

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 4 April 2012

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (ELECTIONS) BILL 2012

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT) BILL 2012

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION NOTICES

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HENRY "DICK" SIMPSON

Mr RICHARD AMERY—That this House acknowledges:

- (1) The contribution of Mr George Henry (Dick) Simpson to the Mount Druitt area over many decades.
- (2) That Dick Simpson, 97 years old, is a founding member of the Mount Druitt Historical Society.
- (3) That a plaque recognising Dick Simpson's work in preserving the history of the Mount Druitt area has been unveiled at "The Manse", Mount Druitt, as a permanent reminder of his work.

LEBANESE COMMUNITY HARMONY DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Lebanese Community Council of New South Wales on its Harmony Day cocktail reception.
- (2) Acknowledges the efforts of the council in promoting social cohesion and harmony.

AUSTRALIAN ARAB BUSINESS NETWORK GALA NIGHT AND BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Australian Arab Business Network on its achievement in holding the 4th annual Gala Night and Business Awards celebration.
- (2) Congratulates the young entrepreneurs awarded at the event for showing exceptional talents, capacity and innovation in business.

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE HIGH ACHIEVERS CELEBRATION

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Australian Egyptian Council Forum and the Upper Egyptian Association for its Higher School Certificate High Achievers Celebration event.
- (2) Congratulates all the hard working students on their Higher School Certificate achievements and wishes all the 2011 Year 12 students the best in their future studies and careers.
- (3) Thanks the teachers and educators for their excellent efforts.

BAHA'I COMMUNITY NAW-RUZ CELEBRATIONS

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Extends its best wishes to the Baha'i Community as it celebrates Naw-Ruz (New Year).
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution of Holroyd's Baha'i Community towards community building and promoting social cohesion.

DELANY COLLEGE SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Delany College on celebrating its 70th anniversary at a special Mass led by Bishop Anthony Fisher OP.
- (2) Commends Delany College for its positive, spiritual learning environment for students.

HOLROYD STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House commends and thanks the volunteers and staff at Holroyd State Emergency Services for their efforts and assistance during the recent heavy rain and wet months.

MERRYLANDS MEDICAL CENTRE

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House congratulates the Merrylands Medical Centre at Woodville Road on its official opening on 19 March 2012.

TRIBUTE TO HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House extends its condolences to the Coptic community and particularly the Egyptian Ministerial Consultative Committee on the passing of Pope Shenouda III.

AUSTRALIAN DRUZE COMMUNITY

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Australian Druze Community for its hard work and commitment to engaging youth in social activities.
- (2) Commends its vision to promote harmony and recognising youth activities at the 42nd annual Druze event.

HILLTOP ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr TONY ISSA— That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Hilltop Road Public School for receiving the 2011 Cohesive Community School Award from the Department of Education and Training.
- (2) Acknowledges the outstanding achievement and contribution of the school in promoting social harmony and unity in the community.

GREEK NATIONAL DAY

Mr TONY ISSA—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Greek community on the celebration of the National Day of Greece.
- (2) Notes the official flag raising ceremony attended by the Consul General for the Economic and Commercial Affairs, Consul Vaianos Oreopoulos Kelenis, at Parramatta Town Hall on 14 March 2012.

WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE AND ANDREW PRYCE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House thanks and congratulates Mr Andrew Pryce, Principal of Glendale East Public School, who participated in the World's Greatest Shave, to raise money for Jake Silvestri, a young Glendale resident.

LIFELINE HUNTER STEEL MAGNOLIA AWARD RECIPIENT SHIRLEY CHAPMAN

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Shirley Chapman, recipient of the Lifeline Hunter Steel Magnolia Award 2012.
- (2) Recognises Mrs Chapman has overcome her own health problems to help the lives of others.

ELERMORE VALE TREE PLANTING DAY

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Newcastle City Council invited the community to help plant a tree to bolster Elermore Vale urban forest.
- (2) Commends the council for its endeavour to improve the environment of the community and involving citizens in the process.

MAX AND ALICE LOVEGROVE SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Max and Mrs Alice Lovegrove on their 60th wedding anniversary on 1 March 2012.
- (2) Thanks Mr and Mrs Lovegrove for their dedicated service to the Hornsby Community as members of Berowra Rotary and Hornsby VIEW Club, for over 20 years.
- (3) Wishes Mr and Mrs Lovegrove continued health and happiness in the future.

TRIBUTE TO MR BARRY THOMPSON

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Barry Thompson on being presented with a 40 Year Service Recognition Award by the Hornsby Lions Club.
- (2) Notes that Mr Thompson, of Mount Colah, has been involved in many community activities at local, state, national and international levels.
- (3) Thanks Mr Thompson for his community service.

TOASTMASTERS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AND JASON SMITH

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Jason Smith on winning the first round of the Toastmasters Public Speaking World Championships.
- (2) Wishes Jason every success in the next round of the competition.
- (3) Congratulates Berowra Toastmasters on providing a supportive environment to develop the skills of its members.

HORNSBY ROCKETS TENPIN BOWLING TEAM

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Mr Tim Wilson, Ms Jenny Jones, Mr Kelvin Ablea and Mr Kevin MacPherson of the Hornsby Rockets were selected to compete in the first annual NSW Tenpin Bowling Association Disability Open and Restricted Masters Championship in December 2011.
- (2) Congratulates Mr Ablea for first place in the championship.
- (3) Congratulates Mr Ablea, Mr Wilson, Mr MacPherson and Ms Jones on their achievements.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT ROBERT DOBSON, AFSM

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Mr Bob Dobson, AFSM, of Mount Kuring-gai, received a Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division.
- (2) Congratulates Mr Dobson on his outstanding service to the community through service clubs, including the Berowra RSL Sub-branch.
- (3) Notes that Mr Dobson is the President and Founding Member of the Children's Burns Unit Fund at the Sydney Children's Hospital.
- (4) Notes that Mr Dobson is the founding member of the Galston Valley Model Railway.
- (5) Notes that Mr Dobson is an active member of the New South Wales Fire Brigade and a founding member of the Critical Incident Management Team.

ROS NASIRY COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates and thanks Ms Ros Nasiry for her 20 years of dedicated service to Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital and local community.
- (2) Wishes Ms Nasiry every success for the future.

TRIBUTE TO DON HUXTABLE

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the service of Mr Don Huxtable with the 463 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force during WWII and the award of the distinguished Flying Cross Medal.
- (2) Recognises Mr Huxtable's 49-year membership of Hornsby RSL Club and service as the President and Patron of the Hornsby RSL Billiards and Snooker Club.
- (3) Recognises that Mr Huxtable has been honoured by Hornsby RSL, naming its billiards room the Don Huxtable Room.

YOUTH LEADERS JENNAH BAKKER AND BELINDA LAYSON

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ms Jennah Bakker and Ms Belinda Layson on their selection to attend the District Rotary Youth Awards in January 2012.
- (2) Notes that Ms Bakker, currently studying for a Diploma of Innovation Management, is active in leadership with the Ku-ring-gai Police and Community Youth Club.
- (3) Notes that Ms Layson, studying Chemical Engineering, is a member of Berowra Rovers.
- (4) Congratulates Ms Bakker and Ms Layson on being young leaders within their community.

CATHERINE IRELAND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates and thanks Ms Catherine Ireland for her 25 years of dedicated service to Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital and local community.
- (2) Wishes Ms Ireland every success for the future.

HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI HOSPITAL PINK LADIES

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Thanks Ms Win Newton for her 40 years of service to Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital.
- (2) Thanks Ms Olive Blackett for her 30 years of service to Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital.
- (3) Notes the role of the Pink Ladies and thanks them for their role in caring for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital.

OPERATION FOOD FOR LIFE AND DENNIS PERRY

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Mr Dennis Perry, of Cherrybrook, co-founded the charity Operation Food for Life which provides food, fresh water and clothing for over 2,000 women and children living in impoverished circumstances outside of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.
- (2) Congratulates Mr Dennis Perry on his charity work, including opening a school for children at St Peters Literacy School in Laloki.

HORNSBY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS MUSICAL TOUR

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Miss Louise Drea and Miss Kali Gillenon on being selected as part of the Asquith Girls High School and Hornsby Girls High School musical tour of the United States of America.
- (2) Thanks conductor and organiser Ms Deb Dietz for her efforts in encouraging music talent in the Hornsby district.

YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT SHERRIE LECK

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House congratulates Miss Sherrie Leck, of Mount Colah, on receiving a Youth Achievement Award for services to the Hornsby RSL Sub-branch Youth Club Gymnastics.

WAHROONGA ROTARY SAPPHIRE PIN RECIPIENT BOB HOWE

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mr Bob Howe, of Cherrybrook, on being awarded a sapphire pin to his Paul Harris Fellowship in recognition of his contribution to the Rotary Club of Wahroonga and his long service to the community.
- (2) Notes that Mr Howe is a past Youth Director, Vice-President and President of the Rotary Club of Wahroonga.
- (3) Notes that Mr Howe has had a pivotal role in the Rotary Youth Program for Enrichment.

WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE AND TILLY MCCORMACK

Mr MATT KEAN—That this House:

- (1) Notes that 13-year-old Miss Tilly McCormack, of Asquith, shaved her head as part of the World's Greatest Shave to raise funds for the Leukemia Foundation.
- (2) Notes that Miss McCormack is a member of the PCYC Teenage Theatre Company which is donating 50 percent of all ticket sales from its latest production to the charity.
- (3) Congratulates Miss McCormack on her commitment to raising money for charity.

RICHMOND VALLEY BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Casino RSM Club on being named the Business of the Year at the Richmond Valley Business Excellence Awards held at Casino on 17 March 2012.
- (2) Congratulates Jack and Denise Londy and Nell Pinkerton on being awarded Lifetime Achievement Awards for their commitment to the people of Casino and surrounding districts.
- (3) Congratulates all other award winners and nominees.
- (4) Congratulates the Casino Chamber of Commerce and Industry on its commitment in staging the event.
- (5) Recognises the support of all the sponsors of this event and commends them on their commitment and dedication to the local community.

CASINO RSL WOMEN'S AUXILIARY SEVENTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Casino RSL Women's Auxiliary on celebrating its 78th anniversary in February 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the efforts and service to the Casino RSL Women's Auxiliary by Leila McLachlan for 40 years service; Mavis Goodlad for 30 years service; Barbara Magnay, Carolyn Slade and Adelle Vogt for 20 years service; and, June Lamont, Laurel Unicomb, Mae Golding and Heather Wallwork for 10 years service.
- (3) Commends the Casino RSL Women's Auxiliary on the work it does in the local community.

TRIBUTE TO VINCE CASTLE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Vince Castle, Clarence Valley canegrower and industry stalwart, on being awarded the Grower Service to Industry Award at the Sugar Research and Development Corporation's Grower Innovation Awards.
- (2) Recognises Mr Castle on his commitment, dedication and active involvement in the industry over 40 years.

WOLLONDILLY WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE TEAM

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Wollondilly World's Greatest Shave team, We Are One, for raising approximately \$20,000 this year.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication and commitment that the team members have made over the years for the Leukaemia Foundation.
- (3) Notes that over \$100,000 has been raised over the last four years by the Wollondilly team.

PICTON THEATRE GROUP

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Picton Theatre Group on being awarded the Agnes Chalker Award at the Festival of Steam on 4 March 2012.
- (2) Commends Guenter Binasch, President, who accepted the award on behalf of the group and who works tirelessly with other group members in the Wollondilly community.
- (3) Notes the group has been active for 35 years and that the next performance, Beyond the Veil, will be held on 21 April 2012.

CAWDOR PUBLIC SCHOOL CUDDLE A KOALA DAY

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the children at Cawdor Public School and guest speaker Professor Robert Close, University of Western Sydney, who participated in the recent Cuddle a Koala Day.
- (2) Acknowledges Sharon Ihlein, school principal, for her commitment to working with the children and the local community.
- (3) Notes this initiative focuses on increasing young students' knowledge of the local area and the conservation of koalas.

NATIONAL YEAR OF READING AND WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE LIBRARIES

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Library Team Services leader Gail Dunn for her efforts in supporting the National Year of Reading across Wollondilly libraries.
- (2) Acknowledges all the reading ambassadors who have dedicated their time to highlight to the community and schools the importance of reading.
- (3) Notes that the Wollondilly Library offers services such as a book club, Higher School Certificate learning and preschool story time sessions.

SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS AND MIKAYLAN AUMUA

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mikaylan Aumua, of Thomas Acres Public School, for her achievement in being selected to swim at the Primary School Sports Association State Championships.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work and dedication by Mr Cartwright, Principal, and all the staff in supporting the local school community.
- (3) Wishes Mikaylan every success in her two events.

ETTALONG BEACH FESTIVAL

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House congratulates the Ettalong Beach Business Group for its involvement on the organising committee for the Ettalong Beach Festival.

CENTRAL COAST FILIPINO-AUSTRALIAN FIESTA

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House congratulates the Central Coast Ugnay Kabayan, Filipino and Australian's Peoples Link, for organising the successful 14th Filipino-Australian Fiesta on Sunday 25 March 2012.

GOSFORD RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House extends its gratitude and thanks to the volunteer contingent from the Gosford Rural Fire Service who assisted with flood relief in Hay.

LIFELONG LEARNING AWARD RECIPIENT GWEN DUNDON

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House congratulates Mrs Gwen Dundon, of East Gosford, on being awarded the Lifelong Learning Award in the NSW Seniors Week State Awards 2012.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD NOMINEE NANCY MCDONOUGH

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN—That this House recognises Mrs Nancy McDonough, of Woy Woy, on being nominated for the Community Service Award in the NSW Seniors Week State Awards 2012.

SYD AND MARY STANLEY SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Syd and Mary Stanley, of Tuncurry, on celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on 12 April 2012.
- (2) Notes that Syd was a member of the Royal Australian Air Force until 1969 achieving the rank of Warrant Office First Class and went on to work in the health sector in the Australian Capital Territory until his retirement.
- (3) Notes that Mary grew up in Tasmania and trained as a mothercraft nurse before she met Syd and started their family of four children and eight grandchildren.

OLD BAR UNDER 12 CRICKET TEAM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Old Bar under 12 cricket team for winning its local cricket competition undefeated.
- (2) Notes that Old Bar defeated Great Lakes in the Grand Final to record the Club's first ever under 12 title.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AWARD RECIPIENT COURTNEY DUNN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Courtney Dunn for winning the public speaking award at the Lions Youth of the Year Regional Final in Taree.
- (2) Notes that Courtney is a student leader at St Clare's Catholic High School in Taree.

SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPION LILLIAN SMITH

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Lillian Smith, of Blackhead, for winning the under 15 years surfboard event at the New South Wales Surf Life Saving Championships at Kingscliff contested by 6,000 competitors.
- (2) Notes that Lillian represented the Lower North Coast at the championships.

OLD BAR LIONS CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Old Bar Lions Club on its fundraising efforts and the purchase of a modified bicycle for disabled Old Bar resident, 11-year-old Lillian Rowsell, who needed a new bicycle.
- (2) Notes that Lillian is a local identity on the streets of Old Bar riding with her father Chris.
- (3) Notes the regular riding sessions improve Lillian's strength and coordination, core stability and balance and contribute to her independence.

GREAT LAKES SAILING CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Great Lakes Sailing Club for arranging and winning the inaugural Booti Booti Cup which attracted a fleet of more than 40 boats.
- (2) Notes that cup races included those for junior and senior sailors, with boats from Coomba, Port Stephens and Port Macquarie competing.
- (3) Notes that the purpose of the cup is to strengthen ties between sailing clubs in the region and to promote the sport of sailing.

BOB AND BETTY STEWART SEVENTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bob and Betty Stewart of Tuncurry on celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary on 23 March 2012.
- (2) Notes that Bob and Betty have three children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

MITCHELLS ISLAND RURAL FIRE SERVICE LIFE MEMBERS WARWICK MURRAY AND FRED CUNEO

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Warwick Murray and Fred Cuneo on their awards of life membership of the Mitchells Island Rural Fire Service.
- (2) Notes that Warwick and Fred have each been involved with the Mitchells Island brigade for 18 years.

MASTERS SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONS LAURA THURTELL AND KIM WYNTER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Laura Thurtell and Kim Wynter from Forster Surf Life Saving Club for winning the gold medal in the 45 years and over women's double ski event at the New South Wales Masters Surf Life Saving Championships.
- (2) Notes that Laura also won the 45-49 years women's individual ski race and bronze in the surf race.
- (3) Notes that Kim won the 50-54 years 2 kilometre beach race, was placed second in the surf race and won bronze in the beach sprint.

FORSTER MEN'S SHED AND PETER MCWILLIAM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates and acknowledges Peter McWilliam on his donation of \$50,000 to assist with the construction of a larger building for the Men's Shed in Forster.
- (2) Notes that Peter McWilliam, with the support of his wife Wendy, has previously donated \$5,000 to set up and fit out the Men's Shed in Forster.
- (3) Notes that Forster Men's Shed has 95 members and its membership has grown rapidly over the past 12 months.

MANNING VALLEY LEGACY LAUREL CLUB TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates members of the Legacy Laurel Club in the Manning Valley on the 25th anniversary of the group.
- (2) Notes that the Legacy Laurel Club is an important part of the support community of Legacy, which is dedicated to caring for the families of deceased and incapacitated veterans.
- (3) Notes that more than 60 members attended a celebration of the 25th anniversary at Club Taree.

RUTH GARDINER 103RD BIRTHDAY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Mrs Ruth Gardiner, of Wingham, on celebrating her 103rd birthday.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Gardiner was born and lived her entire life in Wingham and has raised two daughters with her late husband, John.

SWIMMING CHAMPION MOLLY ARENS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Molly Arens, of Old Bar, who broke 13 club records in the under 10 division of the Taree Swimming Club.
- (2) Notes that Molly set new records in 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 metres freestyle; 50, 100, and 200 metres backstroke; 100 and 200 metres breaststroke; 50 metres butterfly; and the 200 metres individual medley.
- (3) Notes that Molly will contest the Public School Sports Association titles in the 50 metres freestyle and breaststroke races in April.
- (4) Notes that Molly won the under 11 surf race at the New South Wales Country Championships at South West Rocks.

TAREE LIONS CLUB YOUTH OF THE YEAR ALEXANDRA SHEATHER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Alexandra Sheather, a student at Taree High School, on winning the Taree Lions Club Youth of the Year Quest 2012.
- (2) Notes that Alexandra will now represent Taree Lions Club and her school in the regional final.
- (3) Notes that the quest aims to select an outstanding young individual to be an ambassador representing Australia at an international youth camp held by Lions International.

BILL AND LORRAINE GRAY SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Bill and Lorraine Gray of Forster on celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on 12 January 2012.
- (2) Notes that Bill and Betty have four children, plus many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

GREAT LAKES LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Superintendent Paul Fehon and the Great Lakes Local Area Command on their skill and persistence leading to the capture of Malcolm Naden.
- (2) Notes that Malcolm Naden was considered to be Australia's most wanted fugitive and had been hiding from police for more than seven years.
- (3) Notes the patience and diligence of police in tracking and arresting Malcolm Naden and the assistance given to police by members of the public.

ST JOHNS PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ANDREW ROHAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates St Johns Park High School students for their successful performance at the New South Wales Secondary Table Tennis Challenge Cup held recently at Sydney Olympic Park.
- (2) Notes that for the eighth consecutive year, students of St Johns Park High School won medals across all divisions.
- (3) Commends students: Steven Lee and Davud Nguy for winning gold in the junior boys division; Cindy Duong and Isabella Chung for winning silver in the senior girls; Catherine Trinh and Sivy Te for winning silver in the junior girls; and Rachel Vo and Alicia Chung for winning bronze in the junior girls division.

WETHERILL PARK ROTARY CLUB NINETEENTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ANDREW ROHAN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Wetherill Park Rotary Club on celebrating its 19th anniversary on 23 February 2012.
- (2) Notes that more than 3,000 patrons attended its 2011 Carols night event which was a great success raising more than \$25,000.
- (3) Commends the club for donating the money raised to local community organisations, schools and churches.
- (4) Thanks all members of the club for their continued commitment to serving the local communities.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Commends the establishment of the Catholic Education Foundation.
- (2) Notes that the foundation was established to ensure that no child be denied a Catholic education due to financial hardship.
- (3) Welcomes initiatives that support struggling families and promote access to education.

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES SOCIETY

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the contribution of Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS) in promoting closer community ties amongst Chinese speaking people and the wider community throughout New South Wales.
- (2) Notes the regular community and cultural events organised by CASS and welcomes the cultural diversity promoted by the events.
- (3) Recognises the leadership of Director Henry Pan, the Founding Chairman of CASS in 1981.

2AC AUSTRALIAN CHINESE RADIO

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the contribution to cultural diversity of 2AC Chinese radio, the first 24-hour broadcaster for the Chinese community established in 1994.
- (2) Notes that 2AC radio broadcasts in both Cantonese and Mandarin.

LUGARNO LIONS CLUB AND AUTISM

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Applauds the efforts of the Lugarno Lions Club on its initiatives to raise awareness about the impact of autism on families.
- (2) Recognises the challenges that autism poses to families and the community at large.

NARWEE BAPTIST CHURCH CREATIVE CRAFTS CLASSES

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the efforts of Narwee Baptist Church creative crafts classes.
- (2) Notes the importance of the arts and crafts classes to bring people together.
- (3) Congratulates and encourages Narwee Baptist Church to continue this initiative into the future.

MEN'S SHEDS

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Applauds the work of the Men's Shed to provide support for men from all walks of life.
- (2) Recognises that depression, isolation and loneliness are potentially major men's health issues.
- (3) Encourages all men to get involved in their local Men's Shed.

ASSYRIAN PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the establishment of the Assyrian Parliamentary Group as a voice for the Assyrian community.
- (2) Recognises the vibrant and diverse Assyrian community in New South Wales and throughout Australia.

NSW POLICE LEGACY

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the work of NSW Police Legacy, a not-for-profit organisation, that helps the families of deceased police officers.
- (2) Notes the charity provides support and services to legatees including welfare grants, trauma and grief counselling, educational grants and tertiary scholarships.

LUGARNO PROGRESS ASSOCIATION NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the Lugarno Progress Association which for over 90 years has been an essential part of the local community.
- (2) Congratulates the association on reaching this milestone, and wishes it every success in its future endeavours.

