, do we want to do this? How many votes are we going to pick up in Leichhardt?" and then they made the decision. That is what it was about. It was not about the environment; it was about The Greens inner-city preferences. We are putting in place a proper review that allows the community to contribute to the debate. I am obviously no longer the shadow Minister. I acknowledge the dates in the question from the member and I will refer the matter to the Minister for Private Industries for a detailed, appropriate and, I am sure, very sensible response.

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND TRANSPORT WORKERS

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports in that capacity or representing the Minister for Transport. Now that the House has passed the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 in an amended form that secures the salaries, conditions and other employment rights of public sector transport workers, will the Government commit to supporting these workers and support the amended bill in the other place?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Our commitment in the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 was to look after the rights of workers in the integrated transport authority. The amendments moved yesterday denigrate their rights and the ability to deliver to the people of New South Wales. In a push to satisfy their friends from the union—and some of my friends from the union also—and under the guise of saying that they wanted to restore workers' existing rights—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: The Minister is canvassing a decision of this House.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Why did you ask a question on it?

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: The question is about what you are going to do; it is very clear.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I will await the ruling.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Given the nature of the question, obviously difficulties arise. However, the Minister should be mindful of the standing orders in his response to the question.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Thank you, Mr President. I will abide by your ruling, but the concern is the bill that is now before the lower House. I cannot talk about that bill without talking also about the changes that were made in this place yesterday.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Just tell us whether you are going to support the bill.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: In the context of those changes, we will develop our strategy as we see fit.

The Hon. Adam Searle: They've got no idea. They don't know what to do—no ideas, no plans.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Dear me, we are being told by the prince of darkness that we have no idea. I am not going to disclose my strategy to The Greens driven Opposition. The fact is that we passed a bill of State significance yesterday that is a huge step forward and reflects what we took to the people—

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: The question was very straightforward and direct. Will the Minister support the workers by supporting the bill in the other place—yes or no?

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

Mr David Shoebridge: There is no answer either.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: They do not like the answer. They are getting a few home truths. We developed legislation to take this State forward when they could not. Those opposite were at it for more than a decade. They put out the glossies, they issued the press releases and they did not do it. We took the time to put a plan together. At the end of the day, it is important to note that, despite the fact that those opposite are climbing all over each other to get the rivers of gold from the unions, they supported our legislation because they know it is good legislation. We accepted the amendments, although we believe they will make the operation of this organisation messier than it should be. Up to 14 different awards will operate in the one space. We are trying to deliver better services to the people of New South Wales, so it could be better. Even though those opposite have made the bill worse, it is still a damn good bill and a huge step forward for the people of New South Wales. I suspect it will be passed in the lower House, but frankly I do not know because I have not spoken to anyone. We have not had a meeting about that today. [*Time expired.*]

THORNTON RAIL BRIDGE

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Will the Minister please update the House on progress towards construction of the Thornton rail bridge?

The Hon. Mick Veitch: You are his Parliamentary Secretary and you don't know?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Mr President, I assure you that this is probably a question without notice. The Hon. John Ajaka has been very busy in other parts of the State and, being the good Parliamentary Secretary he is, he likes to be up to speed on everything. This document passed across his desk and he wants everyone to know about it. I appreciate the question. I am pleased to advise that the contract for the construction of a new two-lane bridge over the railway line at Thornton has been awarded to Seymore Whyte Constructions Pty Ltd. The contract was awarded on 29 July 2011, and is yet another example of how the New South Wales Government is committed to getting this State moving. We understand the need to get projects started to bring life back to forgotten communities—communities such as the Hunter, where there was a huge swing to the Coalition, seeing the election of new members like Robyn Parker in Maitland, Andrew Cornwell in Charlestown, Tim Owen in Newcastle and Barry Edwards in Swansea. Members opposite hate hearing this. The \$16 million project is being funded by the New South Wales Government.

The Hon. Peter Primrose: Where's she been?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: She has been working to get projects like this in her electorate. She has been working hard—working tirelessly, 24 hours a day—to look after the people of Maitland because Labor failed them for 16 years. The previous narrow bridge over the Thornton rail line was in a state of disrepair and it was difficult for residents to navigate, and no Labor member did anything about it. As a key connection from Thornton to the New England Highway, it was vital to provide a working link for people in the Hunter region. Maitland City Council initiated the design and planning for the construction of a four-lane road over the rail bridge on Thornton Road in Thornton, which is a local road near Newcastle. I say that because no Labor members would know that—Sussex Street is the furthest west most of them get.

The project has been included in the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's draft Lower Hunter Special Infrastructure Contributions Scheme. Works currently underway include the collection of Aboriginal artefacts and preconstruction condition surveys of local properties. Construction works are expected to start in September 2011, with the first activities, including earthworks for the road approaches to the bridge and concrete piling for the bridge foundations. The new bridge will be a 52-metre pre-stressed, pre-tensioned concrete plank bridge with anti-projectile screens and parapets and a shared pedestrian cycleway. It will provide wider travel lanes and pathways than the existing bridge and provide a safe crossing for cyclists and pedestrians. I acknowledge the hard work of the local member, Robyn Parker, who has worked diligently to secure this project—something that former Labor members were not able to do. Areas of Maitland such as Thornton have become residential hubs in the Hunter region. With increasing numbers of people choosing to live in the Hunter region, traffic congestion has become an issue. The construction of this new bridge will ease traffic congestion. [*Time expired.*]

SHOALHAVEN CANCER CARE CENTRE

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: In light of Daffodil Day, I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services who represents the Minister for Health. The national average of cancer patients who benefit from radiation therapy is around 51 per cent. However, in the Shoalhaven the figure is as low as 27 per cent. Given these findings, can the Minister confirm that the \$10 million allocated for the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre is not at risk in the upcoming September State budget?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the honourable member for this important question. I know all members have been supportive of Daffodil Day—or if they have not yet, I know they will be.

The Hon. Steve Whan: Have you? Where is your badge?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I have not bought one yet. It is a good reminder to me that I need to—as, I suspect, do some of the member's colleagues.

The Hon. Luke Foley: Don't respond to interjections. That is your problem.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I think it is good to acknowledge that the Hon. Steve Whan has spent some money to help that cause—as have the majority of my colleagues. He deserves recognition for that. It appears that, like me, some I will not name have not yet purchased a badge or do not have it with them. We will do so. I announced yesterday the lighting in yellow of the pylon on the Sydney Harbour Bridge in recognition of Daffodil Day. The lower rates of cancer in Shoalhaven were interesting.

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham: How interesting?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It might not be interesting to the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham, but it is interesting to many others. The question was directed to the Minister for Health and involved detail with respect to funding. I will obtain an answer—I suspect after the budget.

TRANSPORT EMPLOYEE-RELATED COSTS

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My question is directed to the Minister for Finance and Services, representing the Treasurer. Will the savings from employee-related costs proposed in the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill still be included in the budget papers?

The Hon. Rick Colless: Find out on the sixth, Penny.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: The Deputy Government Whip knows the answer to that question: The Hon. Penny Sharpe will find out on 6 September.

WIN STADIUM

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra. Will the Minister update the House on the current status of the redevelopment of WIN Stadium?

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I thank the member for her very important question. I inform members that, as a long-time supporter of the St George Illawarra Dragons, this is an issue that is very close to my heart.

The Hon. Eric Roozendaal: How did you go with the Roosters?

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Eric, you've got to have one win in life. The upgrade to the western grandstand at WIN Stadium will boost the stadium's capacity to 22,860 seats. The project involves the demolition of the existing western grandstand, refurbishment of the southern grandstand to accommodate amenities and the construction of a new western grandstand. Recent news reports have questioned the level of local content, in particular local steel, in the construction of the grandstand. I can confirm to the House that there is no Illawarra steel used in this construction. Instead, 60 per cent of the steel was sourced from Victoria and 40 per cent from China. This is hardly surprising considering that there was no condition in the tender for local content. Members opposite have been screaming about loss of jobs in the steel industry in Illawarra but they might not be aware that the contract for the grandstand's construction was signed in September 2010 by none other than former Premier Kristina Keneally—Crikey to her friends. They issued the tender and they set out the parameters. Members might be interested to note also that on Monday Unions NSW issued a media release attacking the Government on its alleged lack of support for local purchases.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is far too much interjection in the Chamber.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Their criticism would of course be best targeted at those in the previous Government who signed up to a deal where 60 per cent of the steel used in Wollongong was Victorian and 40 per cent of it was Chinese.

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham: Shenhua.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Even Shenhua would not have signed up to that sort of a deal. The New South Wales Government is committed to the Illawarra, and we fully support local jobs and industries. We have contributed to the \$30 million Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund, and the local Jobs First Plan is ongoing to assist small and medium enterprises to do business with government and to give workers jobs. This is in addition to other policies to drive investment in the local economy, including the Jobs Action Plan, the empty-nesters and abolition of Labor's homebuyers tax, and the regional relocation grants, which the Government introduced in its first 100 days.

This week I have spoken about some issues concerning procurement in this State under the previous Government. The report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption was very clear that business perceptions of corruption in New South Wales procurement by the former New South Wales Labor Government were influencing decisions to undertake government contracts and forcing businesses to move interstate. Unlike Labor, we are taking action. That is why we have initiated a wide-ranging review to address this issue. In regard to WIN Stadium, let us be clear: Any issues members have about the content of steel in the construction of WIN Stadium need to be directed to the former Labor Government, including the likes of the Hon. Eric Roozendaal, Noreen Hay and the Hon. Steve Whan.

ALUMINIUM SMELTERS

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Energy and Resources, and it relates to the electricity supply contracts for the State's aluminium smelters. What steps has the O'Farrell Government taken to ensure that the existing contract for Tomago and the contract for Kurri Kurri that is currently under negotiation do not deliver windfall profits for smelter owners as a result of the so-called carbon price compensation provided to smelters?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: This question highlights some of the problems of the former Government. This is not about excess profits; it is about job losses, particularly at Kurri Kurri as a result of destabilisation caused at the time of the desperate power sale in this State. Whilst this Government thanks the Hon. Eric

Roozendaal for government, the people of the Hunter, particularly in the Kurri Kurri region, do not thank him. The former Government deliberately stopped the signing of a contract. That destabilised the company and the result is the loss of hundreds of jobs. The Greens do not like jobs in this State; they are against everything. The situation at Kurri Kurri is completely the opposite of what has been suggested by Dr John Kaye.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by pointing out where he came anywhere within a country mile of the question I asked, which was what the Government is currently doing.

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: Point of order: The supplementary question is argumentative and is out of order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will not strike out the question on the grounds that the phrase "a country mile" is argumentative.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: There is a difference between answering a question and liking an answer. I answered the question. Dr John Kaye did not like my answer.

GRAIN HAULAGE

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Has the Minister met with local councils in the central west and the south west of the State and listened to their concerns about the impact of Grain Corp's application to increase tonnage limits for grain at Port Kembla on their regional road networks?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the Hon. Mick Veitch for asking a good question about an issue that is important to local government and people in the country. The short answer is that I have not met with councils in the south west and the central west about this issue but I know that it is a lingering problem from the days of the former Government, which had a lack of determination on grain slides. It failed to deliver any solid outcomes on proper modes of transport. The problem is that the former Government put more grain onto trucks that travel on country roads, and that puts families driving on those roads at risk. Yesterday we passed the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, which related to the integrated transport authority—

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Which we amended.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Those amendments were the low point of the bill, and they have tended to make it unworkable because the workers were already protected. The key part of that bill is an integrated transport authority that brings the people out of their silos—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Grain silos?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: "Silos" is quite appropriate in this particular instance. The key area is freight and regional development.

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham: It is coal.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Greens are preoccupied with the notion that people should not make a quid in this State. They almost spit when they hear the word "coal" in relation to some freight lines. Coal, wheat, wool, fibre and sorghum are all important for the State. Through this bill the Government has been able to free-up the supply chain. The key is to restore rail access particularly into Port Botany after Joe Tripodi, the Hon. Eric Roozendaal and others wanted it running at 40 per cent. Currently it is at approximately 16 per cent and falling. In its first few months in office the Government has been preoccupied with introducing legislation, but as soon as I am able I will happily meet with the Hon. Mick Veitch and those councils. I know that the councils think highly of the Hon. Mick Veitch—and for good reason; he looks after them. I am more than happy to meet with all the local members—perhaps not Alby Schultz—and others about this.