ST PATRICK'S DAY

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the St Patrick's Day festivities on 17 March 2012, and recognises the contribution of Irish people to the State of New South Wales.
- (2) Notes St Patrick's Day has evolved from being the Feast Day of Ireland's Patron Saint, to being a wider celebration of Irish culture.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE DAILY

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Australian Chinese Daily has been serving Australia's Chinese community since 1987, and is one of Australia's largest Chinese newspapers, including a large readership within the Oatley electorate.
- (2) Recognises the value of ethnic newspapers in local communities and the diversity they support.

OATLEY MUSIC IN THE PARK FESTIVAL

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges and recognises the success of the Music in the Park festival held by the Oatley Lions Club on 18 April 2012.
- (2) Notes the popularity of the annual Music in the Park festival, and commends the Oatley Lions Club for organising the event.

MARINE RESCUE NSW

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Notes the recent commissioning of the "Botany 30" held on 10 March 2012 at the St George Motor Boat Club, and its addition to the Marine Rescue NSW fleet.
- (2) Applauds the volunteers of Marine Rescue NSW, and encourages the continuation of initiatives that promote safety on our waters.

TRIBUTE TO HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III

Mr MARK COURE—That this House notes the passing of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the beloved leader of the Coptic Church, and his extensive efforts to promote religious harmony and dialogue through his commitment to ecumenism and interfaith dialogue.

HURSTVILLE CITY COUNCIL HARMONY DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Hurstville City Council Harmony Day celebrations on 21 March 2012.
- (2) Recognises the contribution that diverse migrant communities make to local areas.
- (3) Supports inclusivity, tolerance and understanding amongst migrant groups and the wider public.

HURSTVILLE SENIORS COMPUTER CLUB

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the work of the Hurstville Seniors Computer Club, which teaches seniors valuable computer literacy skills.
- (2) Notes the importance of computer literacy skills and continued learning and education.

MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales for its contribution in developing an appreciation of music amongst the younger generations.
- (2) Notes that on 25 March 2012 the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales held its annual general meeting and is celebrating its centenary year.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Mr MARK COURE—That this House:

- (1) Applauds the outstanding contribution of Meals on Wheels to our local communities.
- (2) Notes that financial strain can put immense pressure on people, particularly the elderly.
- (3) Commends organisations that provide for people who are the most in need of help.

TRIBUTE TO MAX BEARD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the passing of Max Beard, of Tinonee, a former long-serving commander of Taree Fire Station.
- (2) Notes that Max Beard was a member of the fire fighting service for 41 years and was based in Taree for 19 years.
- (3) Notes that Max Beard was the eighth longest serving fire officer in New South Wales and is survived by his wife, Margaret and his three daughters and their families.

SENIORS WEEK AWARD RECIPIENTS PAM HOLLEBONE AND LUCY BOKULIC

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Pam Hollebone and Lucy Bokulic on being honoured at the Seniors Week Achievement Awards for their contributions to community service.
- (2) Notes Pam received her award for her stewardship of Taree's University of the Third Age, which caters to the learning interests of citizens aged over 50.
- (3) Notes Lucy received her award for her involvement in numerous community organisations, including 14 years with Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services.
- (4) Notes that Lucy was named Greater Taree City Council Citizen of the Year in 2007.

MANNING VALLEY SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR JANET DENGATE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Janet Dengate on being named Senior Citizen of the Year by the Manning Valley Senior Citizens Association.
- (2) Notes that Janet has worked with the association for 18 years to encourage and assist seniors in the Manning Valley to enjoy active social and community lives.

CHRISTMAS ROAD TRAIN AND CRAIG HUTH

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Craig Huth, radio announcer at 2RE in Taree, for raising more than \$40,000 for the Christmas Road Train charity.
- (2) Notes the money will support the Children's Ward at Manning Rural Referral Hospital in Taree.

CANTERBURY SENIORS WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Canterbury City Council's Seniors Week celebrations including a free concert at Anzac Mall in Campsie and a seniors bike ride between Gough Whitlam Park in Earlwood and Pure Gelato in Croydon Park.
- (2) Notes that Canterbury Council is encouraging older residents to live independently and ensure that they have the opportunity to participate in community activities.

EARTH HOUR

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges Earth Hour on 31 March 2012 and its aim of saving the planet by encouraging everyone to turn off their lights.
- (2) Calls on everyone to observe Earth Hour on 31 March.

CANTERBURY BOYS HIGH SCHOOL INTENSIVE LITERACY PROGRAM

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the success of the Canterbury Boys High School intensive literacy program which has been reflected in the NAPLAN test results.
- (2) Congratulates the Year 7 to 9 students who are recording significant improvement in the area of spelling and are scoring above the state average.
- (3) Congratulates the dedicated staff, Nectaria Melas, English as a second language teacher and Nektaria Kamenos, support teacher learning assistant.

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL FREE LEGAL SERVICE

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Canterbury City Council for joining with the Salvation Army in providing a new free legal information, advice and referral service.
- (2) Notes that since the program commenced in late 2011, 72 matters have been handled involving family law, debt and immigration matters.

CANTERBURY MEALS ON WHEELS

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Notes the refurbishment of the basement area of the Carrington Centre and the purchase of the new kitchen equipment for Canterbury Meals on Wheels.
- (2) Acknowledges that the equipment will allow Meals on Wheels to continue providing its services to the frail, aged and disabled residents and their carers.

CANTERBURY STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Ms LINDA BURNEY—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Canterbury State Emergency Services for its support to local residents, on Thursday 8 March 2012, when bad weather resulted in flooding.
- (2) Notes that Canterbury SES received around 40 calls for assistance, mainly for leaking roofs and eight cars caught in rising waters.

WALLSEND COMMUNITY NURSERY

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates, Tony Still and Karlie Kearney, of Lifestyle Solutions Hunter, on their successful Wallsend Community Nursery, which offers jobs for many who find it challenging to gain employment.
- (2) Commends the Wallsend Community Nursery for the wide range of services, including a cafe and the sale of plants.
- (3) Praises Lifestyle Solutions for the positive and supportive vocational environment they provide for local workers.

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, LAMBTON

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates St John's Catholic Primary School, Lambton on its new flexible learning space and refurbishment of the parish school hall.
- (2) Commends St John's for adhering to its motto Love One Another.

OCEANIA CANOE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Recognises the success of the Oceania Slalom and Sprint Canoe Championships at Penrith Whitewater Stadium and the Sydney International Regatta Centre from 24 February to 4 March 2012.
- (2) Congratulates all competitors who participated, particularly Jessica Fox who won Olympic selection at the regatta.
- (3) Thanks the organisers and volunteers from the Oceania Canoe Association who worked to make the event a success.

HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN FLOOD ACTION COMMITTEE

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Notes the recent flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean River Catchment.
- (2) Acknowledges the works of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Flood Action Committee who provided valuable information and for measures to minimise loss and damage caused by flooding.
- (3) Thanks the executive including Les Sheather, Chair, as well as Norm Johnson, John Miller, Rob Tolson and Jim Aitken OAM for their commitment and dedication.

PICTON PHYSICAL CULTURE CLUB

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the members of the Picton Physical Culture Club who have scored top points in team and champion girl categories in the Burns Association competition.
- (2) Acknowledges that Picton sent two 5-6 year-old teams, two 9-12 year-old teams and a ladies team to compete.
- (3) Notes there were 27 Picton representatives and that Zoe Daniels, Sophie Fagan, Emma Stretton and Ashleigh Vidler achieved first placings.

DRIVE TO SURVIVE AND IAN LUFF

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ian Luff who founded Drive to Survive and has trained more than 100,000 motorists at his driving academy.
- (2) Acknowledges the dedication and hard work that Ian makes in contributing to a lower road toll in Wollondilly and helping to save lives.
- (3) Notes that Picton Rotary Club supports Mr Luff's initiative.

PETER BUCKLEY FUNDRAISING CYCLE

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Peter Buckley, of Picton, who aims to raise over \$2,500 for Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets.
- (2) Notes that Mr Buckley will ride his bike 1,000 kilometres from Sydney to Surfers Paradise.
- (3) Notes Mr Buckley's ride will benefit those youth who are in need of help and support.

THIRLMERE PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Thirlmere Public School's school captains, Katie and Regan, on their election in 2012.
- (2) Acknowledges the work and dedication that Principal Steven Lord gives to the school community and children.
- (3) Notes that Katie and Regan have a leadership team of approximately 40 student leaders to implement initiatives to involve the student body.

WOLLONDILLY SENIORS WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the members of Wollondilly Shire Council Seniors Advisory Group that organised events for the seniors of Wollondilly.
- (2) Acknowledges the hard work and contribution of Gay Hardwick, Community Projects Officer for Ageing and Disabilities.
- (3) Notes that Wollondilly's Seniors Week events included the great debate between high school students and seniors, photo competition, live and learn expo, trivia and information, entertainment expo and elders Olympics.

PERFORMANCE ART WESTERN SYDNEY AND BROOKE SATTLER

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House recognises the work of Performance Art Western Sydney and the achievements of its student Brooke Sattler on her inclusion in the Project Dance troupe on Channel Ten's Young Talent Time.

ANGLICARE NEPEAN

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House recognises the valuable service provided by Anglicare Nepean at its healthy cooking expo held as part of Seniors Week and the role such programs have in helping seniors adjust to healthier lifestyle practices that reflect smaller household requirements.

LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS ROTARY CLUB

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House recognises the large financial contribution made by the Lower Blue Mountains Rotary Club toward Rotary Australia's school building project in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

VOLUNTEER LEANNE TOBIN

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House recognises the volunteer work of Leanne Tobin at the Emu Plains Correctional Centre for Women.

BLAXLAND EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOIR AND BAND

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House congratulates the choir and band from Blaxland East Public School on its performance when opening the Rotary District 9690 Conference.

ROSS HUTCHISON FOUNDATION

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House recognises the Ross Hutchison Foundation in providing an additional car to the Great Community Transport Fleet.

PENRITH SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM—LITERACY AND NUMERACY RESULTS

Mr STUART AYRES—That this House:

- (1) Recognises Penrith South Public School on its performance in recent NAPLAN results.
- (2) Recognises the work of the teaching staff, under the leadership of Principal Greg Waddel, in coordinating the programs to develop the literacy skills at the school.

LONDONDERRY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the importance of volunteers who add social capital to our community.
- (2) Notes that the Australian honours system is a prestigious award to recognise the contribution of Australians to our society and country.
- (3) Congratulates the following citizens from the Londonderry electorate on the receipt of a 2012 Australia Day honour: Dorothy Phipps, Order of Australia Medal, for her significant contribution to the community through involvement in the Country Women's Association, Richmond Players and the Girl Guides; and Sergeant Brendan Church, Conspicuous Service Cross, for service to the Royal Australian Air Force, in particular for work on the C-130J Propulsion Systems Support.

PENRITH SENIORS AND BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

Mr BART BASSETT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Peter Horsfield and members of the Penrith Branch of the National Seniors for promoting awareness of mental health issues.
- (2) Acknowledges the work undertaken by the Black Dog Institute on the research, education and support of the cause and effects of mental health to individuals, their friends and families and society.
- (3) Commends the recent presentation by the Black Dog Institute at the Penrith Valley Seniors Centre.

DISTINGUISHED LONG SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT JOAN ROBERTSON

Ms PRU GOWARD—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Joan Robertson on receiving a Distinguished Long Service Award in the sport of football from the New South Wales Sports Federation.
- (2) Notes that Joan Robertson is a life member of Football NSW and has been a volunteer for 43 years with football clubs around New South Wales to promote good governance in football.

YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT ELOISE MATTHEWS

Ms PRU GOWARD—That this House:

- (1) Notes that Eloise Matthews, a Year 11 student at Mulwaree High School, will represent Goulburn at the Young Women's Leadership Conference at the University of Sydney in April 2012.
- (2) Congratulates Eloise Matthews for being one of 20 New South Wales school students selected to attend this conference.

LIFELONG LEARNING AWARD RECIPIENT NOEL FINCH

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House congratulates Noel Finch, of Anna Bay, for his Lifelong Learning Award, announced during the 2012 NSW Seniors Week, in recognition of his significant contribution to the Port Stephens community.

PORT STEPHENS LOCAL AREA COMMAND AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House notes the contribution the Port Stephens Local Area Command Facebook page is making to the local community by alerting residents to important issues and crime prevention activities through this social network medium.

IRRAWANG HIGH SCHOOL BEACON FOUNDATION CHARTER COMMITMENT

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Raymond Terrace's Irrawang High School Year 10 students for signing the Beacon Foundation Charter, committing to stay at school until they have a clear pathway to further education, training or employment.
- (2) Notes the work of the beacon co-ordinator, Miss Jean Duma and student ambassadors, Payten Dickson, Jack Jones, Samantha Thompson and Tim McLaughlin.

SEASIDE SINGERS

Mr CRAIG BAUMANN—That this House congratulates the SeaSide Singers, of Port Stephens, for hosting a well attended concert during Seniors Week for the local community.

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Benevolent Society for supporting those recovering from mental illness in Wollondilly.
- (2) Notes that the Benevolent Society also works in helping individuals with children and families, ageing, community development, mental health care and social leadership.

PICTON WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT

Mr JAI ROWELL—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Picton Anzac Committee on its project to upgrade the war memorial in Picton.
- (2) Notes the project includes a roll of honour of veterans from the Wollondilly Shire who have served in all wars.
- (3) Notes that Xstrata Coal, Bargo RSL and many other local businesses have been involved in the project.

PLAN-IT YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the staff at the Plan-It Youth Hunter/Central Coast mentoring program who have assisted young people in Years 10 and 11 to pave a successful future.
- (2) Notes the Plan-It Youth mentoring program has effectively assisted disengaged students who have sought to leave school without plans for their lives after school.

NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY TRADE TRAINING CENTRE

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the opening of the \$12 million Newcastle Community Trade Training Centre at Callaghan College in Jesmond.
- (2) Notes the facility will provide high school students with industry relevant training to address skills shortages in construction, engineering and hospitality.

PARAMEDICS

Ms SONIA HORNER—That this House:

- (1) Commends the hard-working paramedics of New South Wales.
- (2) Acknowledges that their job to save the lives of people may be very stressful.
- (3) Recognises that ambulance officers often work in dangerous circumstances to assist people in emergencies.

MACARTHUR CHRONICLE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Macarthur Chronicle on the Macarthur Chronicle Project Local Campaign.
- (2) Acknowledges that NewsLocal, publisher of the Chronicle, has already given almost \$50,000 to community groups.
- (3) Notes the importance of this campaign in funding local projects for community groups.

ARTIST KEVIN BARRY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House thanks local artist, Kevin Barry, for donating two works to Camden Hospital for the enjoyment of patients.

YOUTH SOLUTIONS

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Youth Solutions on its Who Carries the Responsibility campaign.
- (2) Notes Youth Solutions' efforts in preventing youth drug and alcohol abuse.
- (3) Acknowledges the support that Campbelltown Catholic Club, the Macarthur Chronicle, radio station C91.3 and McDonalds have provided to Youth Solutions.
- (4) Wishes the new Program Co-ordinator of Youth Solutions, Dan Lea, well in his new role.

BOYD GALLERY AND RIGHT START FOUNDATION

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Boyd Gallery owners Pania and Rowan Gregson on their official relaunch of Boyd Gallery.
- (2) Acknowledges Boyd Gallery's partnership with the Right Start Foundation and the donation of a percentage of the proceeds of all items sold at the launch.
- (3) Thanks the Right Start Foundation for providing support to children and their families with Down syndrome.

WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE AND TOM BONNANO

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the fundraising efforts of Tom Bonnanno, of St Clair Catholic Primary School, who raised over \$2,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation's World's Greatest Shave.
- (2) Acknowledges the support and encouragement of school principal Mr Kevin Devine, who offered to let Tom shave his head if Tom raised over \$2,000.
- (3) Notes that the total raised by Tom and St Clair Catholic Primary was \$2,500.

CAMDEN SHOW

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Camden Show Society on the success of the 2012 show enjoyed by over 35,000 people.
- (2) Notes the efforts and hard work of the members of the Show Society.
- (3) Thanks the teams of volunteers who assisted with the running of the show and Hennings Jewellers for the fireworks display at the show.
- (4) Congratulates all competitors in the show.

EAGLE VALE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS RUGBY TEAM

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Eagle Vale High School on hosting Paris District High School from Ontario Canada on its girls rugby tour of Australia.
- (2) Notes the hard work and dedication of teacher Julie Toeatolu in organising this event.
- (3) Congratulates Eagle Vale High School girls rugby team on its victory over the visitors.

WYONG DISTRICT CRICKET ASSOCIATION CENTENARY

Mr DARREN WEBBER—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Wyong District Cricket Association on its centenary year in 2012.
- (2) Notes that a centenary committee has been established, chaired by life member Mr Tony Booth, to organise centenary reunion celebrations in November 2012.

SENIORS WEEK AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the following recipients of a Seniors Week Achievement Award for Community Service: Les Sanford for his work for Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed; Paul Turner for his work as an advocate of retirees health and wellbeing; and Tony Jenkins for his work at the Cumberland Community Radio Station.
- (2) Congratulates ComputerPals for Seniors Parramatta for receiving a Seniors Week Achievement Award for Life Long Learning in recognition of its work promoting computer literacy.

CASTLE HILL SHOW

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT—That this House:

- (1) Commends the Castle Hill and Hills District Agricultural Society for another successful Castle Hill Show.
- (2) Acknowledges the tremendous contribution of the Castle Hill Show to The Hills over the past 126 years.

HILLS RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT—That this House:

- (1) Commends Hills Relay for Life for its invaluable contribution to cancer research.
- (2) Recognises the value of Hills Relay for Life to The Hills as a community event.

INDIA CLUB EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS FORUM

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT—That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the India Club for hosting a successful forum on emotional abuse and domestic violence awareness.
- (2) Notes the work of the India Club in raising emotional abuse and domestic violence awareness within the Indian community.

Question put and resolved in the affirmative.

Community recognition notices agreed to.

COMPANION ANIMALS WELFARE

Ms CLOVER MOORE (Sydney) [10.09 a.m.]: I move:

That:

- (1) A select committee be appointed to inquire into companion animal welfare with the view to improving their welfare.
- (2) That the committee consider the following matters:
 - (a) the number and cause of companion animals arriving in NSW shelters and pounds each year and their outcome, such as whether they get re-homed, reunited or euthanased;
 - (b) the breeding of companion animals;
 - (c) the practices associated with the sale of companion animals including from pet shops, markets, pounds, shelters, online, classifieds, or to the overseas market;
 - (d) mandatory desexing, including prior to sale;
 - (e) the effectiveness and enforcement of the Department of Primary Industries companion animal policies, standards and guidelines;
 - (f) the effectiveness of the Companion Animals Act and its application by local government;
 - (g) the effectiveness of micro-chipping;
 - (h) the treatment of companion animals travelling by airplane;
 - (i) the impact of pet bans in accommodation including apartments, strata, retirement villages, and rental properties;
 - (j) the impact of pet bans on public transport;
 - (k) the existence and effectiveness of education programs on responsible pet ownership, including the importance of desexing;
 - (l) data collection by government and non-government agencies to inform and monitor companion animal welfare; and
 - (m) any other matter relevant to improving companion animal welfare.
- (3) That the committee consist of six members as follows:
 - (a) Ms Clover Moore, who shall be Chair of the committee;
 - (b) three Government members; and
 - (c) two non-Government members.
- (4) That the members be nominated in writing to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by the relevant party leaders within seven calendar days of the passing of this resolution.
- (5) That at any meeting of the committee four members shall constitute a quorum.

This is a very significant issue. Animals are live, sentient beings. Pets give unconditional love and companionship. Pets teach us to care and nurture, encourage us to exercise and save the national health bill over \$4 billion a year. How could a civilised society allow around 60,000 cats and dogs to be destroyed every year in New South Wales? The Animals (Regulation of Sale) Bill 2008 I introduced would have stopped impulse buying of pets, resulting in fewer cats and dogs ending up in pounds and being destroyed. It also would have removed an outlet for cruel puppy farming and backyard breeding. My bill was rejected even though companion animal welfare is seriously inadequately addressed. During debate on the Animals (Regulation of Sale) Bill the then Opposition, now the Government, called for more information and moved to defer the vote to establish a select committee to inquire into companion animal welfare. This motion now calls for that select committee to be established.

Thousands of people across New South Wales support this initiative. An open, transparent and independent inquiry is a vital opportunity for Parliament to improve the welfare of companion animals. The RSPCA has seized from puppy farms thousands of dogs in appalling conditions. These mass breeding facilities churn out puppies en masse while thousands of healthy animals are destroyed every year. The recent claim of the Pet Industry Association that it will sell puppies only from accredited puppy farms is welcomed,

but there is no independent oversight or enforcement of the sale of pets, and many pet shops are not association members. Puppy farms will continue to sell pets through classified advertisements, at markets and overseas.

While most registered breeders are responsible, concerns have been expressed that some dog breeds have exaggerated physical features, such as overly large eyes or heads that cause breathing, walking, eye, skin, hip and back problems, and a lifetime of pain. Professor Paul McGreevy of the University of Sydney Veterinary Science Faculty, who worked on the BBC documentary *Pedigree Dogs Exposed*, expressed such concern that a parliamentary inquiry was held in the United Kingdom. The New South Wales Parliament should consider mandatory desexing of animals. Unwanted litters account for a significant number of animals in pounds and shelters. A non-desexed female cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 cats in seven years, yet cats can be desexed as young as eight weeks. Non-desexed animals are more likely to show antisocial behaviours, get into fights or escape from their surroundings.

Many abandoned pets are not microchipped, including some from pet shops, despite legal requirements. Often the details for microchipped pets are out of date, making it difficult to link impounded animals with owners. Education is essential to achieve responsible pet ownership. The City of Sydney companion animal policy focuses on education and provides for free microchipping, dog obedience training, subsidised desexing and pet taxis for low-income earners. Not all councils do this and animal welfare charities do not have the resources to run large education programs on pet welfare. Governments should run statewide education campaigns to ensure a consistent message about animal welfare and care. Stray cats are vulnerable to attacks from dogs and people as well as health issues from lack of food, water and veterinary care, but councils have no rights or legal support to protect stray and feral cats as they are not defined in law. We need animal law reform to help councils rehouse stray cats and protect them from harm.