SERGEANT MATTHEW LOCKE BRIDGE

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Will the Minister please update the House on new signage to honour the late Sergeant Matthew Locke at Mailman's Track near Bellingen?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I have the honour to announce that the Sergeant Matthew Locke Bridge at Mailman's Track near Bellingen now displays signs allowing his name to be visible to millions of Australians who travel the Pacific Highway each year. The new signs were erected on 17 August. The bridge itself, over the Bonville upgrade on the Pacific Highway, was named in honour of Sergeant Locke in June 2009. I am most pleased that we have put the final touches to this tribute with the erection of new signs.

Serving with the Special Air Service, Sergeant Locke made the ultimate sacrifice for his country when on patrol in southern Afghanistan he was fatally wounded by small arms fire from Taliban extremists in October 2007. Sergeant Locke grew up in Bellingen, and his parents and a number of other family members still live there. The naming of this bridge in his honour is a fitting tribute to his distinguished service record and career.

At the time of Sergeant Locke's passing, the Australian Defence Force released some of the following information of his remarkable military career. Matthew Locke enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in June 1991. At the completion of his initial employment training, he was posted to the 5th/7th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. Matthew had a flair for infantry training and, whilst at the 5th/7th Battalion, he completed driver courses, a mortar course and became a small arms coach. It was obvious that Matthew wanted to be challenged as a soldier and in November 1997 he successfully completed the special air service course. Over the next two years, he completed another 15 specialist courses ranging from patrolling, demolitions, diving, parachuting and medical. Matthew was posted to the Third Special Air Service Squadron. In December 2006, Sergeant Locke was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions whilst deployed on Operation Slipper in Afghanistan in 2006. My understanding is that that medal is ranked third among the decorations for gallantry in the Australian honours system. The Hon. Charlie Lynn has advised that recipients of the medal are entitled to use the post nominal letters, MG. An extract from Matthew's medal citation reads:

Sergeant Locke's actions of gallantry whilst under enemy fire in extremely hazardous circumstances displayed courage of the highest order and is in keeping with the finest traditions of Special Operations Command-Australia, the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Sergeant Locke was also the recipient of the Australian Active Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Australian Defence Medal, the United Nations Medal with the UN Transitional Authority East Timor Ribbon and the International Coalition Against Terrorism Clasp to the Australian Active Service Medal, just to mention a few. My thanks go to the Locke family for driving this worthy initiative along with the Bellingen community and shire council, not to mention the Australian Army and Returned Services Leagues of Australia. The member for Coffs Harbour, Andrew Fraser, was also a great supporter of this initiative. [*Time expired.*]

SYDNEY HARBOUR RECREATIONAL FISHING HAVEN

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Primary Industries. Given that commercial fishing has been banned in Sydney Harbour for a number of years now, and given the remarkable increase in the biodiversity in the harbour, will the Minister move immediately to declare Sydney Harbour and its estuaries a recreational fishing haven?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the honourable member for his question about Sydney Harbour being a recreational fishing haven. At one stage I was aware of the figures on rejuvenation of the harbour, but currently I am not. As members would remember, I was complimentary of the previous Government—one of the few times I was complimentary of it—for its efforts to improve Sydney Harbour over the years. I was a rower on Sydney Harbour in the early 1960s, when Sydney Harbour was a pretty horrendous place. Whilst rowing up the Parramatta River near Union Carbide and Clyde I noticed that on some days the water was luminous: it was just horrendous. In the interim, the efforts of a combination of governments have made a hell of a difference. Whilst I am critical of the 16-year hiatus under the previous Government, some of the work to clean up the harbour done by Maritime, Fisheries and others should be commended. I understand that one can catch but not eat fish caught west of the bridge. But the question was not about that; it was about a recreational fishing haven. It is a fair question, and I will refer it to my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries.

SHOOTERS AND FISHERS PARTY MEMBERS

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Acting Leader of the Government, the Hon. Duncan Gay. Does the Acting Leader of the Government endorse the Premier's scathing attack earlier today on the integrity of the Hon. Robert Brown and the Hon. Robert Borsak?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: While it is not my norm to analyse questions, there are several things wrong with this one. First of all, I am not the Acting Leader of the Government; I am the Deputy Leader of the Government.

Dr John Kaye: Point of order: The Minister has shown clearly that he is about to debate the question. That is not his role. His role is to answer the question.

The Hon. Luke Foley: To the Point of order: If the Hon. Duncan Gay is correct and he is not the Acting Leader of the Government, then the Government is officially leaderless.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister is aware of the standing orders relating to debating a question. On the other hand, the Minister needs to give a relevant answer. In terms of the question asked, the Minister was in order.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is always my intention to give a relevant answer. If I were looking for a proper critique and reporting on the Premier's comments, I suspect the last person I would turn to would be the Leader of the Opposition. I could not imagine that the Premier would use terse terms of that calibre. Whilst there is normally a lot of love between members, at the moment there is not quite as much love between some, but a lot of love between others. Members opposite cannot be satisfied: they howl because they consider we have a special friendship with some members on the crossbench, but the next day, for whatever reason, they howl that something is wrong in our relationship because the Premier has said something. There is no way of satisfying Opposition members. I remember the over-the-top attitude taken by them when the Government made amendments to the Hon. Robert Brown's bill to bring it into line with our election promise that there would be a moratorium on marine parks. Suddenly it was said by those opposite that we had sold our souls, we had sold out to the Shooters. Opposition members did not bother to think, "Maybe that's what they took to the people of New South Wales and have amended the bill to reflect that." No, once again, they went over the top, just as I suspect the comments of the Leader of the Opposition are over the top. My relationship with members of the Shooters and Fishers Party, as it is with everyone in the House, is always as good as I can possibly make it. There is the odd moment when we might have a terse word, but those moments never last long.

TELOPEA URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Services. Will the Minister update the House on the Housing NSW Telopea Urban Renewal Project?

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I thank the honourable member for her question and commend her for her interest in this area. The Government is committed to overhauling public housing estates in New South Wales. The days of the old social housing estates are over because they do not work. What does work is the creation of communities where there is a mix of both social housing and private residents. The Telopea public housing estate is an example of this. The issues at Telopea are so important that I decided to go there myself. Last week I attended the Telopea site with my colleague Dr Geoff Lee, the member for Parramatta. Geoff Lee listened to the people of Parramatta and they voted overwhelmingly for him—they voted him in with a swing of 25.8 per cent. That is almost as much as the entire support for Labor in the last New South Wales election, and currently for Prime Minister Julia Gillard, at 27 per cent. Geoff Lee got a swing of 25.8 per cent.