Last year two of my constituents lost their beloved French bulldog Kransky, who died at Sydney Airport from heat exhaustion while waiting to board a plane. Animal protection groups have told me similar stories. Parliament should investigate whether the Companion Animal Transport Agencies Code is sufficient to prevent a similar fate for other pets. Parliament should assess all animal welfare codes and policies to determine whether they meet expectations. Code reviews are regularly overdue and often support industry interests over animal welfare needs. Shelters and pound practices vary greatly and good models need to be identified as benchmarks. The term "free to a good home", for example, creates problems particularly for cats, with non-desexed cats having kittens and thereby adding to the number of unwanted pets.

The City of Sydney has a partnership with the low-kill Sutherland Shire Animal Shelter, where only dangerous or seriously sick animals are euthanased. Healthy animals remain at the shelter until they are rehoused, microchipped and desexed. New South Wales should aim to become a pet no-kill State. Blanket bans on pets in apartments, retirement villages and rental properties force many people to give up their beloved companions at a difficult time of their life. Apartments and retirement villages in New York, London and Paris generally allow pets. Similar bans on public transport make it difficult for people with pets to get to a vet or visit a friend, particularly if a low-income person does not have access to a private car. CityRail imposes a complete ban on pets being allowed on trains, but the State Transit Authority allows pets to travel on buses at the discretion of the driver. However, sometimes public housing tenants who are able to get to a vet cannot return home because they are prevented from taking their pet on the bus.

In cities such as San Francisco, Berlin, Paris and London it is normal for people to take their pets on public transport. The terms of reference for the committee I propose would include the collection of comprehensive data on pet sales, pound and shelter numbers to trace the origin of pets to assess any underreporting. The Government set up the Companion Animals Taskforce in response to lobbying for this inquiry. A taskforce cannot replace an inquiry because it has strong industry representation and does not hold public meetings. With a taskforce we do not know what is happening. Many members in this place have said they are animal lovers, and I guess many of them will talk about their pets. Those who really care about animals will support this motion so that the Parliament can gain an understanding of the problems associated with companion animal welfare and make informed recommendations on this important issue. This motion is about establishing an inquiry, understanding the issue and getting to the facts. It also is about the Parliament making the right decision. Respect and compassion for animals are essential to a humane and just society. I commend the motion.

Mr DONALD PAGE (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [10.16 a.m.]: Let me first acknowledge the longstanding genuine interest of the member for Sydney in companion animal welfare issues. In the time we have been together in this Parliament, which is 24 years now—

Ms Clover Moore: That is coming to an end quite soon, it is said.

Mr DONALD PAGE: We will see. That is the member's choice. Over that time the member for Sydney has consistently demonstrated a very keen interest and concern about companion animal welfare. I thank her also for her comments on her motion, many of which have validity. Certainly, when I became the Minister for Local Government—I had not been involved in this area—and was briefed about the number of dogs and cats being euthanased, mostly in this State's pounds, I was saddened and very concerned. For example, animals euthanased between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011 totalled 13,661 dogs and 17,991 cats. These figures are disturbing indeed. As a result I met with the Minister for Primary Industries, who has responsibility under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, to see what the Government could do to try to address these issues. We agreed to put together a taskforce to investigate and address these and other issues facing the companion animal industry. In saying that, whilst I am very empathetic to the concern of the member for Sydney, we will not support the motion because a taskforce has been established, which is chaired by the very capable member for Charlestown, who is a veterinarian and who has been doing great work with the taskforce.

The taskforce will provide advice on key companion animal issues and, in particular, on strategies to reduce the rate of companion animal euthanasia. As I said, the taskforce is chaired by the member for Charlestown, who is a veterinarian with vast experience and knowledge relating to companion animals. I am pleased that he agreed to chair the taskforce, as is the Minister for Primary Industries. The taskforce comprises representatives of the following organisations: the Australian Companion Animal Council, the Australian Institute of Local Government Rangers, the RSPCA New South Wales, Animal Welfare League NSW, Pet Industry Association Australia, Dogs NSW, Australian Veterinary Association, Cat Protection Society, and the Local Government and Shires Associations New South Wales.

The taskforce terms of reference are sufficiently broad to cover the issues the member for Sydney has raised in her motion. The terms of reference state that the taskforce will inquire into: euthanasia rates and re-homing options for surrendered or abandoned companion animals; the breeding of companion animals including the practices of puppy farms—it is a disgrace what is happening there; the sale of companion animals; the microchipping and desexing of companion animals; current education programs on responsible pet ownership; and any other high-priority companion animal issues that become apparent to the taskforce during its investigation. In response to the comment by the member for Sydney about the problem with the taskforce in that it does not have public meetings, I am assured by the chair of the committee that there will be public meetings as the taskforce goes about its work.

The taskforce is currently finalising the draft discussion, which will be available for public comment in coming months. All interested individuals, groups and organisations are encouraged to make a submission when the discussion paper is released. After taking into account feedback on the discussion paper the taskforce will prepare a report by the end of this year which will provide recommendations for consideration by the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business, Katrina Hodgkinson, and me as Minister for Local Government. I thank the chairman of the taskforce for the work he has done so far. I understand the draft discussion paper is ready to be presented.

I thank the members of the taskforce, who have worked very hard, and also the two departments involved—Primary Industries and the Division of Local Government. I express my deep appreciation for the brilliant work of the officers from the two departments: Ross Burton, Angela Thompson and Vaughan Macdonald from Primary Industries and Janet Pengelly and Glen Colley from the Division of Local Government. The chairman of the taskforce has confirmed with me, as the responsible Minister, that these people have been nothing short of fantastic in the way they have contributed to the deliberations of the taskforce. We thank the members of the taskforce for their participation and for the work that they are doing.

I look forward to the discussion paper being made public and the community having an input into where we go from here. By the end of this year the recommendations will come forward from the taskforce for the Government to put into place. This is an issue of concern to me. I was raised on a cattle property, have been around dogs all my life and still own dogs. I am keen, as is the Minister for Primary Industries, to stop—I do not know whether we can stop—or reduce the number of unnecessary deaths that are occurring through euthanasia of our dog and cat populations. I look forward to the report coming back to the Government. Because of what we are doing as a Government we will reject the motion today but we appreciate very much the intentions of the member for Sydney in raising these issues. The concerns of the member are shared by the Government.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [10.23 a.m.]: I support the motion of the member for Sydney. It is a detailed, sensible motion. I acknowledge her work in this area for many years. The member is quite right, this

is about a broad matter of respect for animals, how we treat our animals, and bearing in mind that thousands of animals, cats and dogs are companions to many people in the State and across Australia. I acknowledge that the member for Marrickville, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, is in the House today. She has a keen interest in this issue. Many members on my side of the House have held a keen interest in the issue. As a former Minister for Local Government I am aware of the issues around companion animals and the high rate of euthanasia. The Minister will know that in my time I started some work on that issue. The high rates of pet euthanasia in New South Wales are horrific: over the past five years more than 150,000 dogs and cats have been euthanased in pounds across the State.

That is not to say that a great amount of work is not going on with pet rescue shelters and the RSPCA. I note the work done over many years with regard to responsible pet ownership: the Safe Pets Out There [SPOT] program which appears to be a new program that is delivered in schools across the State. I think that has gone a long way towards teaching young people about responsible pet ownership. Those young people are then teaching their parents. Despite all that work it is clear that there still remains a great deal of concern around these issues that the member for Sydney raises. I am aware and I clearly understand, having heard the Minister of the taskforce that is in play at present, but I am concerned about the following matters.

The Companion Animals Act has not been reviewed for many years. It has been amended to include tougher dog laws with higher penalties, but I do think the Companion Animals Act needs to be reviewed to look at the broader issues that the member raised. The task force terms of reference incorporate some of the concerns of the member for Sydney but they do not go into broader issues such as the impact of pet bans in accommodation including apartment, strata, retirement villages and rental properties, and the impact of pet bans on public transport.

If we are going to look holistically at companion animals the issues on the agenda—those put by the member for Sydney and many animal welfare advocates—need to be looked at in a broad way. The Opposition will support the motion. I ask the Minister to elucidate how the public inquiry will work. A task force, from my recollection, is a little different: it reports publicly but does not necessarily take evidence publicly in the same way a parliamentary select committee would, with cross-examination possible. An important person involved in animal welfare died yesterday. Kath Gazzard set up a project called Pets for Older People. That program was about rehousing pets for people who were socially isolated or needed to go to palliative care. I note her good work and I will speak of her another time.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [10.27 a.m.]: In May 2011 the member for Sydney gave notice of a motion regarding the establishment of a companion animal inquiry. While I appreciate the member's longstanding interest in the area, the motion is not supported. The Government does not support this motion because it has been superseded by the Government's proactive approach in the area. In the middle of last year the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Primary Industries established the companion animal taskforce. The task force met through the second half of last year and into this year to produce a discussion paper that examines the matters the member for Sydney has raised in her motion.

A select parliamentary committee is not required because the Government has already acted in the area and therefore paragraph (1) of the motion cannot be supported. This motion should not be supported because the terms of reference for the companion animal taskforce are sufficiently broad to cover all of the areas of concern raised by the member for Sydney. The task force has examined all issues relating to euthanasia rates and unacceptable breeding practices such as puppy farming. I can assure the House and the member for Sydney that all of the issues covered at items (a) through to (m) in paragraph (2) of the motion have been considered by the companion animal task force. This Government is acting in a complete and comprehensive manner that is not offered by the motion put forward by the member for Sydney.

Paragraph (3) of the motion deals with the make-up of the committee. The member suggested that she should chair the committee that would consist of three Government members and two non-Government members. This part of the motion cannot be supported because the make-up of the Companion Animal Task Force is superior to the suggestions made by the member for Sydney. As opposed to having six politicians considering matters of this importance, the task force has a cross-section of stakeholders who have come together to produce a discussion paper that is comprehensive and groundbreaking. On the task force we have the RSPCA, which brings with it some 130 years of corporate knowledge in the area. We have the Animal Welfare League, which brings in excess of 50 years at the coalface. We have the Cat Protection Society, which brings in excess of 50 years experience. We have the Australian Veterinary Association, which represents a profession with more than a century of animal welfare as its core business.

The task force also has members who represent dog breeders and industry who not only bring corporate knowledge but also a passion for animals and a genuine desire to improve outcomes for companion animals. We have representatives from local government and council rangers, the people who deal with some of the heartbreaking situations that unwanted companion animals face. And, finally, we have been supported by the fabulous departmental staff from the Department of Local Government and the Department of Primary Industries. Whereas the make-up of the committee suggested by the member for Sydney may offer opinion, the Companion Animal Task Force offers expertise. Therefore, paragraph (3) of the motion should not be supported.

The member for Sydney has demonstrated passion, and I commend her for that. But the motion cannot be supported because, thanks to the leadership of Minister Page and Minister Hodgkinson, the Government has taken the lead in this area. Our brief is broader, the make-up of our task force is superior to that suggested by the member, and our work is virtually complete. The discussion paper is due to be released in the first half of this year; and, in line with our commitment, it will be. I thank all members of the task force for their expertise and their desire to improve outcomes for companion animals. The member for Auburn raised a number of other issues. I assure the member that we have taken a holistic approach. We will have public consultation once the discussion paper is released, because that is exactly what it is designed to do—to promote comment. We are seeking input from the public. Once that process is complete, we will be taking further recommendations to the Minister. I have appreciated the opportunity to debate the motion. But we have taken the lead, and therefore cannot support it.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [10.31 a.m.]: I thank all members who have contributed to this debate. I trust they do so genuinely and honestly, because some issues remain about lack of openness and involvement of the public in the process to date. But I take on board the genuine comments by the chair and the Minister, who claim that the situation is "under control". This is an important issue—a critical issue, in fact—because one of the points raised constantly by the member for Sydney over the 20 years or so she has been a member of this place is the inadequacy of action on animal welfare. I welcome the contributions of members of the Labor Party on this issue; unfortunately, there was not significant action on this matter during its term in government.

We trust that this Government will take some positive steps because, as a local councillor of almost 14 years and mayor for several years, I have been very concerned about the level of euthanasia of companion animals. As another member discussed, the department released in August last year the numbers: 150,000 dogs and cats euthanased in pounds over the past five years. That is absolutely unacceptable. It is a disgrace. The number of animals euthanased in pounds can be easily remedied. A range of steps can be taken. We have heard some of those today, but they include issues that have been raised, for example, in the Australian Capital Territory, in a bill that is before its Legislative Assembly outlining some possible reforms. The bill, introduced by The Greens, has been discussed with other parties in good faith.

The bill proposes introducing mandatory licences for cat and dog breeders to ensure they meet proper standards of animal welfare; banning the sale of cats and dogs from stores and markets, with some limited exceptions; introducing additional requirements on the sale of animals; providing basic care information to all buyers; banning the display of animals in store windows; making it an offence to sell animals to children; restricting advertising; introducing a system of traceability; and mandating desexing of cats and dogs at sale—as part of a whole range of strengthening of animal cruelty provisions in the Australian Capital Territory. I encourage the chair of the task force to examine that proposal to see whether it will provide some useful information.

I support the motion moved by the member for Sydney because concerns are held about the make-up of the task force. As a solution, it is considered inferior to a select committee. Many members will have seen the newspaper article that generated a great deal of consternation about this issue, because the make-up of the task force is of significant concern. The *Herald Sun* of 7 March this year carried a report about the pet industry group president posing with a dead cat. That does not generate support and encourage people to think the industry representatives—who make money by selling companion animals—will have the best interests of animal welfare in mind. The article in the *Herald Sun* was very disturbing for many people; it caused a lot of concern in the community. People contacted my office and said, "Are these the people looking at animal welfare in the community?"

Genuine concern has been generated because the minutes of meetings of the task force are not available to the public, and there have not been public discussions. Those are legitimate concerns—not political or tactical

concerns designed to attack the Government, but genuine concerns about the type of outcome that will come from this task force. The question is: If the industry is running this task force, what kind of an outcome will we get? So, of course, people are waiting with bated breath to see what happens with the submissions and comments on the discussion paper that will be distributed by the Government. I conclude by saying that animal welfare needs to be the focus of all issues. Animal welfare needs to be at the heart of a just and humane society, and that is why The Greens support the motion. We look forward to the Government's discussion paper so that we can respond to it.

Ms CLOVER MOORE (Sydney) [10.36 a.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I am pleased that the Minister has said he finds the facts disturbing and believes the task force will address the issues; and that the chair of the task force assures us that that will be done. But I have to say that I have raised the issue of animal welfare continually over the years, and the Parliament has failed to respond. I find that failure distressing. We are known as the country that has the highest number of pets per person, and we are known as the country where the family pet is a national characteristic. Yet, compared with other countries, our treatment of pets is quite appalling. Successive governments and this House have failed absolutely to address the issue when I have raised it.

I say again that animals are live, sentient beings; they suffer both physical and psychological pain. Defending animal welfare should be a very important part of what we do. I believe the majority of people in New South Wales expect us to do that. There has been an absolute failure in this place to do so up till now. The Government says it will achieve reform through the task force. I welcome the fact that the task force has been set up because that is better than nothing. But we do not know what the task force has done; it has not held any public hearings, and its minutes have not been made public. We are assured that it is getting on with the job. That is great, but we are keen to see what job it is getting on with, given the absolute lack of commitment to this area by government and opposition till now.

The task force includes members of the Pet Industry Association of Australia, the Australian Veterinary Association of Australia and the Australian Companion Animal Council. These are not animal welfare bodies; they represent industry interests. I share the fears and concerns of animal protection groups that the task force will produce recommendations that reflect industry interests and not animal welfare goals. That is why I wanted the inquiry. I believe—and fear, given my past experience in this place and the past experience of the people of New South Wales—that animal welfare needs will be watered down because of industry influence. That is what has happened time and time again. That is why I proposed an inquiry. In fact, I proposed the inquiry when the Coalition said in opposition that it agreed with the proposals in my bill but could not support the bill because it was going to have an inquiry when in government. But when I put forward the proposal for that inquiry now the Coalition is in government, it says the task force will deal with it.

I hope the task force does deal with it and that the task force has as its main goal improving the welfare of companion animals, because that has simply not been the case in this place. I am sorry that the Government has not honoured its commitment to conduct an inquiry. Once the information was collected and presented it would be up to the Government to decide whether to accept the inquiry's recommendations. But the Government has gone down the task force route, and I hope some benefits will come from that. I respect the RSPCA, which I work with closely at the City of Sydney, and I have worked with Tim Vasudeva of the Animal Welfare League and Kristina Veski of the Cat Protection Society on animal welfare issues for a very long time. But I believe they are going to be very much up against industry bodies that have opposed outright regulation in the pet industry.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 20

Mr Barr	Mr Lynch	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Dr McDonald	Ms Tebbutt
Mr Daley	Ms Mihailuk	Ms Watson
Mr Furolo	Ms Moore	Mr Zangari
Ms Hornery	Mr Parker	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Keneally	Mrs Perry	Mr Amery
Mr Lalich	Mr Piper	Mr Park

Noes, 59

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

Pairs

Ms Burton	Mr Baird
Ms Hay	Mr Edwards
Mr Rees	Mr Provest

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

COMMUNITY SECTOR PAY EQUITY

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I inform the House that in accordance with Standing Order 139 the member for Wallsend has submitted an amended motion.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [10.51 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes Fair Work Australia's recognition that for decades community sector workers have been underpaid and that the recent tribunal decision is an important step towards closing the gender pay gap in Australia; and
- (2) acknowledges that women in many caring jobs are paid less than men for equivalent work.

With the approval of the Government, Opposition Whips and the Table Office, I have deleted the third paragraph of my original motion because it is no longer contemporary. Fortunately much has changed since notice of this motion was given last May. Social workers, carers and child protection workers—previously the unsung workers—will now benefit from Fair Work Australia's ruling to increase their wages. Wages will increase by an average of approximately \$15,000, or 35 per cent annually, although these changes will vary amongst States due to different awards. The rates will be phased in over an eight-year period from 1 December this year, which will allow State governments and organisations ample opportunity to adjust financially to the changes.

Fair Work Australia recognised that these community sector workers had been underpaid for decades, particularly women who were paid less than men for comparable work. According to the "Employee Earnings,

Benefits and Trade Union Membership" publication released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2010, men earned on average \$1,000 per week in comparison with the average weekly earnings of \$731 for women. These are not statistics devised solely for the community sector but are an average of all employment areas. The relevance of this statistic is undeniable given that 120,000 of the 150,000 workers employed in the community sector are women.

This ruling by Fair Work Australia is a vital step towards the notion of equal pay for both genders, though there are still issues to be considered and more work to be done. Tony Ross from the Hunter Volunteer Centre has commended this decision. He believes the community sector is now better positioned to retain its skilled and experienced workers and is better placed to attract new workers. This is important given that the ruling will benefit so many workers who would have until now struggled to buy their own home on such a limited wage. As reported on ABC Radio's *PM*, Laura Miller, who works with youth at risk of reoffending, said:

I think as a young worker myself I struggled to think about how I was going to move forward in my future and do things like buy a home and have a family on the wages that the community sector was providing before. So I'm really excited about my future and about hopefully sticking in the community sector long term.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions President, Ged Kearney, said that the ruling by Fair Work Australia was an historic decision that was a significant step towards pay justice for women, who comprise most of the workforce in the community sector. Ms Kearney said:

The decision to properly value the work of the majority female workforce who look after the homeless, the disabled, refugees, domestic violence victims, children at risk and other vulnerable people in our society is a credit to workplace reforms introduced by the Labor Government.

She continued:

The Federal Labor Government has shown enormous leadership here, fully awarding its share of the funding, with a \$2 billion commitment. Now those state and territory governments who have not already committed to their share must do so.

This is where an issue arises. The O'Farrell Government opposed these increases for workers who deserve a higher wage. As Ms Kearney said, the homeless, the disabled, refugees, domestic violence victims and children at risk are cared for by these workers. Who could honestly argue that these people do not deserve a higher wage? We must ask why the O'Farrell Government opposed pay equity when so many people in New South Wales would rightfully benefit from a wage increase. The ruling by Fair Work Australia means that 150,000 Australian workers will now be better off due to these changes.

These taxpayers contribute significantly to society and undoubtedly care for constituents in our electorates. Some of us may have friends or family members who rely on this assistance. The executive director of Anglicare Australia, Kasy Chambers, said that State governments need to match the Federal Government's commitment to the scheme. According to Ms Chambers, State governments need to come on board and commit fully as otherwise it "could lead to a situation where organisations that have workers with the same qualifications, giving a similar service, are actually ... receiving different levels of funding to pay those workers." Of course, appropriate support from the O'Farrell Government would prevent that from occurring.

As we are all aware, the O'Farrell Government opposed Fair Work Australia's plan from the outset and compiled multiple submissions criticising the proposal. There were threats of cutting services and increasing taxes as it was said the cost of the decision would impact significantly on the State's finances. The Government claimed to welcome the historic pay decision, though reservations were still expressed openly after the decision was finalised. The Hon. Greg Pearce demanded precise details of what the Commonwealth Government would provide to New South Wales. A key question arises as to why the O'Farrell Government concluded in one of its submissions that the eventual ruling should not be regarded as a precedent for future cases.

The Government's hesitancy in allowing other sectors possibly to receive a pay increase is alarming, particularly as those sectors have lower wages with pay discrepancies due to gender. I understand that the Australian Services Union [ASU] will meet with Government officials soon to discuss the outcome of the community sector workers pay equity case. I encourage the Government to ensure that all workers in the community sector are paid their fair share. In closing, I will quote the chief of Mission Australia, who summed up the present situation succinctly:

Now the Australian government has stepped up to the plate by making this significant contribution, it's up to the states and territories to make their positions clear and pay their share.

I call on the House to note Fair Work Australia's recognition of our underpaid community sector workers and the recent tribunal decision that is an important step towards closing the gender pay equity gap in Australia. I also call on the House to determine the extent to which the O'Farrell Government will provide funding for this essential pay increase.

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [10.59 a.m.]: It is a pleasure to contribute to debate on the motion relating to the decision by Fair Work Australia to award equal remuneration to the social and community services sector. I congratulate the member for Wallsend on drawing this issue to the attention of the House. At the outset I state my strong support for those who work in the social and community services sector, who do a fantastic job in a very difficult situation. While I know that there is no way a person would be in the social and community services sector for the money, we as a government and as representatives of the community cannot afford to ignore their real worth. Their work is valuable in areas such as my electorate, which has a high proportion of disadvantaged residents. Social and community service workers also play an instrumental part in the not-for-profit sector.