So I went to Telopea to see for myself. This site is in dire need of redevelopment. It needs to be properly managed with the benefit of genuine community consultation. Geoff Lee has been very active in this area, and rightly so. Residents are concerned to ensure their voices are actually heard in this process; that they are not just told after the fact, as they were when the mob opposite were in power. Residents are concerned about parking, the provision of adequate social services, public transport, and integration of private and public housing residents. I welcome the input from the community. We need to work through these issues and get this project right to avoid repeating the mistakes of the previous Labor Government. Actually listening to the views of the people in the area is a great first step.

The Telopea public housing estate primarily houses elderly residents, yet most of its 530 units are without appropriate access and other facilities for older people. Further, a high percentage of bed-sitter units are often under-occupied due to poor amenity and access. Consequently these units are hard to let and, being older and outdated, carry high maintenance and repair cost imposts. Under the proposed renewal project, 381 social housing units will be demolished and replaced with new housing aligned with current and future resident needs. The total number of social housing units will remain the same—530. There will be no reduction in the amount of social housing.

The remainder of the precinct will be developed in partnership with the private and community housing sectors for private and affordable housing. It is projected this will yield approximately 1,370 private and affordable housing units. Thus the concentration of social housing will be reduced to around 30 per cent. Construction of stage 1, comprising 152 new social housing units, is scheduled for completion in early 2012. I have asked the department to work with the local member to develop a genuine consultation model for local residents and stakeholders.

BLUESCOPE STEEL PORT KEMBLA OPERATIONS

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question is directed to the Minister for Finance and Services, and Minister for the Illawarra. I note that on Tuesday this week, instead of contacting the ABC Illawarra news desk directly and exposing himself to questions on the important issue of the State Government's response to job losses at BlueScope Steel, the Minister instead emailed a pre-packaged audio grab to the studio—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: Question time is about questions not statements. This is a statement without a question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is long-standing practice that some preamble to a question is allowed to enable the question to be intelligible and authenticated. The member's time to ask the question has expired; however, I will allow him to ask his question and remind him that the preamble to the question should not take any more than half the time that it would take a member to ask a complete question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Minister instead emailed a pre-packaged audio grab to the studio. Will the Minister commit not to continue this unhealthy practice of avoiding questioning when making statements to the radio media?

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: Radio station ABC Illawarra is a sensational radio station and provides important relevant and up-to-date information to the people of the Illawarra. One of the characteristics of radio station ABC Illawarra is that it never broadcasts anything from David Shoebridge. However, the station often rings me for grabs or to request an interview. On Tuesday morning ABC Illawarra rang my office when I was in a meeting. Nick McLaren, an excellent journalist on ABC Illawarra, indicated to my staff that he would like to speak to me. When my staff told him I was in a meeting that I could not leave, he was offered the alternative of some media grabs. Nick indicated that he was happy to take the grabs. Why did I do some grabs in advance? Tuesday morning was the day after BlueScope Steel's announcement in the Illawarra. I had actually gone to the trouble of making sure that I had some comments available because I knew I was going to be locked up in a meeting. The Government takes the loss of jobs in the Illawarra seriously. I did not go to the radio station, because I was negotiating with the Federal Government and BlueScope to make sure that we put in place a \$30 million package straight away to offer assistance in the Illawarra. I did not spend my time running around gloating at the misfortune of these people. And what did I say? I will read the grabs that I recorded. The first was:

The O'Farrell Government is determined to stand with the people of the Illawarra by contributing to a fund to help the region through the shock following BlueScope Steel's announcement. We're concerned for the workers, their families, and the hundreds of others who rely on the steel works for their jobs. That's why the Federal & State Governments have created the \$30 million Illawarra Region Innovation & Investment Fund to help secure the region's future. Over coming weeks and months, the O'Farrell Government will work with the Federal & Local Government, business groups, the University of Wollongong, education providers, and people affected by BlueScope's decision to rebuild new job opportunities in the Illawarra. We also have our Jobs Action Plan, which will encourage eligible business to take on new staff by providing a payroll tax rebate, and we have a number of assistance lines which people are encouraged to ring.

That is what I said. And what did the shadow Minister for Fair Trading say? Nothing. What did Mr David Shoebridge say? Nothing.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Would the Minister elucidate his answer by confirming that he will not adopt this practice in further media announcements and will expose himself to questioning?

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Big Brother.

Mr David Shoebridge: It is not Big Brother, it is about exposing himself to questioning.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I am always happy to expose myself to questioning.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Does the Deputy Whip wish to take a point of order?

The Hon. Rick Colless: Point of order: The question was completely new and is out of order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It was a new question. It did not ask for elucidation of an aspect of the Minister's answer and it was out of order.

SPEED CAMERAS

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Given there was a serious six-car accident on Warringah Road last Sunday, not far from the speed camera that was switched off following the Government's speed camera audit, will the Minister review the removal of this speed camera?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the member opposite for her question. It is disappointing that members would use an accident like this to make a political point.

The Hon. Steve Whan: Point of order: The Minister's start to his answer has reflected on the motivation of a member of this House and that is inappropriate. Clearly the question does not try to make a political point. It is a serious question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister did not identify the member who asked the question. However, I ask the Minister to be careful not to transgress the standing orders by reflecting on a member of the House.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: As I indicated, this was a serious accident and no-one is happy about it. Sadly, a number of people were injured in an accident that involved a number of vehicles, and it is the subject of a police investigation. I can indicate that, in relation to the particular camera that the member is referring to, 19 injuries were reported in the three years prior to the speed camera's installation, and 27 injuries were reported in the three years after it was installed. In his report, the Auditor-General found that this speed camera had no proven road safety benefit and for that reason it was switched off. In locations where a camera has been found to have no proven road safety benefit, I have asked the Roads and Traffic Authority to investigate alternative methods to improve road safety. I have asked the Roads and Traffic Authority to look at this particular section of road to determine how to reduce accidents at the site. It is obvious from those records that the speed camera had no effect at this site. A large number of accidents took place before the speed camera was installed and an even larger number took place after its installation. An accident has happened since then, and I express my sympathy to those who were involved in that serious accident. The Government is currently looking for better and different ways to reduce accidents in this area. A speed camera is not being put back there, certainly not in the short term.

HEAVY VEHICLE REST AREAS

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I address my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of the New South Wales Government's strategy for heavy vehicle rest areas on key rural freight routes?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I apologise. I did not hear the question because the Clerk was consulting me on an issue. I ask the member to repeat the question or hand me a copy of it lest I am required to rule on any points of order that may be taken to it.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: As time for questions has expired, and if the member is content to do this, I will postpone answering his question. If members have further questions, they should place them on notice.

Questions without notice concluded.

GRAFFITI LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2011

The PRESIDENT: I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:

MR PRESIDENT

The Legislative Assembly, having considered the message dated 25 August 2011 in which the Legislative Council requested the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly with amendments to the Graffiti Legislation Amendment Bill, informs the Legislative Council that the Legislative Assembly disagrees with the proposed amendments because:

1. The amendments would allow first time young offenders to avoid going before a court. This is inconsistent with the NSW Liberals and Nationals election commitment to ensure that juvenile graffiti offenders be brought before the court.
2. The amendments would remove sanctions on drivers licences, which would undermine one of the key purposes of the Bill, which is to provide increased sentencing options for courts that reflect the serious nature of the offence.
3. The amendments seek to trivialise what the community regards as a very serious issue. Requiring juveniles to appear before a court and increasing sentencing options in relation to graffiti offences constitute essential components of the Government's approach to combating graffiti which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the community at the 26 March 2011 election.

Consideration of message set down as an order of the day for a future day.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 6 September 2011 at 2.30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Ports) [3.05 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST PROHIBITION AUSTRALIA

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO [3.05 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about an organisation that provides a realistic approach to drug law reform. Law Enforcement Against Prohibition [LEAP] Australia was formed in late 2010 by a small group of current and retired law enforcement officers who know that current drug policies in Australia, and internationally, are not working and are impacting on society as a whole. Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia is focused on educating the public and policymakers on the harms that current policies are causing and it is heightening the awareness of alternate ways in which to deal with drug abuse and organised crime. All members of the Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia Board possess extensive drug and alcohol sector experience.

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia does not promote the use of drugs and is deeply concerned about the extent of drug abuse worldwide. It is concerned also about the destructive impact of violent drug gangs and cartels everywhere in the world. Neither problem is remedied by the current policy of drug prohibition. Drug abuse and gang violence flourish in a drug-prohibition environment, just as they did during alcohol prohibition. Law Enforcement Against Prohibition advocates the elimination of the policy of drug prohibition and its replacement by regulated policies based around appropriate restrictions on drug sales.

Drug abuse is a health problem, and drug use should be regulated and subject to restrictions that are similar to those currently applying to alcohol and tobacco. Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia recognises that even in a post-prohibition world, all drugs can cause harm and create a potential for addiction, and that this requires appropriate regulation and control. The group believes that all persons suffering from drug abuse afflictions and addiction should be provided with a variety of help, including safe usage education, drug treatment and drug maintenance programs.

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia will support independent research to demonstrate that an end to drug prohibition will control criminal justice expenditures, reduce disease and uptake, and that a fraction of those savings would be more than sufficient to pay for expanded addiction services. Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia believes that adult drug use, however dangerous, is a matter of

personal freedom as long as it does not impinge on the freedom or safety of others. Adult drug abuse is a health problem and not a law-enforcement matter, provided that the abuse does not harm other people or the property of others. Patrons of Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia include the Hon. Michael Kirby, AC, KCMG, Dr Alex Wodak, AM, Director, Alcohol and Drug Service, St. Vincent's Hospital, Bernadette McSherry and Nicholas Cowdrey, QC. On 16 June 2011, the fortieth anniversary of President Richard Nixon's "war on drugs", former President Jimmy Carter, who was the 2002 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, commented in the *New York Times*:

In an extraordinary new initiative announced earlier this month, the Global Commission on Drug Policy has made some courageous and profoundly important recommendations in a report on how to bring more effective control over the illicit drug trade. The commission includes the former presidents or prime ministers of five countries, a former secretary general of the United Nations, human rights leaders, and business and government leaders, including Richard Branson, George P. Shultz and Paul A. Volcker.

The report describes the total failure of the present global antidrug effort, and in particular America's "war on drugs", which was declared 40 years ago today. It notes that the global consumption of opiates has increased 34.5 percent, cocaine 27 percent and cannabis 8.5 percent from 1998 to 2008. Its primary recommendations are to substitute treatment for imprisonment for people who use drugs but do no harm to others, and to concentrate more coordinated international effort on combating violent criminal organizations rather than nonviolent, low-level offenders.

Currently Law Enforcement Against Prohibition Australia is conducting two campaigns. The first is to regulate rather than prohibit synthetic cannabis. New Zealand has successfully implemented the regulation of synthetic cannabis; we should do likewise. Secondly, they are demanding action to allow the use of cannabis by people with a medical certificate. Research has proven that cannabis has anti-cancer properties, and it is time that governments took this issue seriously.

Currently 19 states of the United States of America allow the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes. In some states the conditions and symptoms eligible are cancer, chronic pain, epilepsy and other conditions characterised by spasms, chronic glaucoma, HIV or AIDS, multiple sclerosis and nausea. I know of a number of cancer sufferers who have benefitted from the use of medical cannabis for pain relief, suppressing nausea and appetite stimulation. I support both campaigns.

In Australia in 1985 the Federal and State governments adopted a national drug strategy, which included a pragmatic mixture of prohibition and a stated objective of harm reduction. Harm reduction has been an official part of Australian drugs policy ever since, although most resources by far are devoted to policing and to border patrol attempts at interdiction or supply reduction. Fewer resources are made available for health treatment and drug rehabilitation programs or for preventative public health programs, such as needle exchanges. Australia maintains an extremely low rate of HIV infection among injecting drug users compared to infection rates of 60 per cent or more among injecting drug users in some American cities where needle exchange remains illegal.

I strongly support the campaign by the Law Enforcement Against Prohibition group for elimination of the policy of drug prohibition, which should be replaced by regulated policies based around appropriate restrictions on drug sales. I congratulate those responsible for establishing Law Enforcement Against Prohibition [LEAP] Australia, which builds on the good work that Law Enforcement Against Prohibition [LEAP] has been doing in the United States of America since 2002.