I know that across Australia approximately 5.2 million volunteers give up their time for the service of others. Volunteers do extremely hard work for minimum pay looking after the most vulnerable in our society. They do so, not for a monetary reward, but because they are generous, incredibly generous, and we should not take advantage of them. That is another reason to reinforce the importance of giving them proper pay. These valuable people work towards improving the quality of life and developing the potential of each individual, group and community in society. They also donate a service or activity for the benefit of the public or its institutions. We could not afford to pay for all they do, and without them our society would be worse off. I wish we could afford to pay them so much more: in reality, we probably cannot afford to pay them enough. But I digress.

The Australian Services Union lodged its original application for an equal remuneration order with Fair Work Australia on 11 March 2010, which is approximately two years ago. On 16 May 2011 Fair Work Australia handed down an interim decision and found that, for workers in this sector, there was not equal remuneration for equal or comparable value in comparison with State and local Government employees. Fair Work Australia was not able to identify the extent of the gender-related undervaluation or how to best remedy the situation, and invited further submissions from interested parties on that issue. On 6 December 2011 the New South Wales Government filed its response with Fair Work Australia to the joint submission. The response provided an analysis of the joint submission's methodology for assessing gender undervaluation.

The New South Wales submissions called upon the Commonwealth Government to detail the impact of its \$2 billion funding commitment for the sector in the Federal budget and provide a State-by-State breakdown of its funding arrangement. On 1 February 2012 Fair Work Australia handed down its decision on how to achieve equal remuneration in the social and community services sector. The decision granted to workers in the sector wage increases of between 19 and 41 per cent above their modern award rates, with an additional 4 per cent loading. These wage increases and their loadings are to be implemented in nine equal instalments over a period of eight years beginning on 1 December 2012. As is usual in industrial cases, the applicant in this case, the Australian Services Union, has been requested to draft the final order that will implement the decision of Fair Work Australia.

Fair Work Australia has granted the Australian Services Union an extension of time to draft the final order and has provided assistance to encourage discussion about this matter with the parties. As a party to that matter, I understand that the New South Wales Government is participating in this process. All members of this House should, as I know the New South Wales Government does, support the principal of equal remuneration for male and female workers for work of equal or comparable value, and accept the finding of Fair Work Australia that there is not equal remuneration for workers in the social and community services sector. While the New South Wales Government is committed to providing its fair share of funding for the wage increases, it must be recognised that providing funding for the wage increases flowing from the decision is the shared responsibility of the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments.

The need for this action on the part of the Commonwealth Government is all the more pressing as the decision broadly adopts the wage increases sought by the Commonwealth as part of the submission it filed jointly with the Australian Services Union with Fair Work Australia. It is for this reason that the New South Wales Government calls upon the Commonwealth Government to indicate the precise proportion of its funding commitment that will apply to New South Wales, and how it will be allocated over the period set down by Fair Work Australia for phasing in the wage increases. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [11.06 a.m.]: It is with pleasure that I support the worthy motion moved by the member for Wallsend. The decision to recognise that social and community sector workers are considerably underpaid was a landmark decision made on 1 February. Sometimes we use the term "landmark" a little flippantly, but this is an instance in which it applies to an entire work sector that is primarily female and that has been underpaid for work when similar styles of work are paid at a significantly different level in other sectors. It is interesting to note that during the hearing process and formulation of the ruling while the matter was before Fair Work Australia, the New South Wales Government made five different submissions. The submissions varied in their content at different times.

Indeed at one stage the New South Wales Government said it was important that payment of the increases should be staggered, but in another submission it complained that the pay rises would be staggered. In another submission the New South Wales Government said that it would support the pay increases if the Federal Government stumped up the money, and in another submission the Government said that, even with the Federal Government stumping up the money, it still would not support the pay increases. I want to make an important distinction. There is a massive difference between two words, "can't" and "won't". The O'Farrell Coalition Government is saying that it "won't" support this pay rise. In part of a submission by the New South Wales Government it attempted to estimate how much the impact of the decision would be.

The estimates ranged from somewhere between \$998 million over five years down to \$390 million over five years, which is a fairly broad range. However, that gives us some context within which to have this discussion. Importantly, when we are thinking about the terms "can't" or "won't", we should think about what this Government is prioritising and spending its money on. In January this year the New South Wales Government contributed \$86 million towards the redevelopment of the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG]. That is a decision. That is what governments do—they make decisions. It seems that we can pay \$86 million for the Sydney Cricket Ground but we cannot pay the first year's increase which is, by the Government's own modelling, \$53 million for the first stage of the pay increase. We can pay \$86 million for the Sydney Cricket Ground, but we cannot pay a lesser amount for social and community sector workers.

In other modelling, the New South Wales Government has also given a \$300 million tax cut to ClubsNSW. We can give a \$300 million tax cut, but we cannot afford \$53 million for the first year's increase in pay for social and community sector workers. In other modelling the Coalition Government has taken out in its own budget an additional \$3 billion in borrowings for this year alone. We can borrow \$3 billion, but we will not pay the social and community sector workers the money to which they are entitled. If we look further into the budget we can see more modelling over four years. Unfortunately it only goes for four years but there are some important points there.

I refer specifically to GST increases. On this Government's modelling, GST income will increase by \$4 billion in the next four years, an increase of 33 per cent. It will have \$4 billion more GST revenue to spend than any previous government, but it will not fund this important pay rise. Coal royalties will increase from \$1.2 billion to \$2.3 billion in just the next four years, a 90 per cent increase. The Government will have an additional \$1 billion from coal royalties, but it will not support this important pay rise for these workers. Community sector workers are far and away deserving of this equal pay, pay that equates to the work they do and the contribution they make to the community. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [11.10 a.m.]: I contribute to the motion on the equal remuneration decision for the social and community services sector and place on record my strong support for the social and community services sector workers who do incredibly challenging work in quite difficult circumstances at times. They work with people with disabilities, counsel families in crisis, run homeless shelters and work with victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. I am sure most members have toured their electorates and been to many places staffed by community services sector workers and viewed firsthand the great work they do. There is no doubt that they are valued and for far too long they have been underpaid.

The \$2 billion recently allocated by the Federal Government was a historic pay rise for the 150,000 social and community services sector workers. Of those 150,000 workers, 120,000 of them are women. The historic pay rise reflects the value of their work. It is all well and good to come up with a figure of \$2 billion and say, "This is what is going to happen with pay increases up to 45 per cent over the next seven or eight years, stagger it and give these people the fair pay they deserve." However, the funding model that has been dished up is complex, no doubt for the Federal Government, the State Government, the local government sector and also not-for-profit organisations.

We must be very clear about how we will fund this pay rise to those workers, the percentages thereof, how it will apply to New South Wales and how it will be allocated over the period set down by Fair Work Australia for phasing in the wage increases. There is no argument on this side of the House that those workers need a pay rise. They deserve it. They work very hard in challenging circumstances. But the point of difference is finding that funding mix. It is all well and good to come up with that figure of \$2 billion but the challenge we face is who has to contribute and how to do it responsibly and sustainably. The Australian Services Union is having ongoing meetings with the Government to determine an equitable mix to ensure that the funding is viable and sustainable.

If we are going to provide a program to acknowledge the great work of our social and community sector workers, it must be sustainable and have longevity. The Federal Government cannot come up with a figure and suddenly cost shift to State to get it to carry the burden. The State Government has a mandate to look after the people of New South Wales, quite unlike those opposite who ignored them for so long. We will make New South Wales number one again. We value our community and social sector workers. They will get the fair pay that they deserve.

Mrs BARBARA PERRY (Auburn) [11.14 a.m.]: I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. On 1 February 2012 Fair Work Australia brought down its decision on equal pay in relation to the Australian Services Union claim for the social, community and disability services industries. Fair Work Australia concluded:

For employees in the SACS industry there is not equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal or comparable value by comparison with workers in state and local government employment.

It further noted that:

We consider gender has been important in creating the gap between pay in the SACS industry and pay in comparable state and local government employment.

This was a long-overdue acknowledgment that tens of thousands of community workers were not receiving the remuneration they deserved. Many of them are females, caring for some of our society's most vulnerable such as families and children in crisis, people with disabilities, foster children, people living with mental illnesses and the elderly. Consider that community sector workers with a degree earn on average \$42,000. Compare this with a starting salary for an economics graduate of around \$10,000 to 20,000 a year more. But the difference is really in how the wages peter out for community workers and accelerate for graduates in, for example, the law and financial sectors. It seems too obvious to point out that such workers do not do their jobs for the money. This work is sadly undervalued in our society and it is to our detriment. Clive Hamilton noted that our society is increasingly valuing the amount of money that a citizen puts towards the gross domestic product over everything else.

Ultimately this means that the caring jobs are less and less valued. These workers do incredibly important work, often stepping into the gaps when all other avenues have been exhausted. Research into community services, such as by Eileen Munro in the United Kingdom, is increasingly noting that what will make the difference between a good and bad child protection system will come down not so much to systems but to whether the system is staffed by well-educated, highly skilled and trained caseworkers who are able to assess complex cases and family dynamics. The work undertaken by community service workers is often difficult and sometimes incredibly exhausting, but it is vitally important that we support such workers.

The ramifications of decisions made by caseworkers are far reaching and often make the difference between generational cycles of disadvantage and exclusion, and children being able to flourish in our society and break away from disadvantage and an unequal start to life. The other reason why this pay increase is so important is that community organisations are reporting that they increasingly have to deal with staff shortages in the sector. Because the pay is so low, the sector is unable to attract graduates. The Commonwealth Government has committed \$2 billion to help fund the increases and I commend the Prime Minister for this. The Prime Minister was right when she said:

Properly valuing caring work and providing decent wages in these services sectors will also help make our economy and our society more resilient.

The Federal Government is committed to fund its share of the programs it funds directly and also proportionately its share of the joint State-Federal funding through specific purpose payments and national

partnership payments. The way in which those funding commitments will be applied will be the subject of discussions between relevant parties. It is clear from submissions that the Australian Government is committed to meeting its share of the burden that will flow from this decision. Over the next eight years, community sector workers will have their pay increased by between 40 and 60 per cent. This is a good thing and I call on the O'Farrell Government to recognise the importance of this ruling and to commit to its fair share of this increase. The increases have to be funded properly in a timely manner so that other programs or services in the community services sector or the disability sector are cut. Community organisations should not have to worry about how this pay increase will be funded. The Premier made a commitment to fund this increase. He should stick to it and act quickly and properly.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [11.18 a.m.]: I am very happy to speak on the motion moved by the member for Wallsend and I commend her for removing paragraph (3) of the motion. On 1 February 2012 Fair Work Australia handed down its decision on how to achieve equal remuneration in the social and community services sector. The decision grants to workers in the sector wage increases of between 19 and 41 per cent above the modern award rates with an additional 4 per cent loading. These wage increases and loading are to be implemented in nine equal instalments over a period of eight years beginning on 1 December this year. As is usual in industrial cases, the applicant, in this case the Australian Services Union, has been requested to draft the final order that will implement the decision of Fair Work Australia. Fair Work Australia has granted the Australian Services Union an extension of time to draft a final order and has provided assistance in order to encourage discussions about this matter with all parties concerned.

As a party to this matter, the New South Wales Government is participating in this process. The New South Wales Government acknowledges the valuable contribution of workers in the social and community services sector and their important role in delivering much-needed services to the New South Wales community and its most vulnerable members. Further, the Government supports the principle of equal remuneration for male and female workers for work of equal or comparable value and accepts the finding of Fair Work Australia that there is not equal remuneration for workers in the social and community services sector. The Government is committed to providing its fair share of funding for the wage increases and will carefully consider the implications and impact of the decision on the State budget. The budget was handed to us in a very poor state. We must be cognisant of the black hole that was left to us. At the same time, it must be recognised—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The budget was left with a \$1.3 billion surplus.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! That is not a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: Being left with an extremely bad budget black hole has its implications. At the same time, it must be recognised that providing funding for the wage increases flowing from the Fair Work Australia decision is a shared responsibility of the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments, and is an essential part of managing the outcome of the case. The need for action by the Commonwealth is all the more pressing as the decision broadly adopts the wage increases sought by the Commonwealth as part of the submission it filed jointly with the Australian Services Union in Fair Work Australia. I refer to some comments of the Minister for Family and Community Services, and the Minister for Ageing, and the Minister for Disability Services in a media release:

Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward and Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services Andrew Constance today slammed the Opposition for hypocrisy in the Australian Services Union (ASU) Equal Remuneration Test Case.

"The former state Labor Government made a mess of this case, making submissions which neither quest the merits nor the quantum of the claim," Ms Goward said.

"NSW Labor told the public they were in favour of the ASU claim but at the same time told Fair Work Australia that they nether supported nor opposed it ..."

Flip-flopping away.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [11.22 a.m.], by leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. The Greens obviously acknowledge the recognition now given to community sector workers regarding their pay. I do not intend to repeat the important facts of this matter but, rather, to state that sympathy is not enough. If it were not for the Australian Services Union and the efforts of organised labour—the activists, organisers and union officials—we would not be in this situation. That should not be lost in this discussion. The Pay Up campaign run by the Australian Services Union with the support of the community services sector was

incredibly successful—the campaign received four awards from the Australian Capital Territory. The efforts of the Australian Services Union's State secretary, Sally McManus, and others have been outstanding, despite the union being criticised in this House for its work on the case.

It is clear that disability and community services organisations are struggling, such as the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre in my electorate, which has fantastic staff who work in some cases for up to a 30 per cent wage gap between the community and government sectors. They need our support. Their efforts, rallies, protests and marches led to this outcome. Many people say, "We express sympathy and know they are hardworking and don't get paid" but nothing happens. Sympathy does not pay the bills. Organising, struggling and campaigning get results. That is what the Australian Services Union and its members demonstrated in this case. I am not engaging in a political debate about whether the Government should pay up; of course this issue should be resolved quickly and an investment should be made, but the Fair Work Australia decision tells the story of how organising delivers results.

Traditionally, the community services sector, of which 87 per cent of its workers are female, was poorly organised. The organisers who went out every day to all the different community organisations and recruited members to build the critical mass to research, get legal representation and raise funds to take the matter to Fair Work Australia delivered the result. I pay tribute to every single rank and file member, those involved in the union and all who supported that community campaign to get the fantastic result delivered by Fair Work Australia. Half the step has been taken; the next steps now need to be taken to fund it.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [11.25 a.m.], in reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Smithfield, Cessnock, Tamworth, Auburn, Camden and Balmain for their contributions to the debate. It was great to hear the member for Smithfield praise community sector workers for a job well done. Importantly, he mentioned the Australian Services Union negotiations. It was heartening to hear him say also that the New South Wales Government is committed to providing its fair share. The member for Cessnock said that Fair Work Australia's decision that community services workers were underpaid is entirely appropriate. Of course, women primarily work in this sector and are paid lower wages compared with that of their male counterparts. A number of submissions the Liberal-Nationals Government provided Fair Work Australia contained conflicting responses.

I liked the comment of the member for Cessnock who said that at times the Liberal-Nationals Government had a "can't" and "won't" attitude to funding for community sector workers. I certainly want to change those words to "can" and "will". The member for Tamworth also acknowledged the challenging work of community sector workers and was in no doubt about their value. If that is true, let us pay them their worth. The dichotomy is that community sector workers do such an important job yet their pay is not commensurate with that importance. The member for Tamworth said that we need to understand the complex pay structure. I am sure that is the case, but I am sure also that with all the talent and ability of the Liberal-Nationals Government that complexity will be sorted out straightaway and the decision will be made as soon as possible.

The member for Auburn spoke about the decision on the February Fair Work case and the acknowledgement of the importance of child protection workers. She said that child protection workers must be well educated and highly skilled to carry out their jobs. The member for Auburn said that the community services sector had difficulty attracting qualified people because they were not paid their worth and, therefore, were more attracted to other jobs. I was happy to hear the member for Camden say that the Government supports the principle of equal remuneration. As many community services workers are women, it remains with the Government to ensure that women are paid commensurate with their male colleagues in any sphere of work.

The member for Balmain concluded the debate by talking about the support from the Australian Services Union and the hard work it had undertaken. I too pay homage to Sally McManus, Secretary of the Australian Services Union, who has worked extremely hard to empower workers, particularly women, in the community sector field to seek payment of a decent wage. I totally agree with the member for Balmain that sympathy is wonderful, but it is not enough. Sympathy does not pay the rent or the bills, nor does it attract qualified workers to this field. I agree with the member for Balmain. We need a quick resolution to this situation to ensure that we do match the Federal Government's \$2 billion. Let this Government match the Federal Government's funding commitment to ensure that community sector workers are paid their worth, particularly underpaid women in this field.

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

Motion agreed to.

PHILIPPINE-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [11.30 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. has been offering guidance and support to Filipino migrants in the local community for over 20 years;
- (2) notes that Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. provides assistance for recent Filipino migrants in finding employment, as well as services to assist with immigration, legal matters, domestic violence, family and relationships, child care, aged services, women's health, mental health and income support; and
- (3) congratulates President Julie Nunez for her commitment to providing support to the Philippine-Australian community in Blacktown.

It is with great pleasure that I move this motion to note the work of this incredible organisation. Far too often the work of organisations such as Philippine-Australian Community Services Incorporated [PACSI] goes unnoticed. These organisations provide valuable services directly, but also indirectly, by promoting social harmony and acceptance within our community. It is the efforts of organisations such as the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. which make our multicultural society in New South Wales work so well. Without the tireless work of people such as Dr Julie Nunez this would not be possible.

The core mission of the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. is to work for the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants in Australia. It does admirable and fantastic work when advancing this cause. It does not just provide services but facilitates access to information and provide recent migrants with the resources and networks they need to establish themselves in Australia. It is by building these strong community connections that the organisation empowers Filipino migrants not just to succeed but to give back to society in an equally meaningful way. The organisation's goal is that Filipino migrants will be able to contribute to Australian society while at the same time maintaining the roots and strength of their own culture.

The results are seen right across my electorate of Blacktown, which has a large population of Filipino migrants and descendants of those who have migrated. They make a huge contribution to the area of Blacktown. You only need to wander down the main street to see the number of Filipino takeaway shops and restaurants that are located in the main street of Blacktown and the great contribution that is made to food, restaurants and catering within Blacktown by the Filipino community. Many in the Filipino community make a contribution to the wider community in Blacktown.

The Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. was founded in 1989 as the Philippine Australian Council in support of Filipino women. It was founded in response to the growing number of Filipino women migrating to Australia at the time who were otherwise without support in the settlement process. Over the next few years the organisation faced many significant changes to the way in which it delivered services. In 1995 its name was officially changed to the Philippine-Australian Community Services Incorporated to reflect the new face of Filipino migration under family stream migration. These days the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. is able to operate through the settlement grants program from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and continues to help new Australians tackle the many hurdles of settlement in a new homeland.

The organisation has offered its services to all newly arrived Filipino migrants who arrived in Australia within the past five years as well as the vulnerable members of the community and those in need. All of this is provided completely free of charge. This is only possible thanks to the incredible commitment of the organisation's dedicated volunteers. Each and every one of them should be commended. Dr Julie Nunez should be congratulated by the House for selfless service not just to the Filipino Australian community but to the wider community. Dr Nunez was named Blacktown's Woman of the Year in 2010 and she has poured her life into helping others.

Wherever you go in Blacktown Julie Nunez is well known and regarded by the community. She has worked tirelessly as part of the organisation despite having a full-time job. She is always able to find extra time and go the extra distance to make sure the organisation continues to function and, most importantly, that those people who look to rely on the organisation are able to access the services and support they need to get on with their new lives. The dedication of the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. and Dr Nunez are visible every day in my electorate and right across New South Wales. It is with great pleasure that I commend this motion to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [11.35 a.m.]: I support the motion and welcome it. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving the House the opportunity to talk about the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. The body is an independent community-based organisation working for the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants in Australia—as we have heard. The primary aim is to assist newly arrived Filipino migrants, specifically those who have arrived in the last five years, and Filipino Australians in vulnerable situations, such as in social isolation, in need of community support, or dealing with domestic violence. As we have heard, the organisation began its life in 1989 as the Philippines Australian Council in support of Filipino women and later changed its name to Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. in recognition of the increasing number of Filipinos migrating to Australia as families.

The organisation is funded by the Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Through the settlement grants from that department Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. is able to continue providing support and assistance to newly arrived Filipino migrants. Under that basis all the organisation's services are provided free to those in need in the community. Newly arrived Filipino migrants, those that have arrived in the past five years, and those in various situations of vulnerability or threat can use those services.

The organisation offers information, referral and casework services. It provides information and referrals on settlement needs such as employment opportunities, pathways to employment, enhancing skills in looking for work and services to get assistance with immigration, legal issues, domestic violence, family relationships, child care, aged services, women's health, mental health and income support. It provides a telephone information and referral service which operates in the evening on Tuesdays.

Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. is a membership based organisation. It invites membership from the target community and encourages active participation in the organisation. I know two things about Filipino Australians: they are joiners and they are doers. Filipino Australians genuinely want to contribute to the betterment of the society in which they find themselves. In many organisations I have encountered in the time I have been involved in the district I find Filipinos contributing in positive ways to make a better society for all of us. I congratulate the current leadership of Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc., including Dr Nunez, vice president Elvira Cortez, vice president Ellen Limum, and secretary Imelda Valve.

I look back to when Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. was originally founded in 1989 by Linda Swords, assisted by Jess Diaz. Linda Swords is a former president of the Philippine Community Council and was honoured in 2006 with the Filipino women's award by the Philippines consulate. The award was in honour of the many different things that she had done on behalf of Filipino women in Australia in particular. Over many years Ms Swords championed the cause of women fighting for action in relation to domestic violence and dealing with the issue of mail-order brides. In particular, Ms Swords was able to achieve an amendment to the migration regulation to control serial sponsorship of brides by Australian men.

This significant contribution and achievement over many years should be acknowledged here today as part of the history of the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. I note that some of those issues remain real issues for the Filipino community today. Domestic violence remains an issue, particularly for those on temporary spouse visas in Australia for a relatively short time. They feel, not unreasonably and understandably, that their status in Australia could be threatened if they make complaints. That is an area in which a particular group of people need our support. Groups such as Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. provide that support.

After Linda Swords a long period of leadership of Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. was undertaken by Jess Diaz, who was president for more than 10 years. He was responsible for sourcing grants over that time to support the employment of two resettlement workers, and to provide a youth development program. In more recent years Jess Diaz has gone on to become a councillor in Blacktown City, being one of the first two people of Filipino background to represent the community in any level of government in Australia. I am proud to be able to say that he achieved this distinction as a representative of the Liberal Party. Jess's son Jaymes has also been involved in the work of Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. in recent years, particularly in relation to working with young people.