TRIBUTE TO SIMONE MORRISSEY

Dr JOHN KAYE [3.10 p.m.]: In 24 short years Simone Morrissey left an indelible mark on her party, the causes to which she lent her unbounded energy and wit, and the many people with whom she shared her passions. The world has lost a brilliant feminist, a unionist, environmental activist, green, avid knitter and tea drinker. The Left has lost a vocal and effective champion, Mick and Cyndi have lost a beautiful daughter, Chris has lost a sparkling partner and all of us have lost a lovely, loyal, loving, inspiring and challenging friend and comrade. On 5 August doctors turned off the life support system that had sustained Simone for the weeks since the artery in the base of her brain inexplicably and cruelly burst, inflicting irreparable neurological damage. No-one who knew Simone will ever fully recover from the loss of her presence in their lives. Yet everyone who came in contact with her whirlwind personality will carry within them the bright light of a life of generosity, humour, energy, love and politics.

Simone accurately described herself on her Twitter account as a "Sparkly mix of lefty, feminist, enviro, unionist extraordinaire. Yay!" Always accurate, ironic and engaging, Simone used the English language

simultaneously as entertainment and a devastating instrument of political campaigning. Simone's list of contributions to progressive and Left causes is impressive but it merely glances the surface of her real impact. As a student of politics and history at Latrobe University, Simone was the welfare officer for the Student's Representative Council and an editor of *Rabelais Student Media*. She worked with the Young Unionists Network in Victoria, was the project director of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition's PowerShift conference, and was part of the F (Feminist) Festival organising committee. She was an organiser for the Australian Services Union from July 2009 until May 2011 when she became an organiser with the National Tertiary Education Union.

Simone was an active member of The Greens and the Young Greens, and stood for the State electorate of Menai, achieving a swing of 3.2 per cent. When challenged in the media about some of her more colourful tweets, Simone Morrissey followed the advice offered by Paul Keating in another context. With a characteristic abundance of courage and style, she stood in the middle of the road and dared the bastards to run her down. Two weeks later 3,502 voters in Menai were sufficiently charmed by her pluck and excited by her politics to vote for her. Simone also was a key activist behind The Greens stand against the O'Farrell Government's attack on public sector workers. Outraged by the reality of the onslaught on pay and conditions and on the union movement itself, she deployed her formidable organising skills to help build a vibrant grassroots movement.

Simone was a true leader. Though diminutive in stature, she walked tall in the world of ideas and politics. The English language lacks sufficient superlatives to describe the joys of watching Simone discipline someone much older than herself or driving a meeting back on track. Punishment could take many forms, including a forced encounter with the *Keating! The Musical* album. However, as quickly as she could chastise a lapse of personal collective politics, she was just as eager with generous praise. She brought to politics not just a deep commitment to social justice and the environment but also a level of intelligent wisdom from which many of us who were more than twice her age found ourselves constantly learning. She injected much more than humour and vitality. Simone brought to each cause an unbounded sense of humanity and the opportunity for a most just, inclusive and equal world.

Simone was cheated of five to six decades of what would have been an inspiring and unique life. All of us who knew her and loved her are to be denied the exquisite pleasure of being part of that life. The world is a much poorer place without Simone. To her partner, Chris, with whom she found deep love, to her parents Mick and Cyndi, who had so much to be proud of, to her sister, Peta, who had the joy of sharing a childhood with Simone, to her friends and comrades in The Greens, the union movement and the environment movement, losing Simone is an ultimate and unspeakable sadness. It is impossible to put into words all that Simone was and all that she would have been. The best I can do is quote her description of herself:

A radical cross-stitcher, feminist, vegetarian, craftivist, queer, enviro, union activist, but much like the terms themselves cannot be reduced to mere signifiers. Unlike their carbon footprint (which is hopefully ever shrinking) Simone seeks to create ever expanding social change toward a more inclusive and just society.

Vale, Simone.

FUNERAL INDUSTRY

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK [3.15 p.m.]: Earlier this year on a day after Parliament had risen I caught a Rex flight home to Ballina and was delighted to find myself sitting next to Ken Chapman, the executive secretary of the Funeral Directors Association of Australia. Together with Phil Brooks who is president of the association, Ken and his hardworking colleagues on the executive have undertaken a long-running and commendable campaign to improve standards in the funeral industry. During my term as the shadow Minister for Fair Trading I was shocked by the many allegations and proven misconduct of a handful of unethical and ill-equipped operators. On behalf of the Liberal-Nationals I took up the cause by way of an amendment to a Government bill. The aim was to instigate a mandatory code of conduct so that disreputable shonks could be barred from the industry. When that amendment was narrowly defeated I introduced a private member's bill. Therefore I have a continuing interest in this subject.

It was nice to see Ken again and I inquired as to his business in Ballina. I am sorry to inform the House that Mr Chapman had been called as an expert police witness to give evidence in a court case involving a former Ballina funeral director. We discussed the continuing need for a code of conduct in the industry. Having been alerted to the case, I took the opportunity to visit Ballina Magistrates Court to observe proceedings from the gallery. Together with other members of the public, I squirmed with discomfort as police video evidence showed the execution of a search warrant, and police showing the former funeral director jewellery that was

allegedly stolen from deceased persons, and a detective asking the man if he would assist with identifying the former owners of the jewellery. The police wanted to spare bereaved families the trauma of having to identify jewellery. The man said he could not help.

The next videos were of family members going through jewellery that had possibly been stolen from the bodies of their loved ones prior to cremation. Daughters, sons and sisters were doing their best to cooperate with police, but in many instances they could not be completely sure. They were apologising under huge stress, feeling inadequate to the task. They did not want to believe that such a heartless crime could be committed against their lost ones. It was very hard to watch. One man agreed that a jacket looked similar in size to that owned by his late father. Yes, it seemed to be the right size—he and his Dad were the same size. He examined the wedding invitation left inside a pocket of the jacket and said that it was for his daughter's wedding. But still he could not be sure.

I felt very sorry for the families and the police. I cannot speak more highly of the professionalism and sensitivity of the officers involved in the case. However, it seems to me that if a crime was committed it could have been prevented. If New South Wales had had adequate regulation, much of that would have been stamped out earlier. So it seems to me avoidable, and wrong, that police should have to do that work and that families should have to endure such distress. In an earlier video the former funeral director blamed his wife for setting him up. He said:

She is a bitter person ... It was her job to place items with bodies prior to cremation.