Jaymes Diaz has held the position of one of the directors of the organisation. He represents the next generation of Filipino-Australian leadership, and continues that tradition of "joining and doing" of Filipino people, who are keen to contribute to the betterment of their society. The story of Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. reminds me of an earlier story of Australian migration. Many of us growing up in schools in Australia would have learnt the story of Caroline Chisholm, a woman who contributed much to the

betterment of female migrants in her time back in the early nineteenth century when people arrived penniless, often friendless, on the docks of Sydney to try to make a new life but in a harsh and challenging place. For Filipino women in the 1980s and 1990s, I am sure some of those same characteristics would have applied.

The people who have formed Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. over the years have continued in that proud tradition of Caroline Chisholm in providing a safe haven and support for new arrivals, women in particular, trying to make their way in a new land. I congratulate all of them on the wonderful work they have done over the years. I welcome and endorse the motion put forward today by the Leader of the Opposition so that Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. can be appropriately recognised; and so that all those people from the days of Linda Swords through to Jess Diaz, and now to Julie Nunez, can be appropriately recognised for the wonderful way in which they have contributed to making Australia a better place for all of us.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [11.42 a.m.]: I join the Leader of the Opposition in congratulating President Julie Nunez, for her commitment to providing support to the Philippine-Australian community in Sydney. I know the member for Lakemba has guests present in the gallery today from the migrant resource centres. It is very good to see them. I congratulate them on the incredible work they do to help all people coming to this country make this their home. As members know, I come from an electorate called Canterbury. It is an extraordinarily diverse electorate. In fact, like many of our electorates, it is becoming more and more diverse as time goes on: 40 per cent of Canterbury residents were born overseas, as the people in the gallery will know. This makes Canterbury an exciting place, and it makes me proud to be the representative with responsibility for such a diverse electorate. I know the Leader of the Opposition and others in this place feel exactly the same way. The vibrancy of the different languages and cultures makes Australia a much richer country.

It is interesting to reflect, as the member for Riverstone just did, on the history of migration to Australia. Of course, migration to this country goes back many, many, many generations. That is the way in which I think about this country: it is built on the extraordinary base of the first peoples and then waves and waves of migration over several hundred years. In the Canterbury electorate the foreign language most spoken is Chinese, but we have communities of people from Liberia, Burundi, Eritrea, Pakistan and many other places, and of course the Filipino community, which we honour today. As I said, I feel privileged to be a person chosen by that community to represent them and bring their aspirations to this place.

That Canterbury is such a vibrant community is due in no small part to the work of many community organisations over many years. At the end of the day that is what we are speaking about here. We are speaking about the many community organisations of the various waves of migration that contribute so much to the broader Australian community. Philippine Australian Community Services Inc. is an independent, community-based organisation working for the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants in Australia. It has a very important role: protection of the rights of the community and the rights of workers of the community. Of course, I recognise that many workers' rights are infringed, particularly if English is not their first language or they are working in casual, low-paid jobs.

Community service organisations facilitate access to information, resources and social networks—critical if community members are to have the full benefits of Australian citizenship and be members of the Australian community, which is not always the case. Filipino migrants contribute more significantly to the Australian society while they continue to uphold and practise Filipino culture and values. I want to focus on that for a moment because this organisation ensures those goals. One of the things that we have finally come to understand in this country, after many mistakes and much stupidity, is that people coming to this country are better contributors if they can hold onto their cultures and languages and that is respected.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [11.46 a.m.]: I am very pleased to support the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. I put on record my personal support and great affection for the Filipino community in western Sydney. New South Wales is the home of Australia's greatest multicultural community, and the Filipino community is one of the richest and most colourful cultures in this State. Filipino community members are humble in their great pride in their homeland, language, cuisine and culture. I am proud that the Philippine Language and Cultural Association of Australia is based in St Marys, within my electorate. I have had the great privilege of being part of this most wonderful community for just over three years. I have been welcomed most warmly into their various community gatherings, being able to present merit awards to students on passing certain grades in the Filipino Language School, be part of Christmas events and, most memorably, joining in the cultural dance called the Rigodon and learning the dance at one event.

Just last month I was warmly greeted by the current President of the Philippine Language and Cultural Association of Australia, Mr Danny Rosales, and other community leaders, and welcomed to the Filipino Language School in St Marys, which runs every Saturday morning during school terms. I was greeted with "Komusta", the Filipino greeting of hello. After spending two hours observing the school in operation I could, with much practice, respond with the Filipino return of "Mabuti naman"—I think I still need to work on that. Marie Bandayral, the Filipino Language School principal, has built a strong and close Filipino community that give of their personal time and effort every Saturday morning for young Australian Filipino community students.

Marie has built a great collection of Filipino members who freely impart to the younger generation, particularly boys and girls who were born in Australia of Filipino heritage, their knowledge, expertise and skills in matters such as cuisine, dance, language and culture. Last month we had the privilege to host the inaugural gathering in this House of the Filipino Multicultural Consultative Committee. That was a night of great and positive ideas and suggestions. The Filipino community raised issues direct with the Government. The passion of the community members displayed at this meeting was very warming. I am quite certain that with their level of passion and knowledge of the needs of the Filipino community and with my co-chairs leading that committee we will work really well together in finding solutions to the current challenges that they have raised.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving us this opportunity to place on the record the New South Wales Government's strong support and affection for the Filipino community, which brings great wealth, colour, vibrancy and richness to our State. It is my absolute privilege and honour to be a co-chair of the Filipino Ministerial Consultative Committee. I also place on record my support for the current president of the Philippine Language and Cultural Association of Australia and for other members of the language school in the Mulgoa electorate.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [11.50 a.m.]: I also wish to make a contribution to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. First I acknowledge in the visitors gallery representatives of migrant resource centres from across Sydney and I commend them for their hard work and dedication. I am pleased to join with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Blacktown in recognising the contribution of the Filipino community, and in particular Filipino-Australian Community Services Inc. One of the great privileges of being the Opposition shadow Minister for Citizenship and Communities is to meet with, listen to and build friendships with groups covering the great spectrum of nationalities in our State. The Filipino community in Australia is well established and respected for their great work ethic, their strong sense of family and community and their focus on education. Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. plays an important role in supporting members of the community settle and become active members of society. Its mission statement highlights its values and objectives and the role it hopes to play in serving Filipino Australians. The mission statement reads:

The Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. is an independent community-based organisation working for the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants in Australia. We believe that by facilitating their access to information, resources and social networks P.A.C.S.I contributes to their empowerment. Thus, Filipino migrants can contribute more significantly to the Australian society as they continue to uphold and practice Filipino culture and values.

The mission statement is powerful, succinct and is a narrative familiar to very many migrant community organisations in our local areas—groups that recognise that the role they have is to help their newly arrived members to become active and valued members of the Australian society while retaining links with their heritage, language and culture. Like so many community organisations that members in this place come into contact with, Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. is run by a dedicated management committee that goes above and beyond the strict nine to five duties. In Julie Nunez the organisation has a strong leader and dedicated servant. But these organisations need the support of the broader community if their hopes and mission are to be realised.

The Filipino community, as with the 200 other migrant communities that have settled in Australia, needs the New South Wales and Australian governments to recognise the strength and opportunity provided by our rich heritage and diversity, and our governments need to buttress our community from the narrow, bigoted and negative attitudes that too often find comfort in our media. It is by providing an environment that is respectful, welcoming, civil and fair that we truly honour our diversity and provide the ingredients to enable a stronger, more cohesive society. I am pleased to join with the Hon. John Robertson, who I know has a deep respect for our diversity and has a strong relationship with the Filipino community, especially in his local area, in acknowledging Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc.

In doing so, I also acknowledge the hardworking staff and volunteers of this organisation and sister organisations throughout New South Wales. Last year I had the pleasure of meeting and talking with Lourdes Kaiser, President of the Campbelltown and Region Filipino Council. Like Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc., that group is dedicated to strengthening the Australian community by building bridges and support for migrants settling here. I join with all members in acknowledging Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc., its executive, members and volunteers, and congratulate them on their commitment to building an even better Australia.

Mr BRYAN DOYLE (Campbelltown) [11.54 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to support the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. The Australian Filipino community at Campbelltown plays an integral role in our society and they have made a longstanding contribution to our community. They bring with them great strengths, faith, family and country. That is one of the reasons that our Minister for Citizenship and Communities installed the Ministerial Consultative Community Committee for Filipinos. I am very pleased to be a co-chair of that committee with my colleagues the member for Riverstone and the member for Mulgoa. Some of the issues dealt with by the committee are very pertinent to the Filipino community—migrant issues, the recognition of external qualifications and addressing settlement issues—and I look forward to working very closely with the Filipino community.

This morning when I was out on my morning bike ride heading up Anthony Drive I rode up through a crimson dawn to Rizal Park. Members may not be aware of the story of José Rizal, who was the father of the Filipino independence movement. In Campbelltown his memory is honoured by the Filipino community with a wonderful park dominating the high hills of Rosemeadow. Later this year we will unveil a five-metre statue of Dr José Rizal, which will be the biggest statue in Australia, to honour his work. Dr José Rizal was a Filipino polymath and a patriot. He peacefully advocated for reform in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial era. He was born on 19 June 1861, the seventh of 11 children. He studied widely—a Bachelor of Arts, medicine and a doctorate. He was a polyglot—which means he could speak in very many languages—and he was conversant in at least 22 languages. Sadly, Dr José Rizal was executed on 30 December 1896 by the Spanish authorities. It is tragic that the father of the Filipino independence movement died just two years before independence was achieved.

I had the great honour of attending a play, *Her Son, José Rizal*, which was performed at the Campbelltown Arts Centre. The play features the important role that his mother played in his life and some of the reasons he was instilled with such a great love for this country, for his people and for honour—so much so that he was prepared to give his life for his people. Present too at the play that night was the Consul General Anne Louis, who is a regular and frequent visitor to Campbelltown. I had the pleasure of her company at the recent Premier's Harmony Dinner and also at the Rizal Park opening. It gives me great pleasure to support this motion. The Australian Filipino community has contributed greatly to our society. They are very proud Australians and I am proud to stand with them.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [11.58 a.m.], by leave: I make a brief contribution in support of the motion of the member for Blacktown asking the House to note the role of the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. over some 20 years. The work that that organisation does is set out in the second paragraph of the motion, and the motion calls on the House to congratulate the president, Julie Nunez. Members on both sides of the Parliament, particularly members in western Sydney, are very pleased to recognise the very strong Filipino community that has developed in the broader western suburbs of Sydney as well as in many other parts of New South Wales.

The Filipino community now makes up the largest component of migrants in the Mount Druitt and Blacktown local government areas—it is certainly one of the fastest growing. Like other speakers, I recognise the second paragraph of the motion that notes that the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. helps community members to find employment, for example. The community recognises that, like other communities, it faces problems with unemployment. The organisation also assists with immigration and settling matters, legal matters, domestic violence and the like. The paragraph should also recognise that the Filipino community places a great emphasis on things such as employment and education, involvement in church groups and pursuit of home ownership.

The member for Riverstone recognised the involvement of the Filipino community in political activities, and of course it is heavily involved in all sides of politics. As a matter of fact, the Liberal candidate who ran against me at the last election was from the Filipino community, and she received considerable support. But I suspect I would not be standing here today if it were not for the support of so many other members of the

Filipino community, and I recognise those who are heavily involved in the Labor Party. I will not list them because it would be impossible to name all the leaders in the Filipino community in an area such as Blacktown and give them due recognition. For every person I honoured I would offend somebody else by leaving them out.

I repeat the point I made during my Harmony Day speech in my electorate the other week. The Mount Druitt community, as part of the broader Blacktown local government area, is a great example of how different migrant organisations coexist and work well together to form a harmonious and tolerant community. About 50 per cent of people in the Mount Druitt electorate were born overseas. The area has the largest Indigenous population in an urban area. The Filipino community ensures that it coexists harmoniously with other nationalities, such as people from the subcontinent—whose community is growing fast in the Mount Druitt electorate.

The Filipino community should be honoured, as the motion states, but in a broader sense we should recognise its involvement in every facet of Australian life. It is now a major contributor to the welfare of our local community. I attend many high school and primary school presentations. Not a day goes by that a member of the Filipino community is not recognised for academic achievement or for their community work. Schoolchildren from the Filipino community often receive recognition for their hard work in furthering their careers and making their families extremely proud. I thank the member for Blacktown for moving this motion and I thank the House for allowing me to contribute to the debate.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [12.02 p.m.], in reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Riverstone, Canterbury, Mulgoa, Lakemba, Campbelltown and Mount Druitt for contributing to the debate. It is important to acknowledge the contribution of the Filipino community to the wider growth of our State. Many comments have been made about culture, values and heritage. One of the great things about organisations such as the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. is that they instil values. They teach younger members of the community the values of maintaining culture and educate them about their heritage. It is critical for everyone to know who they are and where they have come from. Maintaining culture and heritage is a crucial part of the work of these organisations.

Ours is a story of migration. This great nation was built on migration. That migration success is largely due to the fact that we have organisations such as the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. that help people transition into a culture that is sometimes confronting. The member for Riverstone made that point. In the early 1980s and 1990s our culture may have been quite confronting, but organisations such as the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. smooth people's transition to a new culture and ensure that the story of migration continues to grow. I see that in my electorate of Blacktown, where there are many festivals and events celebrating Filipino culture and heritage.

The Filipino community makes a phenomenal contribution to education and to business in the Blacktown area. I spoke about restaurants and the like but many other businesses in Blacktown, such as legal firms and travel agencies, are operated by people of Filipino heritage. Those people are giving back and contributing through organisations such as the Philippine-Australian Community Services Inc. It is important that we continue to celebrate and acknowledge the work of these organisations. We must acknowledge the great work of the many volunteers who contribute their time for no financial gain or public recognition. They volunteer simply to make life easier for our community and for migrants by ensuring that their migration and settlement is successful. More importantly, they ensure the continued success of multiculturalism in this great nation. These organisations encourage people to integrate, celebrate and participate in what is one of the greatest countries in the world.

This is a great country and New South Wales is a great State because of the story of migration. We embrace these people, present them with opportunities and encourage them to take up each and every one of those opportunities, whether in business, employment or education. The Filipino community excels on all these fronts. Community members do so with great vigour and because they take great pride in their culture and their community. They ensure that, as migrants to this country, they contribute and give back in recognition of the opportunities that have been presented. They also make sure that their children and grandchildren embrace those opportunities and excel in areas such as education to have the best possible life they can. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

KENSINGTON TO LA PEROUSE LIGHT RAIL

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [12.06 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes the Government's promise during the recent State election campaign to conduct a feasibility study into the expansion of light rail to Kensington; and
- (2) calls on the Government to expand the scope of the feasibility study beyond Kensington to La Perouse.

I have not come here to pick a fight or to make a political point. The discussion about light rail has been going on for decades. Light rail is also referred to by some people as "trams". The member from Coogee and other people who have resided in our area for some time will know that we used to have trams. Indeed, the Galloping Greens—the greatest rugby union club in the world—wear a myrtle green strip that was designed to match the colour of the tram stations on the way to Coogee Beach. Decades ago trams were a feature of transport in the eastern suburbs through Coogee and all the way to La Perouse. Some of those early tram tracks and the infrastructure that accompanied them can still be seen today. But now the worm has turned and we are discussing reintroducing trams.

For many years Randwick council has been an advocate for the reintroduction of light rail to the area. It has done much work, conducted studies and spent a lot of money on the project. I commend Randwick council for that work. On many occasions the present Government has expressed a commitment to reintroducing light rail by bringing it from the central business district along Anzac Parade to service that great corridor of business, education and entertainment. The light rail would run past the Sydney Cricket Ground, the Sydney Football Stadium, Randwick racecourse—the greatest racecourse in the world—and the University of New South Wales. That important transport corridor is used by hundreds of thousands of people each year.

The studies show that for all intents and purposes the current study ceases at Kingsford, having surveyed the services to the University of New South Wales. My electorate of Maroubra starts just south of the University of New South Wales at Kingsford and has been pretty well served by the bus network. The electorate does not have a heavy rail network, but it does have a pretty good bus network. I notice that the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and member for Davidson is in the Chamber. At one stage I think the Auditor-General gave a briefing to the committee—if I am wrong, I stand to be corrected—and provided the admirable statistic that more than 90 per cent of the population of Sydney live within 400 metres of a bus stop, which is pretty good. That would certainly be the case in my electorate. However, population pressures are increasing in the Maroubra electorate.

The former Prince Henry Hospital site has been redeveloped as a terrific adaptive re-use, with many heritage buildings being protected in the process. But the redevelopment has introduced more residents to the area. To the north of that is a site formerly owned by the University of New South Wales that was used to undertake solar research activities. Now that site has approximately 1,000 dwellings. There is increasing pressure on bus services. I ask the Government to give a commitment to expanding the feasibility study beyond Kensington and Kingsford and out to La Perouse. I appreciate that it might not happen for quite some time—all feasibility studies are subject to economic constraints—and with the short-listing of routes occurring now, the study may not be able to be expanded immediately. However, I wish to elicit a commitment from the Government that it is considering the people of the Maroubra electorate.

Consider the suburbs lying south of Kingswood that require improved public transport: on the Heffron side of Bunnerong Road there is Daceyville and Pagewood, and there is the massive suburb of Maroubra as well as the suburbs of Matraville, Malabar, Little Bay, Phillip Bay and South Maroubra. There is a large population mass along Anzac Parade in a concentration of medium-density developments with a height limit of 24 metres, which was part of a consolidation strategy implemented by various governments. The populations in all those areas would like to have access to a light rail service. The light rail corridor already exists: the median strip on Anzac Parade has been placed along the alignment of the tram tracks. Much of the work that needs to be carried out to identify a land corridor and acquiring the land has been done, so acquisition costs would be minimal. I note the commitment of the current Government, in particular the press release of the Minister for Transport dated 8 December 2011 in which she stated:

The NSW Government is committed to expanding the light rail network ...

Key to expanding the network is doing the homework required to see where light rail will best fit into Sydney's CBD and the transport corridors to the University of Sydney and the University of NSW.

I would like the 80,000 people who live in the Maroubra electorate to be considered in the study. If the Government has made a commitment to expanding light rail from the central business district as far as Kingsford and Kensington, I ask the Government to give a further commitment that indicates it has not forgotten the people of my electorate. I ask the Government to commit, at the very least, to examining whether light rail could form part of a transport network to the historical birthplace of European Australia at La Perouse and provide benefits to the people of my electorate as well.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [12.13 p.m.]: The member for Maroubra knows that I am never one to pick a fight, but I think a little bit of history will enlighten the House. Labor spent 16 years denying that light rail could be a good and viable public transport option for Sydney. In 2008 the Labor Minister for Transport, John Watkins, said, "We are absolutely against light rail." He said, "It's a bad answer for Sydney." The New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals have always believed that light rail should play an important part in Sydney's transport future. It should be part of the mix. That is why, prior to the 2011 State election, we made a commitment to investigate the feasibility of a number of extensions to the light rail network, including through the central business district to the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney. The Government is committed to investigating all options to improve public transport in New South Wales, not just heavy rail or road projects.

This Government has already made major strides towards the development of a light rail network in Sydney. As recently as last week, the Premier and the Minister for Transport announced that the Government had bought the existing light rail. That gives the Government the flexibility to examine all options for how best to deliver and operate an expanded light rail network for Sydney without being tied up in convoluted contractual arrangements that date back over 15 years. We have already included light rail in the MyZone ticketing system, which was something the previous Labor Government said could not be done. We have established a dedicated project team that is focused on delivering the extension of the Inner West Light Rail between Lilyfield and Dulwich Hill, as well as developing a strategic plan for extending the light rail network right across Sydney.

The Sydney Light Rail Strategic Plan will explore the potential for expanding light rail along three specific corridors in line with the Government's election commitment. The plan will consider routes to the Sydney central business district, from the central business district to the University of New South Wales, and from the central business district to the University of Sydney. The three corridors have been chosen because they represent highly active transport corridors with a significant variety of trip purposes, including work, educational commuting, special events and trips, recreational and tourism journeys. The three corridors also experience demand in both directions. The plan, which will be completed by approximately the middle of the year, will provide a clear understanding of the best way forward for light rail in Sydney, including how to interact with other elements of the transport mix to provide fully integrated and enhanced transport solutions.

Currently there are two routes into the central business district under consideration, two routes towards the University of Sydney, and seven routes under consideration for the corridor to the University of New South Wales. The Sydney Light Rail Strategic Plan will access wider network benefits and, critically, will address the needs of our customers to achieve the best public transport services for passengers along the central business district, the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney corridors. That is not to say that we do not think there are other potential routes that could be suitable for light rail in the future, but we need to start with a core base network. Unlike the previous Government, we are making progress on developing a light rail network—not just announcing an ad hoc series of random projects. Suddenly the member for Maroubra has hitched his wagon to the light rail carriage. That is quite a turnaround.

In a Randwick City Council meeting the member for Maroubra once exclaimed that we would see light rail running down Anzac Parade over his dead body. Since his political career began in 1995, the member for Maroubra has been since so dismissive of light rail that he voted in favour of developments that split the old tramway corridor that wound its way up the hill to Randwick. If the integrity of the corridor had been preserved, it would have solved myriad problems associated with establishing a future light rail service to the Prince of Wales Hospital. There is said to be a split in the ranks of the eastern suburbs branch of the Labor Party. Labor councillors on Randwick City Council are hurriedly trying to find a plausible position on light rail. So far, they have come up with only one retort: "Let's finish the eastern suburbs railway." They want to finish the eastern suburbs railway that the Labor Party pulled the plug on in 1952, and again in 1976. Labor members continue to be light rail sceptics and light rail deniers.

Let us not forget which party scrapped Sydney's tram network in the first place. It was the Labor Party. What other public transport plans have been axed by Labor over the past 16 years? There have been 12 in the

past 16 years alone. In the history of public transport infrastructure in this State, the New South Wales Labor Party has set a new record by committing to not build more infrastructure than any other government in the Commonwealth. In the *Southern Courier* in February 2011, the member for Maroubra said of the eastern suburbs light rail line:

Make no mistake, this rail line will never happen under a Liberal Government.

All Barry O'Farrell has committed to is a feasibility study.

People have been doing studies into light rail for 30 years.

Now Barry wants another one.

Now it seems that the member for Maroubra wants another one too. On this side of the House we welcome the member's late conversion to the merits of light rail. It is a conversion of biblical proportions. On the road to Damascus, Saul's conversion came when he fell under the light of God. It seems that on Anzac Parade the member for Maroubra too has fallen under a light—that of light rail. The member for Maroubra is right to say it is logical to extend light rail to Maroubra and to La Perouse, and that will be looked at in the future. However, first we need a core base of light rail in Sydney, and we are getting on with delivering it.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [12.21 p.m.]: I support the member for Maroubra and his motion calling on the Government to expand the scope of the current feasibility study on the expansion of the light rail to Kensington, and beyond Kensington to La Perouse. I do so because, as the member for Maroubra has said, light rail is an important part of the overall transport mix. We know light rail will never replace heavy rail or buses that can move large numbers of people quickly, but it plays an important role. It can be relatively cheap, it can often provide the connectivity that the major transport systems cannot, and it is very much welcomed by members of the community. The member for Coogee talked about giving the House a history lesson. Perhaps I might give a history lesson to the member for Coogee. It was the Labor Government that extended the light rail to Lilyfield and it was the Labor Government that took the decision to extend it further to Dulwich Hill, in my electorate, and also into the city.

Substantial work was completed on that commitment prior to the March election, including the provision of planning approval, community consultation and the commencement of feasibility work. The O'Farrell Government has dragged its feet on completing this project, which is a great disappointment to the people in my electorate. I know also from members representing the electorates of Canterbury and Balmain that their constituents—and I believe also the constituents of the member for Drummoyne and the member for Strathfield—are disappointed that not only has the light rail to Dulwich Hill not been extended beyond the commitment that we made to complete it by 2012, but also the GreenWay, which was the cycle-walking way that was to run alongside the light rail, has been ditched by the Government.

That is a huge disappointment to the people of the inner west. Many people believe the GreenWay was as important as the extension of the light rail, if not more important. It was a chance to provide another transport mode and more recreational opportunities, and a way of regenerating bushcare sites, which is very important for biodiversity in the inner west. It is a big disappointment. Having said that, I support the motion of the member for Maroubra. I believe that a feasibility study into the expansion of light rail to Kensington is welcome but we want to see it extended further, to La Perouse. There is no doubt that the member for Maroubra is correct: There is enormous pressure on bus services in the eastern suburbs. As I drive past Central railway station of a morning I see students waiting to board buses to take them to the University of New South Wales. There are masses of students, huge queues.

This is an important motion and I hope members will support it. I wish the member for Maroubra luck in pursuing the Government to consider the needs of his electorate—but I am sure he will not be holding his breath, waiting for that to happen. As we have seen in Marrickville, in Canterbury, in Drummoyne and in Strathfield, the Government has not been considerate of the needs of constituents. In fact, the Government has taken decisions that are contrary to the interest of constituents. Nonetheless, I wish the member for Maroubra the best of luck in his pursuit of the Government to take into account the interests of the electors of Maroubra.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [12.25 p.m.]: This motion reveals the sheer hypocrisy of those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition-in-waiting has no shame in moving this motion. Labor and public transport is like Superman and kryptonite—it does not work. For 16 years Labor regarded light rail as a second-class mode of transport. One good thing about Labor is that its members start to make sense when they leave Parliament. Consider what Mark Latham and Graham Richardson have had to say. Labor members make

sense after they leave the faceless party. As my colleague the member for Coogee alluded to, another of those great men is former Labor transport Minister John Watkins. When these people leave Parliament they do not lie any more. Minister John Watkins said, "We're absolutely against light rail, it's a bad answer for Sydney." But the Minister the Transport, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, immediately moved to make changes to improve public transport in the Drummoyne area, providing an extra five services a day just on the RiverCat. That is 25 additional services a week. Thank you, Minister.

We know that those opposite ignored calls from the city of Sydney, the community and transport experts to investigate the expansion of light rail. We know they did not do their homework on the delivery of the Inner West Light Rail extension, and we know they treated light rail with contempt because when they introduced MyZone they excluded light rail. Labor said it could not be done but, thanks to this Government, commuters can now use their MyMulti, Pensioner Excursion and Family Funday Sunday tickets on light rail. The Government achieved that in our first 100 days in office. So much for saying it cannot be done. The New South Wales Government believes light rail will play an important part in the future of transport in Sydney. This Government takes light rail seriously and has always made major strides towards the development of light rail networks in Sydney.

As the member for Coogee mentioned, only last week the Government announced that it had purchased Metro Transport Sydney, the current owner and operator of the existing light rail line. This gives our Government the flexibility to look at all the options and to deliver and operate an expanded light rail network for Sydney. That decision was met with praise from the city of Sydney, the Sydney Business Chamber, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, the Property Council and the Urban Taskforce. Industry and community groups alike welcomed the announcement because they know that our Government takes light rail seriously. Unlike the Labor Government, this Government is getting on with the job of improving public transport in this State. We are backing our communities and commitments with \$103 million this year alone to expand light rail in central Sydney and the inner west. We are delivering where those opposite failed to deliver. We are getting on with the job when those opposite said it could not be done. We are about an efficient, clean, secure and reliable coordinated transport system for this State—the system that this State deserves.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [12.29 p.m.], in reply: I thank the one-trick ponies from the Government who contributed to the debate. Someone needs to tell them that in a debate dealing with transport they do not have to follow the lead of their Minister and come into the Chamber with one trick and juggle one ball. They can do more than that. Just because the Minister for Transport has not learnt to walk and chew gum at the same time, that does not mean that some of her sheep can do the same.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Members will come to order. The member for Maroubra has the call.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The Minister for Transport says, "Oh quick, there's a motion on the paper to do with transport. Let's pull that speech out. It's interchangeable. Anyone can put their name on it. Just run down and keep repeating the mantra that Labor didn't do anything about transport for the past 16 years." We have heard it all before and it does not contribute intellectually at all to this debate. I should tell the member for Coogee that this motion is not about him. The motion is not about councillors on Randwick City Council, nor is it about his days as a councillor on Randwick City Council. If he is still stranded in Frances Street, Randwick, and has not yet made the transition to Macquarie Street, perhaps he should walk the walk that was embodied in the "get Clover" bill and think about giving away one of his roles. The member for Coogee is not at Randwick council now.

This motion is about 80,000 people who do not live in the Coogee electorate; they live in the Maroubra electorate. The motion was simple and gentle. It was just a googly that those opposite could see coming. It contains no spin and it is not a top-spinner. The motion aims straight at middle stump: it asks for anyone to come into the Chamber on behalf of the Minister for Transport and the Liberal-Nationals Government that paid plenty of lip-service to the people of Maroubra about providing light rail but has yet to deliver anything except massive budget cuts and cuts to police numbers and everything else. Government members will see online the statistics for the eastern beaches local area command. The numbers have fallen rapidly as a result of what the Government has done over the past year. All I sought to achieve with this motion today was something very simple and the easiest thing a Government can deliver: a commitment.

All I asked was for someone from the Minister for Transport to say, "Yes, I've spoken to the Minister. We're not playing politics on this. We govern for all of New South Wales. Yes, we are doing a study about light

rail. We might not be able to do it in this study, but we give the people of Maroubra and the member for Maroubra and, indeed, the House a commitment that when we finish this study we won't forget about the people who live south of Rainbow Street, Randwick, and we will do a study. We commit to that study in due course for light rail to Maroubra." The member for Coogee is absolutely right; from time to time I have expressed reservation and some scepticism that light rail will ever make it to Maroubra Junction.

The member for Coogee has punctuated my scepticism quite impeccably. Congratulations to the member for Coogee on delivering nothing today. He said, "There'll be light rail that maybe will come out to Maroubra one day. That will be looked at into the future." So in 2072 some consideration might be given to providing light rail to Maroubra. I want it to happen before then. All my motion asked for was something cheap: two things at zero cost to the Government. I asked that Government members be bipartisan and give the people of my electorate a commitment. The cost is zero plus zero. The only thing that won today was political predictability. Thank you.

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

Motion agreed to.

KOOLOORA COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [12.33 p.m.]: I could just walk around to the other side of the table and deliver the predictable speech. Somebody from the Minister's office will come down and say, "Oh, the member for Maroubra has done nothing for 16 years." Yes, yes, yes. Now that we have that out of the way, I want to talk some sense. I move:

That this House:

- (1) commends the work done by the Kooloora Community Centre at Malabar and the contribution its services provides to the surrounding community;
- (2) notes in particular the hard work done by co-ordinator, Julie Spies, president Gillian Collinson, and thanks them for their efforts;
- (3) notes the appreciation of the local community for the services they provide including the vegetable co-op, seniors gentle exercises, playgroup for kids from low socio-economic families and support services to the large social housing estate located near the centre; and
- (4) supports the centre in its application for further funding from the Department of Community Services and calls on the department to provide enough funding for a second full time community worker.

People who find themselves in this place like to think that their electorates are not just a conglomeration of people who happen to live in certain geographical locations but are places that have a sense of community. Each of our electorates has identifiable communities that are bound together by common interests. Often we find in urban electorates, such as Maroubra, that the challenges accompanying modern city life—we are all busy and increasingly time poor with demands of family and work—remove our considerations of neighbouring communities. Many studies underpin this approach and show that particularly in cities and urban areas people are less inclined to know their neighbours as well as they used to know them, or to be close to a number of people in their street or unit block.

Organisations have good people, usually volunteers or underpaid workers. Certainly that is the case with Julie Spies from the Kooloora Community Centre. Such organisations do their best to keep us glued together. Kooloora Community Centre resides at Malabar in the public housing estate in Bilga Crescent. I am fortunate to represent a coastal Sydney electorate that has much going for it: five golf courses, a national park eight kilometres as the crow flies from the city and a second to be declared. I digress to place on the record my appreciation to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, who joined me, Senator Matthew Thistlethwaite and Peter Garrett, the Federal member for Kingsford Smith, to accept a handover of Malabar Headland to the State Government to be promulgated as a national park. My electorate of Maroubra also has great clubs, great pubs and good sporting organisations.

Mr Guy Zangari: A good member.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The member for Fairfield interjects, but humility prevents me from responding. Property prices in our area are massive. In estates such as South Coogee houses that look from high

down on Maroubra Beach can go for \$5 million. The common misconception is that we are all pretty well off in Maroubra. However, my electorate has the third- or fourth-highest number of public housing tenants in the State per electorate. Those people struggle. I spend much of my time working and visiting people in those housing estates. But that is not enough. Money is tight and the work of the Kooloora Community Centre in the Malabar housing estate defies logic. It keeps producing goods on a shoestring budget. The centre has one coordinator—Julie Spies. I do not think she has given herself a pay rise for years.

When the Kooloora Community Centre budget is challenged, Julie cuts a day from her weekly roster and takes the hit. She should not have to do that; she will kill herself if she continues. I do not want anything to happen to her. I want her to continue and to get some assistance. I support the Kooloora Community Centre's application for further funding for its programs, such as the vegetable co-op that sells vegetables at cost to local residents who could not afford them otherwise. The centre provides programs for gentle exercises for everyone and playgroups for kids to give mums and dads an hour or two of respite. Maroubra has many single mothers who are struggling. The Kooloora Community Centre really cares about people.

Kooloora Community Centre is the glue that binds that group together in Malabar. I have done what I can to help over the years and will continue to do so. I called on more help from Family and Community Services and from Ministers gone by, sometimes with some success and sometimes with limited success. My approach will not change with a change of Government. I will keep calling for increased resources for Kooloora because if it was not for groups like Kooloora and people like Julie Spies and the Colinsons our society and my community at Malabar would be far worse places.

One of the things that people who make public policy have to grapple with is the social cost of programs like this one that run on a shoestring. You can keep putting police on the street but a couple of hundred thousand dollars more in each electorate for community centres like this would help young people to grow up and stay out of trouble. It protects families from falling apart and becoming social problems. The programs and centres actually save money. It is a false economy not to fund them. I know the Government will treat the motion in a bipartisan manner and I thank members for listening this morning.

Mr BART BASSETT (Londonderry) [12.41 p.m.]: There will, of course, be bipartisan support for this motion. These types of community facilities and people working in this area are invaluable. We all know that if we invest in these areas of community support there is a flow-on benefit down the track for our society. Hopefully people will be assisted early on and they will not venture into other less beneficial areas of our community where police may have to become involved. The Government supports this motion 100 per cent. We know the hours that community services put in at community facilities in which all levels of Government are involved. The community appreciates knowing these facilities exist. But, except for those who need them, many people in our community—a great percentage of the population—do not know such facilities are out there. The people who need such services should know that they are available.

Werrington County Children's Centre in Werrington County in my electorate is funded by the Department of Family and Community Services and operates out of a community centre provided by Penrith City Council. The Nepean Adolescent and Family Services program is funded also by the Department of Family and Community Services. These programs highlight what we are talking about in the Chamber today. Nepean Adolescent and Family Services is a youth homelessness centre that recognises significant issues throughout the local government areas of Penrith, Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains. It assists with a range of significant issues affecting young people's lives such as domestic violence, sexual assault, alcohol and other drug abuse issues, education difficulties, gang violence and crime—all the things we hear about in our community every day in the media. Organisations like this are helping to guide our youth and to help families stay together. It is enormously beneficial.

The Richmond Community Services Inc. and Neighbourhood Centre, also in my electorate, provides community development and support, anti-bullying strategies and assistance for parents dealing with difficult kids. The centre has Friday night activities and offers family support for mums and dads who need respite from a lot of kids. They can have "time out" at the centre. A neighbourhood aide provides social home visiting services, which is essential to a lot of people who need assistance in their own home and who want to talk about their issues. In many cases these people need guidance about where to get other support. That is why community centres and the services they provide are so important: community centres can guide people in the right direction. When you are under pressure you are not thinking clearly and stress often results in not knowing where to turn. Those services provide assistance and guide people in the right direction so that they do not end up having difficulties in other areas of their life.

We talk a lot about mental illness. When people find themselves in great difficulty and without support their own health ends up suffering and that flows on to the rest of the family. It is important to assist early on with community services like the one's mentioned here this morning. The North Richmond community centre operates at the northern end of my electorate providing facilities to a residential component. They offer after-school care, a place called the Fun Factory where younger kids can come, youth development, community development and books that parents cannot afford to buy. There is a book borrowing service. It is not a library but it is acting as an outreach library at North Richmond.

The Hawkesbury Community Outreach Service Inc. operates out of the Kurrajong community centre. It provides community services for the north-west districts and mountain regions in the Hawkesbury for people geographically isolated. One organisation that has provided enormous benefit in our community is called Living IN Communities Inc. [LINCS]. It provides services across a number of State electorates and operates out of Glossodia, which is on the boundary of the Hawkesbury electorate and my electorate. It is a volunteer scheme that responds to mothers and young families suffering depression or not coping as a result of social isolation and a lack of personal and family support. I attended its annual general meeting. Carolyn Byers has been involved with Living IN Communities Inc. for a very long time. As the member for Maroubra said, these individuals continue giving and we can never thank them enough for their contributions.

No Government of any persuasion can provide the same sort of dedicated care and support provided by workers in community organisations. They have a passion for what they do. It is not a job and it is not about getting something done and ticking the boxes for the funding: These people are committed. I thank the member for Maroubra for bringing this motion to the House. I believe that members on both sides of the House, when it comes to community services that receive funding from local, State and Federal governments, will be in there fighting for their communities to get more funding. We know there is only so much money to go around—no matter what Government is in power that will be the case. It is important to highlight and look for ways to support these organisations that make a better community for all, make families a happier unit and, as the member for Maroubra said, save money in the long run because other Government departments do not have to get involved.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.48 p.m.]: I support the member for Maroubra and the motion in support of Kooloora Community Centre. The first part of the motion commends the work done by the centre in Malabar and in particular its contribution to the community and surrounding communities. All members in this place would have similar community centres in their electorates that provide prevention programs. As the member for Londonderry said, these community organisations pick up the pieces where other organisations might not be able to and by doing so take the burden away from other departments. I worked in pastoral care in the Fairfield region during my time as a teacher and I understand how community centres help people with prevention programs and also provide family support.

At times of family breakdown, it is difficult to know which group to turn to for help. The Kooloora Community Centre would be that organisation in Malabar. In the electorate of Fairfield I think of a lady called Pam Batkin and the wonderful services that she provides at the Woodville Community Service Centre to help people in their time of need. I note that Fairfield has a large number of non-English-speaking groups, and when family problems or issues arise there is a sense of pride that people have a number of places they can turn to. These community centres provide the safety net and support to help those on the margins. Paragraph (2) of the motion notes the work done by Coordinator Julie Spies and President Gillian Collinson, and thanks them for their efforts.

I know the member for Maroubra thanked Julie Spies and Gillian Collinson for their tireless work, particularly in the Maroubra electorate and surrounding areas. Paragraph (3) of the motion notes the appreciation of the local community for the services they provide, including the vegetable cooperative, the seniors gentle exercises, playgroup for kids from low socio-economic families, and support services to the large social housing estate located near the Kooloora Community Centre. I think of Fairfield and the variety of programs provided to deal with drug rehabilitation, courses and supports for those who have issues with drug, alcohol and other substances abuse. These programs and services are the vital link in ensuring that people keep on the mend and do not end up visiting local police as a result of contemplated or actual indiscretions.

Paragraph (4) of the motion supports the Kooloora Community Centre in its application for further funding from the Department of Community Services and calls on the department to provide enough funding for a second full-time community worker. I am sure the member for Maroubra is wholehearted about this; there are many unsung heroes when it comes to community service centres, and a second full-time community worker

would relieve the burden not only on those manning the centre full time but also on the volunteers. Pam Batkin and the volunteers at the Woodville Community Service Centre, in my electorate, are some of those unsung heroes. I am sure all members, on both sides of the House, know of people in their electorates who work tirelessly for the underprivileged and those on the outer margins of their community. I support the motion.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [12.52 p.m.]: I also support this motion. The Kooloora Community Centre, located in the electorate of the member for Maroubra, is but one of many community centres across New South Wales; indeed there are many in my electorate. There are rare occasions on which I would agree with the member for Maroubra, but today is one of those occasions. During his speech the member spoke about a number of things in his electorate, many of which we have in common. I too represent a coastal electorate; it also has a wide range of property values—although probably none around the \$5 million mark.

However, some properties in coastal areas of The Entrance electorate would be valued at well in excess of \$1 million, while property in other areas would be worth about \$200,000. The Entrance electorate has a large stock of public housing; in fact, it has the largest stock of public housing of all Central Coast electorates. The Entrance has a number of services that cater for the needs of low socio-economic areas. Unfortunately, the Central Coast has the largest number of sexual assaults in New South Wales and we are regularly ranked either one or two for alcohol-related domestic violence—two statistics that we are not proud of. The member for Maroubra mentioned also that community centres are the glue that bind together many of our communities. I could not agree more with that sentiment.

The member for Londonderry noted that many in our communities do not know what help they can get from these community centres. I do everything I can to advertise them and make sure people know these community centres exist. For example, The Entrance electorate has the Gosford-Narara Community Centre, the Niagara Park Community Centre, the Bateau Bay Community Centre and The Entrance Neighbourhood Community Centre. I attended the recent opening of an extension to The Entrance Men's Shed. Men's sheds do great work for our communities, and they will always have my ongoing recognition and my support for the work they do. Recently I attended a meeting at the Wyoming Community Centre, which is managed by Kathy Sock. I have met with Kathy on a number of occasions. Kathy is passionate about the Wyoming Community Centre. She is passionate about the people who live in the North Gosford and Wyong areas, and does an excellent job in managing the centre and advocating at every opportunity to increase the number of services available to the community and to improve the centre itself.

Some of the activities organised by the Wyoming Community Centre include community markets on the second Sunday of each month; a blokes' breakfast on the last Sunday of the month; a mental health support group for carers on the fourth Thursday of each month; the Wyoming weight loss challenge group's weekly meetings on Thursdays; Tai Chi classes, yoga and zumba classes; a Wyoming and North Gosford residents association meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.00 p.m.; and the Wyoming action meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at 10.00 a.m. I will conclude with a quote from the Central Coast Neighbourhood and Community Centres forum. To my mind, this sums up the hard work that these centres do:

Neighbourhood and Community Centres have a wider social research, planning and development role. Centres identify new and unmet social needs. They advocate for services or resources to inform, support and empower disadvantaged people. They play a vital role in community education about issues affecting their local community, and disadvantaged groups in particular.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [12.56 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Londonderry, the member for The Entrance and the member for Fairfield for contributing to the debate, and thank them for their anticipated support for the motion. I note the universal understanding and appreciation of members of this place for the work done by not only volunteers but those in community centres. Sometimes they provide a lifeline for people who are very strung out. The Community Building Partnerships program of this Parliament is now in its third year. I think I speak for all 93 members of this place in saying that this program is hugely popular and successful.

One of the reasons for the success of the program and its popularity amongst members of Parliament is that at the heart of its conception was an appreciation and understanding that very few people in any electorate of this State have the comprehensive understanding of all community groups, and individuals within them, that members of Parliament have. Without lecturing anybody, I would say that one thing that members should be vigilant about is that in the tender processes small community centres in regional areas sometimes lose resources to larger groups, even though those larger organisations do not provide the best services for the people of the

local community. That is because of a tendency in government departments, and certainly within the Department of Community Services to favour larger organisations. I am not going to criticise the people of the Department of Community Services; they do a difficult job.

The bigger the organisation, the more advantage it has when it comes to the tendering process. That is because tendering involves commitment of a lot of resources and many hours of work by the staff of those organisations. Groups like the Kooloora Community Centre cannot compete with other larger groups from outside the Maroubra electorate; they do not have a dedicated officer who can spend anywhere near as much time as the larger, regional groups to put tenders together. I mentioned direct to the Minister responsible for the Department of Community Services that I think Department of Community Services should have a look at its tendering processes and include as one of the tender steps consultation with members of Parliament.

For example, if four or five groups tender for an early intervention service in an electorate, who knows better than the local member of Parliament the value of each of those groups comparatively across his or her own community? In my view, the Department of Community Services should, as part of the process, communicate with the local member of Parliament and get the member's two bob's worth about which group would be best placed to provide the service. I hope the Minister takes my suggestion on board. For example, Kooloora Community Centre had a great program called Breakaway, which was an early intervention program for families in the area who needed help. It was assessed by officers of the department as a terrific program.