Another police video was shown to the court. It was a Channel 10 news report in which the man was saying that he kept items, but it was purely for the purpose of "safekeeping". An elderly witness, who struggled to hear the oath requiring him to speak the truth, told the court he was too deaf to give evidence. He had become entangled in the case because he went to his solicitor, fearing he had lost a \$1,000 deposit for his prepaid funeral. The money recently was returned by the alleged offender after he had been charged by police. The magistrate was told that the witness was upset about having to talk about the matter in court. I congratulate the magistrate for his patience and his ability to take the evidence. Eventually the witness was excused from further attendance in court and was assisted from the witness box.

My attendance at the court gave me a very sobering insight to the hurt and distress caused when things go wrong in the funeral industry—an industry that is central to a very unique and sensitive area of activity. Consumers are incredibly vulnerable. Because the consumer is a deceased person, ordinary rights do not apply. Their pre-death arrangements with their families and funeral directors are based on complete trust that their dignity and their wishes will be respected. Illegal or unethical behaviour is very difficult to detect. The trustworthiness of funeral directors is crucial.

As I have already indicated, my attendance and distress over those poor bereaved families leads me to again draw this issue to the attention of the House. New South Wales must address the concerns of elderly citizens who are planning their funerals. We should consider following Victoria's lead by adoption of a mandatory code of conduct accompanied by scrutiny of the funeral pricing system. We must have some means of blocking unsavoury characters from re-entering the funeral industry. Australian values require dignity in death. Grieving family members ought to be properly protected from sharp and unethical practice in the funeral industry.

TRIBUTE TO CARDINAL PATRICK MORAN

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY (Leader of the Opposition) [3.20 p.m.]: I rise to mark the centenary of the death of Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran. Cardinal Moran, who was the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney from 1884 until 1911, died 100 years ago last week. I believe Patrick Moran to be one of the most significant figures in the colony, and then State, of New South Wales in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Patrick Moran was born in County Carlow in Ireland in 1830. His mother died when he was 14 months old and his father died when he was 11. He was thereafter cared for by his uncle. Moran spent his first 12 years in Ireland, the next 24 in Italy, another 18 in Ireland, and then 27 in Australia.

Moran was fluent in eight languages. He was a distinguished scholar, expert in archaeology, palaeography and the Irish language. He wrote extensively on the history of the Catholic faith in Ireland. I am particularly partial to the *Historical Sketch of the persecutions suffered by the Catholics of Ireland under the rule of Cromwell and the Puritans*. He attended the First Vatican Council in 1869-70. He was elected Bishop of

Ossory in Ireland in 1871. Pope Leo XIII appointed Moran Archbishop of Sydney in 1884. Immediately before his departure Moran met the British Liberal Prime Minister, William Gladstone, to discuss Irish and Australian affairs.

When Moran arrived on 8 September 1884, 20 steamers packed with thousands of Sydney's Catholics sailed out to greet him. Tens of thousands lined the shores. This occurred at a time when the Catholic population of New South Wales was downtrodden and underprivileged. The first bishop of the Catholic Church in Australia was John Bede Polding, who arrived in Sydney in 1835. The English Benedictines had controlled the church here, yet the grassroots faithful were Irish. As Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, Patrick Moran was culturally one with the faithful. "They were Australians, Ireland was the cultural home, and now they had an archbishop of their own", as Philip Ayres put it in his compelling 2007 biography of Moran, *Prince of the Church: Patrick Francis Moran, 1830-1911*.

Moran convened plenary councils of the Australian archbishops. He created his own federation of the Australian Catholic Church in advance of the political federation of the Australian colonies. He supported wharf labourers and seamen during the 1890 maritime strike. The marching strikers stopped at St Mary's Cathedral and gave three cheers for "our friend the Cardinal". Moran wrote that "... the rights and dignity of labour were never so clearly set before the people as during the late strike." He wrote that a year prior to Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Moran backed *Rerum Novarum* with his own lecture, *The Rights and Duties of Labour*, which supported the role of trade unions.

Rerum Novarum was issued in 1891. The Labour Electoral Leagues were formed in 1891, and won 35 seats in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. The groundbreaking 1891 papal encyclical and the birth of a Labor Party in the same year were responses to the commodification of human beings as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. Both were built around the notion of the dignity of human labour. After the 1891 New South Wales election, Moran wrote this:

... it was a triumph for Australia that the representatives of the working classes had been elected to Parliament to urge the claims and defend the rights of labour.

Moran was a seminal influence on the infant Labor Party. He led it away from Marxist influences. The growth of the Labor Party from a third party that sought concessions in exchange for measures that advantaged working people into a party of government at both the Federal and State levels by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century was aided and supported by Patrick Moran. Under Moran the Catholic population of Sydney more than doubled and Catholics came to fully engage in public affairs. The role of the Catholic Church in education, charity and health care grew massively. He led his Church boldly. He was a central public figure in the affairs of New South Wales and Australia.

The fact that last week's centenary of Cardinal Patrick Moran's death passed without any comment from our media and political establishment, apart from the *Catholic Weekly* newspaper, says much about the lack of a public memory in today's society.

COALMINING

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK [3.25 p.m.]: I wish to draw to the attention of the House the value of coalmining to this State and to point out just what impact the Green's desire to ban coalmining will have. It is obvious to everyone that mining brings significant economic benefit and employment opportunities, particularly to people who live in regional and rural areas of New South Wales. If the New South Wales Government were to follow The Greens' proposal of a blanket ban on coalmining, there would be significant consequences both at a national and State level. Indeed, I am advised that such a ban on mining would result in the loss of more than \$11 billion a year in foreign exchange, the loss of more than 16,000 direct jobs and, even worse, the loss of approximately 60,000 indirect jobs, which are based mostly in rural areas. Effectively it would signal the end of a reliable electricity supply in New South Wales and would result in the loss of more than \$1 billion a year in royalties paid to the Government, which in turn are used to fund hospitals, schools and roads.

In addition to all those outcomes, a Greens ban on coalmining also would result in immediate and considerable increases in electricity prices paid by the people of New South Wales as well as the loss of industries that depend on reliable energy. I do not know what part of all those outcomes The Greens do not understand. They say that coal can be replaced by renewable energy. That is all very well in theory, but in reality other sources of energy are not an economically competitive tool at all. The Greens want us to switch to wind power, solar energy, or geothermal energy. Earlier this month I noticed the \$16 million project to use hot

aquifers as a power source for the University of Western Australia collapsed because it could not attract a single investor. That was touted as the nation's first commercial hydrothermal powered air-conditioning and heating project. What The Greens do not tell people is that that alternative form of energy is still in the development stage.