A tender process was conducted and that process led to the awarding of early intervention services at Malabar to a group that was nowhere near the Maroubra electorate—it was located two or three electorates away. I do not criticise the department but if they had asked me I would have told them that Kooloora is on the ground, is in the houses and knows the people intimately and it should not be taken away. It was taken away and Kooloora suffers. I am sure there are similar examples. I make two suggestions to members: First, they should be vigilant about the tendering process, not only in the Department of Community Services but in other areas. Second, they should urge Ministers and departments to inject members of Parliament into these roles because, often, we know our electorates better than anyone. I thank members for their contributions to debate on the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 14/55

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

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.01 p.m.]: As Chair of the Legislation Review Committee I take this opportunity to comment on Legislation Review Digest No. 14/55, tabled on 2 April 2012, the fourteenth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. The role of the committee is to identify issues in proposed legislation and regulations as outlined in sections 8A and 9 of the Legislation Review Act. The fourteenth digest examined five bills introduced in the sitting week commencing 27 March 2012: the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill 2012; the Local Government Amendment (Members of Parliament) Bill 2012; the National Park Estate (South-Western Cypress Reservations) Amendment Bill 2012; the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012; and the State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

The committee agreed that its jurisdiction was not enlivened by either the Local Government Amendment (Members of Parliament) Bill 2012 or the National Park Estate (South-Western Cypress Reservations) Amendment Bill 2012. When reviewing the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill, the committee noted the Attorney General's concern that he is currently unable to obtain information about complaints before the Judicial Commission, even though the existence of a complaint about a judicial officer already may be in the public domain. Given that the Attorney General is the principal adviser to the Government and Cabinet on legal, constitutional and policy issues and that the Attorney General is also responsible for the appointment of judges and magistrates, the committee considered it reasonable in the circumstances that the Judicial Officers Act 1986 be amended to provide the Attorney General with certain information about complaints made against a particular judicial officer. The Judicial Commission will not be required to provide information on a complaint against a particular judicial officer if it considers it is not in the public interest to provide the information, unless the complaint has been referred to the Conduct Division.

In relation to the Retail Trading Amendment Bill, the committee noted that the bill provides an exemption from requirements to remain closed on restricted trading days for small shops in certain circumstances. The bill also introduces an exemption for medium sized shops. Importantly, the committee noted the consolidation of the definition of "freely elected to work" in respect to employees who elect to work on restricted trading days, and particularly noted that under the bill an employee is not taken to have freely elected to work on a day merely because the person is rostered to work on that day. The committee also noted the decision-making powers provided to the director general under the bill, but found them to be reasonable in the circumstances outlined in the bill.

The last bill considered by the committee was the State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill, which has the effect of amending the Duties Act 1997, the Land Tax Management Act 1956 and the Payroll Tax Act 2007. The committee was particularly pleased to see the inclusion of an amendment to the State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, which outlined that new exemptions will be detailed in full in the Act, rather than the previous practice of outlining exemptions in guidelines. The committee recognised that this provides more certainty to the duty regime in New South Wales. The committee noted issues relating to retrospectivity and insufficiently defined administrative powers, but found both to be reasonable in the circumstances outlined by the bill.

I thank the committee staff who have worked on the digest, together with the committee members: the member for Kiama; the member for Rockdale; the member for Bankstown—it was good to see her at the meeting, and we were happy to accommodate her—the member for Parramatta; and our colleagues in the other place the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane; the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps; and Mr David Shoebridge. The committee is keen to ensure that the digest continues to be of assistance to all members.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [1.05 p.m.]: I address Legislation Review Digest No. 6 of 2012 and the fourteenth digest of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. I acknowledge my fellow members of the committee: the member for Myall Lakes; the member for Parramatta; the member for Kiama; and the member for Rockdale and our colleagues in the other place the Hon. Dr Phelps; the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane; and Mr David Shoebridge. Once again I acknowledge the hardworking committee staff: Emma Matthews; Emma Wood; Jason Arditi; and Todd Buttsworth. I note how difficult it must have been to prepare the digest for the back-to-back sitting weeks due to our altered timetable, but, as always, the digest was produced on time. I commend the staff for their efforts. I acknowledge that the committee met at lunchtime this week. I commend the chair for that decision and look forward to further lunchtime meetings. This digest considered five bills. The committee reviewed the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill 2012 and concluded:

The Committee will always note legislation which may impact upon the separation of powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary ... the requirements in the Bill are limited in scope and do not represent a trespass against personal rights and liberties.

However, Mr David Shoebridge sought to amend the recommendation. The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and I supported his amendment, and I want to draw the House's attention to that matter. Mr David Shoebridge rightly pointed out that the bill will provide authority for complaints to be provided to the Attorney General. Given the supposedly independent nature of the Judicial Commission and its capacity to deal with such matters, it was necessary to highlight the potential problems with this proposal. Mr David Shoebridge moved and I seconded the motion that the draft report on the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill 2012 be amended to include the following sentence:

The Committee is concerned that providing all complaints to the Attorney General will inappropriately involve a politician in matters regarding judicial officers, and will trespass on the separation of powers.

Unfortunately, the Coalition members of the committee voted down this amendment. The committee also considered the Local Government Amendment (Members of Parliament) Bill 2012. I already have spoken in this place on the bill and have stated my strong opposition to it. I reiterate the point that if the Government is to prohibit members of Parliament from working as councillors it should also prohibit members of Parliament from working in the private sector. I outlined in some detail the many Coalition members who feel that their backbench salaries are not enough to make ends meet. Members of Parliament undertaking work for a private company are also likely to present a conflict of interest. I have called on the Minister to rectify this situation and I look forward to his response.

The committee reviewed the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is further evidence of the O'Farrell Government's anti-worker, anti-small business agenda. Together with all members on this side of the

House, I thoroughly oppose this legislation. I draw attention to the committee recommendation that the bill could potentially interfere with a person's observance of religious practice. That is a matter of great concern to me. I was shocked that the Liberal Party Christian Right—and I note the presence in the Chamber of the Minister for Resources and Energy—was willing to support this bill, given its long history of supporting family values. I point out once again to the House that it was the Liberal Left powerbroker Greg Pearce who drafted this legislation. I call on the members of the Conservative Forum to voice their opposition to this proposal.

Ms Robyn Parker: Point of order: I ask that the member be brought back to the relevance of the debate. This committee does not address the substantive issues of legislation; it merely acts as a function in terms of rights and liberties in respect of legislation. The member constantly talks about substantive issues. I ask that she be directed back to relevance.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I note the point of order but the member's time has expired.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [1.09 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the member for Bankstown that the Legislation Review Committee is traditionally a committee that enjoys bipartisan support to review legislation on behalf of the Parliament as to whether it has trespassed on people's rights and liberties. The take-note debate should not be used as a political platform to rant and rave and vent political ideas. This is an important committee and when the member for Bankstown uses it for political reasons she demeans not just our chairman but the whole committee. The member for Bankstown is demeaning the committee's important role of reviewing legislation and taking account of what the Parliament does.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [1.11 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the member for Parramatta to the fact that the Government Whip, Darryl Maguire, has scrutinised the former Labor Government on this committee.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [1.11 p.m.]: I was not going to speak in this debate but an important distinction needs to be made in relation to the recent contributions. The members of the committee have a different role to play to that of other members of Parliament who are entitled to comment on a committee report in a different way. That is an important distinction to make. As chair of the Public Accounts Committee I commend all members of that committee, who take a bipartisan approach and support the committee in its aims and objectives. The functions of the Legislation Review Committee are made clear in the Legislation Review Act. I refer the members representing the electorates of Fairfield and Bankstown to the functions of the committee and ask them to contemplate the role of a member of a particular committee and how it might be distinguished from the role of other members of Parliament who are entitled to make comments of a different nature.

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

Report noted.

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Report: Amendments to Standing and Sessional Orders

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

Report noted.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.15 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Ms Fiona Simpson, MP, member for the Sunshine Coast and Speaker-elect of the Parliament of Queensland.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills was reported:

Local Government Amendment Bill 2011
Mining Legislation Amendment (Uranium Exploration) Bill 2012

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Notices of Motions**

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I inform the House that the Deputy Premier will answer questions in the absence of the Treasurer, who is still at that very brief meeting with the Federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.17 p.m.]

THE STAR CASINO

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I direct my question to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the question. The Leader of the Opposition has the call. The member for Keira will remain silent.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Why has he denied telling Peter Grimshaw that he planned to "smash The Star" and "give them a wake-up call" when there is documentary evidence before the Furness inquiry that clearly shows he was involved in conversations of that nature in 2010?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority will conduct the inquiry, as expected. It is an inquiry in which we have had confidence all the way through at a time when the Leader of the Opposition was describing inquiries as whitewashes and wet lettuces in his attempt to elicit interest in this matter by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I will say it again: whatever may, or may not, have been said—and yesterday I made clear my view on that issue—I invite members opposite to look at whatever action we have taken in government in relation to that enterprise. There is not a single action taken by us that could be described as adverse in relation to the casino.

Mr John Robertson: That does not answer the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It does. I ask the House to contrast that with the Labor Party. I ask the House to contrast that with the approach adopted by the Labor Party to enterprises that the Labor Party does not like, or that might be characterised as ones it wants to smash. I happened to note that yesterday that the Federal Auditor-General tabled a report on a television network that beams into Asia—

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the point of order. Members will come to order. The member for Murray-Darling will come to order.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question has nothing to do with the Federal Auditor-General. The Premier should answer the question he was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! Perhaps the Premier should reveal how that issue might be relevant to the question. I am sure he will relate his answer to the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is relevant because the conspiracy theory of Opposition members works only if the action taken by the Government over the past 12 months was negative or damaged The Star casino. What I am doing is comparing and contrasting. I am comparing the action of a state government that has taken not a single decision that could be regarded as adverse.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: However, I suspect that, today of all days, the member for Sydney might disagree. The House should compare our action, which is not to take a decision that is adverse to the interests of the casino since we were elected, with the actions of the Federal Government, which on two occasions has sought to deny a commercial interest, Sky News, access to a tender that on two occasions it had won commercially. That is what happens when Labor sets out to smash or damage the commercial interests of an enterprise.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the point of order.

Mr John Robertson: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. Madam Speaker, you said that you were hoping the Premier would demonstrate how his answer is relevant. Up until now, he has failed to do so.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been drawing an analogy that makes his answer relevant so far.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am simply trying to put it into Labor language. I wanted to give an analogy that Labor would understand about the way its members operate when they do not like people. We all remember, post the John Hewson election, the way they pursued accounting firms who dared to come out during the election campaign to support the Federal Coalition. I am simply saying that when those opposite set their minds to smashing an opponent they get on with the job. But the conspiracy theory does not work. Other than that infamous invitation I received and accepted from the ABC there has not been a decision made by the State Government that affects The Star casino.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The other thing that I ask members to reflect on about this issue is how the Leader of the Opposition has shifted ground. He started this affair by alleging political interference. It was all about political interference. Of course, that started to come unstuck when the head of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority on a number of occasions—most recently when he said categorically there was not—put out statements and indicated to the media at two press conferences that there had been no political interference. It has moved on now to personal vendettas. It has shifted from the political to the personal. There is no evidence in this place or at the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority of any action initiated by this Government that is to the detriment of The Star Casino—at the opening of which the Government was represented by the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, who participated in that opening with Mr Sid Vaikunta, the man who was sacked after Echo Entertainment investigated and was clearly satisfied about two sexual harassment complaints made about him by staff at The Star.

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: My question is directed to the Premier. What is the latest milestone in the delivery of the North West Rail Link?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Castle Hill for his question. I appreciate his presence, and that of the member for Baulkham Hills and other members from the north-west, at this morning's announcement with the Minister for Transport of the issuing of the environmental impact statement for this important railway line, which will serve a growth area designated by those opposite that will ultimately have 300,000 people living in it. The line will give those people a real alternative public transport option to car access into the city and the many stops along the way. I was delighted to make that announcement with the Minister for Transport, who has demonstrated a great commitment to this project. The Minister, who has demonstrated, I think, more enthusiasm for the project than I have, is determined to see a start to this project, which those opposite promised in 1998 would be open by 2010.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is now 2012. Labor did absolutely nothing over those 14 years to get this line built. What this environmental impact statement announcement today means is that the public can start to see how this landmark project will be constructed. They will be able to discuss the environmental impact statement and the major construction work involved—the tunnelling, the sky train, the underground excavation and the major construction above ground. It outlines the impact of that construction on the local community and how that impact will be managed. It provides the public with a say about how this rail link will be built. We have already listened to the community. One of the hallmarks of the Minister for Transport is to listen to members of the community. They suggested additional stations, and additional stations they have. They suggested additional car spaces, and additional car parks they will have around stations.

They suggested, as the member for Castle Hill knows, that the station adjacent to Castle Hill Showground should be moved to preserve that magnificent arena. We have listened to the community about that as well. We are a government that listens but, importantly, we are a government that acts—unlike those opposite, who failed to act. The North West Rail Link will be a significant engineering feat. For this part of Sydney it will be as important as the Sydney Harbour Bridge was in the 1930s, connecting the North Shore to this side of the harbour. In the order of 70,000 tonnes of steel will be used on the rail link, and that, as the Minister said this morning, is 20,000 tonnes more than was used in the construction of this city's most famous landmark, the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Mr Nathan Rees: Don't get the engineers to write your speech.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The best speech of the member for Toongabbie was his last speech, when he said, "If I am not Premier at the end of this day, we know that the factions and Eddie and Joe have taken over." And which puppet did they put in?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will return to the leave of the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The release of this environmental impact statement is another important milestone ahead of the expected start of construction in 2014. The second environmental impact statement is currently being prepared and will be released in the second half of this year. It deals with the design of railway stations, the areas around them, operational rail infrastructure and systems like signalling. As I said, this is the most significant transport project in the country. The economic benefits of the North West Rail Link are immense. The new line will support more than 16,200 jobs during construction and will inject something like \$25 billion into the New South Wales economy.

As I said before, this is a project that was well and truly overdue; promised by those opposite but not delivered. But that was not uncommon. Twelve rail lines were promised by those opposite and not a single one was delivered in full. Indeed, we will not forget—nor will anyone who wants half a billion dollars in extra funding for health, transport, education or policing—the waste of half a billion dollars on the Rozelle Metro, a metro to nowhere except a political destination for those opposite.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance; Standing Order 129. If the Premier wants to brag about an environmental impact statement—

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: —incidents in 1993 and John Hewson—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. He will resume his seat.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: One thing the North West Rail Link does not have, and that is the middle managers that appeal so much to the member for Maroubra.

THE STAR CASINO AND PETER GRIMSHAW

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that he knew about Peter Grimshaw's history with The Star casino and that he did not like the management, why did the Premier appoint him as the go-to guy on casino matters and gaming and racing in his office?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am not sure how Labor ministerial offices worked—if that is not an oxymoron—but when I appoint a director of communications, that person normally is involved in the communication of government announcements to the broader public. As I said in the House yesterday and previously, Mr Grimshaw was not employed as a policy adviser in relation to casino or gambling issues. I have a Minister who has his own office to deal with that. Nor, as has been alleged by some media, was Mr Grimshaw in the business of giving me advice as to which appointments to accept. Certainly I was grown up and mature enough to accept a wonderful invitation from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to attend its national local radio awards.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: We have heard that story.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: And you will continue to hear it because, frankly, when it all boils down, the only grievance The Star seems to have with me is that I sent Minister Souris instead of going to the opening myself. The Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts is quick to remind me that he was not the only one standing by Sid Vaikunta that night at the opening of The Star.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira and the member for Cessnock will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: He was joined by Russell Crowe and, of course, ONJ—Olivia Newton-John. The premise of the question completely and utterly fails, but that will not stop them because this is now the forty-third question in two and a bit months on this issue.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I suspect people across the State are far more interested in their local policing issues, and education, health and disability services. Those opposite do not understand that we have a different modus operandi with these matters. When issues arose I had the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet investigate them. As I said two months ago, when issues arose we were happy for the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority to conduct the inquiry and, as I said in this House two months ago, the authority will conduct the inquiry as it sees fit. I have confidence in the authority; those opposite did not.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order. My point of order is on relevance—Standing Order 129. The question was very simple: Why did the Premier appoint Peter Grimshaw given his history and what the Premier knew about—

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Had the member been listening, he would have heard the answer. I am just adding to the answer because I would hate those opposite to leave today uninformed. As I said two months ago, we will cooperate, and we have cooperated, from top to bottom with any inquiries the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority undertakes. Our modus operandi is different from that of Labor's. I was astounded to read today in the newspaper that somehow the fallout from this inquiry is worse than anything under those opposite because it has touched the Premier's office. I thought about our modus operandi; I thought about MO, and then I thought about Milton Orkopoulos. We need to remember a few facts. Someone was actually pulled out of that former member's office as chief of staff and put into a Premier's office.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: That person may or may not have become a Premier of this State. I know they were long dark Labor years full of scandals—I have the computer roll outside in case we need it during this question time—but, surely, a scandal involving a member of this place who was convicted and jailed for paedophilia goes far beyond any scandal or conspiracy that those opposite claim and concoct but cannot provide any evidence on. They can huff and puff, but the only facts that will come out of this will be those delivered by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority on 29 April, not the alleged facts or lack of information or evidence proposed by those opposite after 43, 44, or 45 questions without notice.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I ask a supplementary question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that his supplementary question should arise from the answer the Premier has given. He should not seek to repeat the original question. The Leader of the House will come to order; he should concentrate on his job and allow me to do mine.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Yesterday Norm Lipson told the Furness inquiry that Peter Grimshaw was the contact for gaming and racing in the Premier's office. Is the Premier saying that Mr Lipson perjured himself before the inquiry?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am happy to answer the question. Just as Mr Lipson is the press secretary for the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts, every other Minister on this front bench has a press secretary. And yes, their contact is the Director of Communications in my office. The purpose of having a Director of Communications is to ensure that the press secretaries of the Ministers coordinate their announcements to the public.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government creating jobs and attracting investment by capitalising on the State's competitive economic advantages?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Drummoyne for a very good, if not entirely unexpected, question. Another day, another piece of good news for the people of New South Wales, thanks to this Government's open-for-business attitude. Earlier this week, I was pleased to inform the House that in partnership with industry and the Commonwealth, we have succeeded in attracting an additional \$46.5 million and 470 jobs to the Illawarra—capitalising on the inherent strengths and skills base of that region. Today I am pleased to announce that Thales Australia, one of Australia's largest defence contractors, will establish its new Australian headquarters at Homebush Bay, consolidating western Sydney's status as the leading advanced manufacturing region in Australia. Thales Australia's long-term lease at the Navy's Garden Island facility in Sydney expires in 2013 and, thanks to the support of this Government, 500 jobs have been kept in New South Wales. The company will invest \$10 million to establish its new headquarters at Sydney Olympic Park while continuing its maritime support to the Navy at Garden Island. Today Thales Australia's chief executive officer, Chris Jenkins, told the *Daily Telegraph*:

The support from the New South Wales Government has been a key factor in Thales Australia's decision to establish its new Australian headquarters in Sydney. The location is ideal, in close proximity to suppliers and geographically convenient for our staff. We look forward to being based at Homebush Bay for many years to come.

That is good news by any measure, but that is not all. Earlier this week I was pleased to represent the Government at an event to welcome the arrival of the inaugural AirAsia X service from Kuala Lumpur to Sydney. The New South Wales Government understands that air travel is the lifeblood of Australia's \$96-billion tourism industry and that we can use Sydney's status as the nation's only truly international city to drive additional visitation to Sydney and regional New South Wales. Those opposite have gone quiet.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister should let sleeping dogs lie, and I use that phrase affectionately, of course.

Mr ANDREW STONER: If a topic does not involve muckraking and mud, they do not want to know about it. They do not want to know the good news about jobs for New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! It seems the Deputy Premier has woken them up.

Mr ANDREW STONER: I love an audience. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition is only interested in one job—his own. Members will remember the sandbagging in Blacktown during the election campaign. Poor old Ninos—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is the inevitable and obvious, and that is relevance under Standing Order 129. Whatever the Minister's comment has to do with anything, it has nothing to do with the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Deputy Premier will return to the leave of the question.

Mr ANDREW STONER: It was about jobs. The member for Macquarie Fields almost lost his seat because of that sandbagging. Back to the good news. This Liberal-Nationals Government recognises that efficient air links are essential in developing and maintaining business relationships, trade and investment with our nearest neighbours. Appropriately, at the welcoming event Sydney airport presented the chief executive

officer of AirAsia X with a small piece of the airport's runway, causing the chief executive officer of AirAsia X to remark that he now realised why Monday's first landing was an unusually bumpy one. Thanks to the open-for-business attitude of this Government that bump will be the only significant one in the negotiations that lead to enhanced economic outcomes for this State. These daily AirAsia X services will inject \$138 million into New South Wales every year. It is the basis of another great step towards this Government's goal of doubling overnight tourism expenditure by 2020. In short, this new service equals business for Sydney. AirAsia's network opens up Sydney to more than 78 cities and millions of consumers across Asia. [*Extension of time granted.*]

I thank the member for Drummoyne, who appreciates the efforts of this Government to create jobs and grow the economy of this State. Monday's inaugural flight comes hot on the heels of the Premier's announcement last December that Asia's newest long haul budget airline, Scoot Airline, has chosen Sydney for its first international route. Scoot is scheduled to commence service in mid 2012 and will add 400 airline seats a day into New South Wales from Asia, injecting an additional \$146 million a year into our economy. The member for Canterbury is interjecting as usual and is getting rather shrill. I can recall the days when the member was a Minister responding to questions. Remember those halcyon days, the hot pink office, and the trips to Cannes?

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will return to the leave of the question.

Mr ANDREW STONER: I digress. Madam Speaker, both these carriers, Scoot and AirAsia X, operate in the Asian markets, importantly putting Sydney front and centre of the boom in budget travel in those priority Asian markets such as Singapore, Malaysia, China and India. Contrast this Government's actions with those opposite who put up the shutters and went on a decade long siesta after the success of the 2000 Olympic Games. So whether it is attracting jobs and investment to the Illawarra or Western Sydney, increased visitation from Asia or even the simple act of providing funding for an infrastructure upgrade for a new cotton gin in Leeton, this Government is getting on with the job of making this State number one again.

BARANGAROO DEVELOPMENT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question without notice is to the Premier. Given Peter Grimshaw was the go-to guy on gaming and racing in the Premier's office, did he participate in any meetings or discussions with the Premier or his chief of staff about how to respond to James Packer's application for a new casino at Barangaroo?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: There is no application. There was a suggestion by Crown—

Mr John Robertson: So that is yes.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I will get to the answer—of a proposal. I gave my response. That response was issued to the media through Mr Grimshaw because he was the director of communications. What did that response say? That response said—I cannot be word perfect about the first half but I can be word perfect about the second half because it was even reported accurately by the *Sydney Morning Herald*—that is, that I welcomed the proposal because it could add life to Barangaroo, but it had to go through independent regulatory and planning approvals before it got anywhere near Government. I go back again. Those opposite continue to claim conspiracy, they continue to allege decisions but after 44 or 45 questions they have not produced a single piece of evidence to show an adverse decision by this Government.