All the alternatives I have mentioned are much more expensive than coal. Let me use the Federal Government's own Productivity Commission figures on the cost of power generation in 2010. Coal-fired power stations cost \$79 per kilowatt hour. Gas fired power stations cost \$97 for the same kilowatt hour. Wind farm power generation costs \$1,502 per kilowatt hour, which is 19 times more expensive than coal. And cop this—solar power cost is \$4,004 per kilowatt hour, which is 50 times the cost of coal-generated power. Coal gives Australia its competitive advantage. It is a source of cheap power that can be used to drive industry—the industries that we have left, anyway, those that The Greens have not yet closed down or forced to operate offshore.

As if wanting to close down coalmining is not enough, The Greens are the architects of the Federal Government's carbon tax. I was greatly interested in the attempt recently by Dr Kaye in this House to convince everyone that the tax would be "good for them". I, for one, am not convinced. I was not surprised to hear The Greens totally reject the projections put forward by the New South Wales Treasury about the impact of the carbon tax on this State. The rejection was based on The Greens not agreeing with the findings—in the same way they reject anything they had not thought of first. Treasury found that New South Wales will be hardest hit by the carbon tax. It will cost at least 31,000 jobs, and that will occur mainly in regional areas. For example, in the Hunter region, 1,850 jobs will go. In the Central West, another 1,000 jobs will go. I defy The Greens to go out to the bush and tell those about-to-be-unemployed people just how good the carbon tax will be for them. I also include comments here by the Federal Minister for Climate Change, Mr Combet, who, with a straight face, said in defence of the carbon tax:

Federal Treasury modelling (of the carbon tax impact) shows an extra 1.6 million jobs being created nationwide in the next eight years.

I would like to know from someone—anyone: In the next eight years under this Australian carbon tax, what difference will there be in the world temperature? Until someone can give me that figure I remain convinced the carbon tax is yet another dream of The Greens. But it is frightening for our country because The Greens control the Senate, which means they can get the compliant Federal Government to do their bidding.

REGIONAL HEALTH

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY (Parliamentary Secretary) [3.30 p.m.]: As Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health I am proud to be working in a Government committed to better health outcomes for all, with a strong focus on regional, rural and remote communities. The fact that we have a Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health speaks volumes and reaffirms the Government's genuine desire to deliver real changes for regional health. Another first for regional health has been the decision by Minister Jillian Skinner to appoint a deputy director general who will have key responsibilities for supporting the planning and development of regional health services.

The Hon. Robert Brown: A great Minister.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I acknowledge that interjection; she is a great Minister. This health overhaul is the first step in empowering local health districts with the support and resources they need to provide genuine local responsibility, decision-making and accountability to best serve their communities. One of the major challenges facing regional, rural and remote communities is the health workforce. To address this major health concern Minister Skinner has established a Health Professional Workforce Taskforce, harnessing a group of health experts who will assess the future workforce needs of NSW Health and devise strategies to ensure that NSW Health continues to recruit, train and retain high-calibre health professionals to meet the health needs of the community.

I am excited to be a part of that task force, which is chaired by Dr Anne-Marie Feyer, Executive Director of the George Institute, with support from Patricia Bradd, Director of Allied Health South Eastern Sydney, Professor Deb Thomas, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer from the Department of Health, Dr Andrew Keegan from the Australian Medical Association, Dr Denys Wynn, Medical Imaging Area Manager

from the North Coast, Dr Scott Finlay, General Practitioner Proceduralist from Moree Medical Centre, Cassandra Smith from the Minister's office and Karen Shultz, Karen Crawshaw and Robyn Burley from the department.

We have already had two meetings and progressed many concepts to date, one being the need to secure a strong and sustainable rural general practitioner workforce. Recent figures suggest that New South Wales needs another 285 general practitioners to meet the current demand for health services. The release last week of a discussion paper entitled "Securing a Stable Medical Workforce for NSW Rural Communities" seeks to support a rural generalist training program and a rural pathway for general practitioner training in New South Wales. With more than 700 graduates coming out at the end of this year and 900 the following year, more than double that of last year, we have an explosion in the medical workforce. To be able to put in front of those graduates a rural regional pathway is extremely important.

Attracting and retaining a sustainable medical workforce in regional areas is an enormous challenge. During question time I was signing some documents, and the Grenfell community is desperately in need of another general practitioner visiting medical officer to work at the multipurpose centre in the town. The local member, Katrina Hodgkinson, has been fighting for that position for some time. Last month I visited many regional communities, including Griffith, Deniliquin, Wagga Wagga, Goulburn, Tweed, Byron Bay, Lismore and Cooma. I am extremely impressed by the quality of leadership and the commitment by staff in the local health district. I witnessed the dedicated and experienced health workforce in many areas of health providing world's-best practice.

It is important to acknowledge this and encourage a collaborative and collegiate working relationship between health districts, hospitals, health services and communities in sharing their knowledge and skills. It is important also to celebrate the high level of health services currently available within regional communities, to encourage them to work together to ensure that we think local. I witnessed a simple yet wonderful initiative by staff last week when I visited the medical ward of Tweed hospital—for the second time, I might add—with the Minister. In the storeroom was a row of dressing gowns provided for the many elderly patients who end up in that ward. It is to encourage them to get out of bed, to be mobile and to keep them warm but, most important, to preserve their dignity and to avoid them wearing those horrid hospital gowns. This is a great initiative and something well worth acknowledging.

On a personal level I add that my parents were driving home from Coffs Harbour following a visit to me last weekend. My mum had a severe stomach pain so she attended Parkes hospital yesterday. I acknowledge that although she was a stranger to the town of Parkes she was treated at the emergency department of that hospital by the most dedicated, professional and caring physician who sent her on her way with the right medical advice. I am proud to be part of a health service and health network that treats people across New South Wales so well. They can have confidence that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is right beside them to support them to do an even better job.

RUGBY TRI-NATIONS CUP 2011

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [3.34 p.m.]: I am sure that I speak on behalf of all members of the Parliament when I say in advance of tomorrow night's game against the All Blacks that we wish the Wallabies all the best and we hope that they can bring home the Tri-Nations Cup.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.35 p.m. until Tuesday 6 September 2011 at 2.30 p.m.