Mr Michael Daley: Then why did you sack Grimshaw?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I will come to that. Over the 53 weeks that this Government has been in office and in what might be described as a boofhead interjection—but I would not say that. I think it was the member for—I will not say where he is from.

The SPEAKER: Myall Lakes.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: He would break a leg to ask me a question on this issue if he could. Why did I sack Mr Grimshaw? I remind members of the media who sought to write-off the director general's investigation into Mr Grimshaw that equally when the issue was raised about emails being circulated the first thing I did was ask the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet to investigate whether there was a breach of the ministerial code of conduct and, if there was a breach, what should the penalty be. Those opposite and others said it was a whitewash and not a proper inquiry. As I said yesterday, that inquiry found it was a breach, recommended a course of action and Mr Grimshaw offered his resignation yesterday and that was accepted.

Mr Brad Hazzard: A bit different from Orkopolous.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: It is different from the Orkopoulos case. My favourite headline today was the one about fallen stars. I remember some of the fallen stars opposite. I remember Eddie Obeid. I remember the tar baby of New South Wales politics, Joe Tripodi. I remember the favourite of the member for Wollongong, Matt Brown. I have to say there are things that politicians do under the influence but some of us would not touch that. I remember John Della Bosca, someone who was running for the premiership of the State but who fell off the bike on the way. I remember Virginia Judge—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: What was the conversation with Grimshaw in his office about?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will return to the leave of the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I remember the fallen stars of Labor. My favourite were the shooting stars who came into the premiership and out of the premiership in quick order: the member for Toongabbie and the member for Heffron.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The Premier is now flouting your ruling.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sure that is not what the Premier intends to do. The Premier will return to the leave of the question.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I will say, as I said at the start, that I made the statement in relation to Crown Enterprise's proposal for Barangaroo. That statement was disseminated to media. That statement made clear there were independent regulatory and planning processes that had to be gone through before there was any approach to Government. I say again that after more than two months of trying in this place the Opposition has not proven a single action of the Government over the past 53 weeks that has been adverse to The Star.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times.

IRON ORE MINING AND EXPLORATION

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: My question is directed to Comrade Hartcher, Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Central Coast. What is the progress of the iron ore discovery in western New South Wales and its potential economic benefits?

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. I would like to hear the member for Liverpool on the point of order.

Mr Paul Lynch: My point of order is that the question is disorderly: The member who asked it breached Standing Order 75 by not referring to the Minister by his correct title. Whatever the Minister is, he is no comrade.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is a very good point of order, and it is upheld. The Minister will be referred to in future by his correct title.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: I am, unlike the member for Liverpool, wearing a red tie. Of all the members of this House, if there is one member entitled to be addressed as commissar it is the member for Liverpool.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is once again taken under Standing Order 75. Whatever my title is, it is not commissar—certainly not coming from the Minister.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will not contravene standing orders and will return to the question.

Mr CHRIS HARTCHER: The member for Murray-Darling is absolutely committed to the development of the far west of New South Wales. More than any other member that I have seen in 25 years representing that area of New South Wales, the current member has worked to develop programs that will advance the far west of this State. The question he asked relates to the development of the far west of this State, as did the earlier decision of this Government to enhance the law in relation to uranium exploration, for it also promises great benefit to western New South Wales. While I am on that subject might I enlarge on an answer I gave yesterday. One of the positive aspects of exploration and mining will be the encouragement of Indigenous employment in this State. I thank the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for his enormous efforts to ensure that Indigenous employment opportunities are offered in the mining industry in this State.

The Government is committed to restarting the State's economy through the sensible and environmentally conscious development of our resources. One of the projects is the Hawsons iron ore deposit located south-west of Broken Hill, in the emerging Braemar iron province. While New South Wales has some small-scale iron ore mines, particularly around Dubbo, this project has the potential to rival Mount Newman in Western Australia. It has 1.4 billion tonnes of magnetite iron ore. It has the potential to reach an income of between \$2 billion and \$3 billion a year. It has the potential—if it is able, on its mining scoping study, to commence by 2015—to bring \$100 million in revenue to the New South Wales Treasury coffers. But, more than that, it has the potential to have 750 jobs in its construction and, for the people of Broken Hill, so well represented by the member for Murray-Darling, 1,500 permanent jobs.

This will be a massive revitalisation of the west of New South Wales—a revitalisation inspired and encouraged by this Government. The Premier may forget but one of his earlier mandates to me some months ago was, "Why don't you get out there and develop the iron ore in western New South Wales." I was not sure whether the Premier wanted me to go there permanently or whether he just wanted me to pay a visit. But, notwithstanding that, the iron ore program is underway. Carpentaria Exploration Ltd has completed a pre-feasibility study that identifies a resource of 1.4 billion tonnes. Subject to the necessary approvals, the project will involve the construction and operation of a large-scale open-cut mine.

Stage one of the project will produce five million tonnes a year of concentrate over three years. Stage two will produce 20 million tonnes of concentrate a year. The capital expenditure to achieve this is \$3 billion. I thank the Deputy Premier, whose officers in New South Wales and Shanghai have been working cooperatively in developing Chinese interests in the potential market and in the potential development of this site—under Tony Zhang, his excellent director in that area. The life of the mine is projected to be at least 22 years, with potential for expansion to more than 50 years. This offers a huge opportunity for the rejuvenation and revitalisation of western New South Wales. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

On 21 March this year Carpentaria Exploration announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Flinders Ports, providing a potential long-term handling, storage and loading solution for iron ore exports via Port Pirie in South Australia. The agreement puts Carpentaria's Hawsons project ahead of the queue of other similar proposed iron ore projects in Australia. The Government has been working to facilitate and coordinate the interests of Chinese, Korean and Japanese steel producers to partner with Carpentaria Exploration to source this product. While the iron ore price outlook is predicted to remain strong, the Hawsons deposit has the great potential to contribute very significantly to the State's economy.

We are trying to ensure that the great resources of this State are developed, as the great resources of Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia have been developed. We are committed to responsible development in ways that protect our water, farmland and environment, and stimulate employment, especially in rural and regional New South Wales, with the encouragement of the member for Murray-Darling. I thank the mining companies for their interest in two projects that the Government has placed before them: enhanced apprenticeship schemes and enhanced Indigenous employment schemes. As I said earlier, the responsible Minister has been of great assistance in that regard. I remind the House and the people of New South Wales that this Government is getting ahead with the job: it is building the wealth of this State and making New South Wales great once more.

MILLERS POINT PUBLIC HOUSING

Ms CLOVER MOORE: My question is to the Minister for Family and Community Services. As all but four Millers Point properties marked for sale by the previous Government have now been sold, will the Minister commit to retaining the remaining Housing NSW properties for social housing, given this small and stable public housing community has a long history of connection and social support?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I thank the member for her interest and commend her ongoing commitment to the people of Millers Point. Stage one of the Millers Point sales program, as the member acknowledges, commenced in 2008 with the sale of 16 vacant properties and has stimulated private investment valued at approximately \$70 million to fund the restoration of these State-significant heritage properties. Stage two of the Millers Point leasehold sales program comprises the sale of 20 houses with 99-year leases, of which 16 have been sold to date. Those 16 sales have generated revenue in excess of \$23.5 million, and the stage two sales program will be completed by mid 2012. The Government is currently reviewing its strategy with regard to the future of Millers Point. In line with the Government's commitment to provide more housing for older and homeless people, this revenue is being and will continue to be used for the development of new social housing in areas of high demand such as the Cowper Street, Glebe housing project, to be delivered in the next two to three years.

Much of the social housing portfolio at Millers Point is unsuitable for clients on the housing waiting list as they are heritage listed older buildings which cannot be modified to meet modern requirements. These older heritage-style properties incur maintenance costs estimated to be five times the average maintenance cost of properties in the housing portfolio—another good reason for selling the 20 houses with 99-year leases. In the parlous financial circumstances imposed on this State by 16 years of mismanagement and an incompetent Australian Labor Party Commonwealth Government these sales make good sense for our tenants and in view of our need to fund additional supply.

I take this opportunity to update the House on the interest that has been shown as a result of the waiting list data released last week by region. I think the member will also be interested in these details given the many bedroom categories in the Sydney central business district and outlying areas that have long wait times. Today I received an update from Housing NSW in relation to the amount of interest shown on line. So far there have been almost 10,000 hits on the website from people accessing information they had never had before about waiting times across the State. Housing NSW has also reported instances where people have come into housing offices to change their location so they, hopefully, could be housed sooner. That, again, was never an option under Labor, which hid the figures and kept the people of New South Wales and prospective tenants in the dark.

The Leader of the Opposition had a hide to say on the ABC that the Government would be forcing people to change their location and that they would be left without family support. That was dishonest and misleading. Only Labor would call this a stunt when it is, in fact, a great service to potential tenants and a way of improving the service we provided. It was a disgraceful comment. No part of our release of data was about forcing anyone to change their location. I have also been advised that Housing NSW staff have celebrated the release of this data because they are now able to give people, for once, a realistic picture of the social housing waiting list, which never occurred in 16 years under those opposite. This is all about improving services to the people of New South Wales after a very long wait—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Ms PRU GOWARD: —under a Government that preferred spin and deceit to facts and figures.

FUEL PRICES

Mr DARREN WEBBER: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. What is the Government doing to address the E10 fuel price gap and protect consumers in New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Maroubra that he is already on three calls to order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member for his question and acknowledge his strong interest and the strong interest of those on this side of the House on this issue, particularly the cost-of-living pressures experienced by his and all of our constituents. As we approach C-day—the day the carbon tax begins to leach money from the pockets of New South Wales residents—

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: —it is imperative that we do everything possible to ease the pressure on household budgets. That is why I recently took action on petrol price clarity and transparency in New South Wales, as reported to the Parliament. We will continue to do everything we can to limit the impact of fuel prices on the budgets of consumers in this State. Those opposite are working towards a carbon tax that will ensure New South Wales households will have to find another \$498 a year to pay for increasing energy costs. In the meantime the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is looking for opportunities to reduce cost-of-living pressures.

As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* today, the NRMA has asked why there is a rising gap between the price of E10 ethanol blended fuel and 95 octane unleaded fuel. The NRMA asks why the price difference has blown out from 9.5 cents per litre in September 2009 to 11.5 cents per litre this month. The NRMA would also like to know why the price difference at the pump is now 11.5 cents per litre when the wholesale price difference is only 2 cents per litre. I add other questions to the list. I would like to know where the Federal Government's Petrol Commissioner is on this. I would like to know where the Federal Minister is on this. I would like to know where Julia Gillard is on this.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: I know it is late in the day and obviously the Minister is confused, but he is meant to answer questions, not ask them. It is our job to ask questions and his job to answer them.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: These are the questions. That is why the Opposition has about 3½ people on that side and we control the House: We are listening. These are questions that the people of New South Wales want answered. While we are asking the questions I want to know where the New South Wales Opposition is on this. Why is it up to the NRMA and the New South Wales Government to raise these issues? Is the Federal Government too busy preparing for C-day to instruct its Petrol Commissioner to look at this issue?

Mr Richard Amery: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order so that I can listen very carefully to the member for Mount Druitt.

Mr Richard Amery: My point of order relates to Standing Order 130. The Minister has been asked to provide information to the House. I submit that he is now debating the subject of the question he was asked, contrary to the standing orders of this House.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is a valid point of order, but I do not think the Minister is debating the subject of the question.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I was talking about C-day not the rolling D-day of the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: It gives me great pleasure to inform the House that today I have instructed the New South Wales Commissioner of Fair Trading to work with consumers and stakeholders in New South Wales and conduct an inquiry into these price differences. We on this side of the House want to see more information. We want to see more justification for these price differences that the oil companies are bringing about in the marketplace. All we have here are the apologists for the fuel companies. We are concerned about this price data, we are concerned about consumers and we are taking action.

Information obtained through the inquiry will be provided to regulators, including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Federal Petrol Commissioner, for action. Only this morning I spoke to the Minister for Roads on this issue and we have written to the Federal Petrol Commissioner. I am going to review the Fair Trading Regulation 2007 soon, including the Product Information Standards for petrol price signs in New South Wales, and I want the review to take account of this issue. [*Extension of time granted.*]

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will contain themselves.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: This follows the recent major compliance operation of New South Wales Fair Trading to address misleading and deceptive petrol advertising by service station operators in this State. We understand on this side of the House that those opposite are not interested in cost-of-living pressures, but we are. I note that the Opposition has not asked a single question on cost-of-living pressures since Parliament resumed.

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: A question to the Minister: When did he last fill his own car with petrol?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order; that is cheeky.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Ask me that when we return for the next sittings, because it was Sunday. I note that the Opposition has not asked a single question that goes to the heart of consumer issues in this State, and I note that the Opposition has not asked a single question that holds the Federal Government to account for what it is doing to consumers in this State. It is a good thing that the Liberals and The Nationals are determined to do the right thing by New South Wales consumers. We know what is happening in western Sydney; we know what is happening in regional New South Wales; we know that consumers are struggling after 16 years of a failed State Labor that pushed up the price of power, pushed up the price of water, pushed up the price of gas and pushed up the price of transport. New South Wales residents deserve protection, they deserve action and they deserve reform.

Mr Nathan Rees: Point of order: Members should not use props.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Madam Speaker, as you know, I have been inspecting show bags today in connection with consumer protection—we identify dodgy show bags. There are plenty of show bags on the other side of the House, but one show bag caught my eye—the Junior MasterChef show bag. We all know what is in show bags, but what is in this one? [*Time expired.*]

THOROUGHBRED RACING INDUSTRY

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: My question is addressed to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members have not asked 10 questions yet. Do Opposition members have anything else to say? If Opposition members would like to question me they can do so after question time. Opposition members have asked three questions and one supplementary question, one Independent member has asked a question, and Government members have asked four questions. This is the Government's fifth question, which makes 10 questions. If there is nothing else, the member for Hawkesbury may ask his question.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Madam Speaker, it is a question about horseracing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I look forward to hearing it.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: As opposed to flogging a dead horse like the Leader of the Opposition, can the Minister provide the House with an update on the recent High Court race fields decision on behalf of the racing industry?

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: I am delighted to be asked this question by the member for Hawkesbury, who is passionate about the racing industry. Last week's decision pleased not only him but the whole of the industry. The Liberal-Nationals Government has welcomed last week's judgement by the High Court regarding the challenge to the New South Wales race fields legislation. In its ruling on Friday, the High Court dismissed appeals by Betfair and Sportsbet and found that Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW had implemented the race fields scheme validly. The decision underpins the principle in the legislation that all wagering operators that use race fields information as a wagering platform should pay an appropriate fee to the New South Wales racing industry for the use of those race fields.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toongabbie will stop stomping on the floor. He is just being silly.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: The Liberals and The Nationals have supported this position from the outset. This landmark decision ensures the long-term sustainability of our State's racing industry, the \$1 billion it injects into the New South Wales economy each year and the 50,000 jobs it supports.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order and stop inciting the member for Toongabbie.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: It paves the way for a much-needed injection of funding for racing. Already our counterparts in Victoria are examining our race fields scheme and this decision. For nearly four years there has been enormous uncertainty within the racing industry surrounding this matter. In an increasingly competitive wagering market it is appropriate that the New South Wales racing industry will receive an equitable payment from those who use its racing product to benefit financially. All wagering operators who use New South Wales race fields must pay a levy of 1.5 per cent of betting turnover, and that goes directly to the three codes of racing to help ensure their long-term sustainability.

As a result, Racing NSW has today announced the biggest prize money increases in this State's racing industry history. I was pleased to be at that announcement. It provides for increases to prize money across the board for metropolitan, provincial and country racing. Funds are also earmarked for improvements to country racetrack infrastructure. That matter pleases me greatly. A brilliant new initiative is that stablehands will receive 1.5 per cent of prize money. The intention is that all will benefit. I congratulate our State's great racing industry on this historic event and its determination in ensuring that the race fields funding scheme remains intact.

In particular, I congratulate Racing NSW chairman John Messara, Racing NSW chief executive officer Peter Vlandys, his staff and current and past board members who have carried the case for almost a decade. Since being elected to office this Government has worked hard to ensure the long-term sustainability and integrity of our racing industry. I also acknowledge the work of the former Minister, the Hon. Kevin Greene, in this important area. We are committed to supporting racing, from the metropolitan headquarters at Royal Randwick and Rosehill through to Albury, Broken Hill, Grafton and Shoalhaven—not to overlook Muswellbrook and Scone in my electorate—and look forward to the rewards for the hard work by everyone that puts on the show.

Question time concluded at 3.14 p.m.

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 4 April 2012.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Reference: Review of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981

Mr ANDREW FRASER: On behalf of the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters and in accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters has received a referral from the Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney to conduct an inquiry into the review of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

PETITIONS

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

Armidale Rural Referral Hospital Upgrade

Petition requesting support for funding for the major upgrade of Armidale Rural Referral Hospital, received from **Mr Richard Torbay**.

Moorebank Intermodal Terminal Development

Petition recognising the impact of the proposed intermodal terminal development on south-western Sydney residents and rejecting the proposal to develop the intermodal terminal on the National Defence Storage and Distribution Centre site, received from **Ms Melanie Gibbons**.

Pets on Public Transport

Petition requesting that pets be allowed on public transport, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Walsh Bay Precinct Public Transport

Petition requesting improved bus services for the Walsh Bay precinct, and ferry services for the new wharf at pier 2/3, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

Container Deposit Levy

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

Animals Performing in Circuses

Petition requesting a ban on exotic animals performing in circuses, received from **Ms Clover Moore**.

The Clerk announced that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons was lodged for presentation:

Pittwater Fishing

Petition requesting the Government buy out commercial fishing operators within the Pittwater to help to ensure a sustainable future for this invaluable natural asset, received from **Mr Rob Stokes**.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER: I will clarify the statement I made yesterday in relation to the use of mobile phones and tweeting in the Chamber. A number of members and others have expressed concerns via tweets, emails and conversations. I take this opportunity to inform members that my comments were not intended to imply a blanket ban. As noted in the more traditional press yesterday, the question of the contribution of social media to democratic debate and whether that should extend to a two-way conversation during Chamber proceedings has not been settled, despite the deliberations of a number of parliamentary committees both in Australia and overseas.

Members who choose to participate in such social engagements are reminded that tweets are not proceedings of the Parliament. As such, they do not attract parliamentary privilege and would be subject to the normal laws of defamation. There is potential for certain use of social media to possibly give rise to the types of statements that would traditionally be considered to be in breach of standing orders on contempt, or involve reflections on members or the Chair. That would be considered disorderly. Whilst tweeting might be at the cutting edge of public engagement, the standing orders are framed around traditional verbal debate in public between elected members. I ask all members not to tweet comments that would be disorderly if verbalised in the House. To reiterate, my comments yesterday were not intended to imply a blanket ban but rather to protect members from inappropriate tweeting in the Chamber.

Mr Jamie Parker: Very good.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member of Balmain—the first tweeter yesterday.

SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (BOARD MEMBERS) BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Katrina Hodgkinson.

Agreement in Principle

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [3.20 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

The Sydney Water Catchment Management Act 1998 constitutes the Sydney Catchment Authority and establishes the Sydney Catchment Authority Board. The authority manages a total of 21 storage dams that

together can hold more than 2.5 million megalitres of water. The dams include Warragamba Dam, which is one of the largest domestic water supply dams in the world, and the main source of the drinking water supply for Sydney. The area for which the authority is responsible occupies 16,000 square kilometres and consists of five primary catchment areas. The authority's vision is to ensure healthy catchments and quality water for the Sydney region. The principal statutory objectives of the authority, as specified in section 14 of the Act, are:

- (a) to ensure that the catchment areas and the catchment infrastructure works are managed and protected so as to promote water quality, the protection of public health and public safety, and the protection of the environment,
- (b) to ensure that water supplied by it complies with appropriate standards of quality,
- (c) where its activities affect the environment, to conduct its operations in compliance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development contained in section 6 (2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*,
- (d) to manage the SCA's catchment infrastructure works efficiently and economically and in accordance with sound commercial principles.

This bill does not change those objectives. The Sydney Catchment Authority Board is responsible for the policies and the long-term strategic plans of the authority, endeavouring to ensure the authority meets its public health and environmental requirements and overseeing the effective, efficient and economical management of the authority. The board consists of the chief executive of the authority and between four and eight other members. Currently those other members must include one nominee each from the NSW Farmers Association and the Nature Conservation Council as well as an elected councillor from a council within the catchment area.

While selection based on defined stakeholder groups can sometimes be effective, it does not allow for representation across the full spectrum of stakeholders. It can also inhibit the Minister from selecting the best person for the job at any given time. The bill therefore removes the current requirement for the board to include nominees from the NSW Farmers Association, the Nature Conservation Council and a local councillor. Instead, the bill specifies the skills and expertise that are required for the board to operate effectively. That obviously does not, of course, preclude members of the NSW Farmers Association, the Nature Conservation Council or local councillors from seeking appointment to the board, if they have the necessary expertise and skills—quite the opposite. I absolutely fully encourage suitably qualified individuals from those organisations to apply.

The amendments require full merit-based selection, and this will ensure that eligible members of the community have an equal opportunity to be selected for the board. This approach is in line with government policy at both State and Federal levels. It will also bring governance arrangements for the Sydney Catchment Authority into line with those for other statutory authorities, such as the catchment management authorities, and with State-owned corporations, such as the Sydney Water Corporation. The Act currently requires the board, individually or collectively, to have expertise only in protection of the environment and public health, and other expertise that the Minister considers necessary to fulfil the authority's objectives. The bill provides for the selection criteria to be expanded in recognition of the important strategic role of the board and the statutory objectives of the authority.

Members of the board, individually or collectively, will be required to have qualifications and experience relevant to catchment management and protection, water quality and public health, running a commercial entity, and water supply planning and asset management. As well, members of the board, individually or collectively, must have practical knowledge of, and experience in, agriculture and industry in the catchment area, and local government and planning in the catchment area. In addition, the Minister will have the flexibility to specify additional expertise necessary to fulfil the authority's objectives. Extending the selection criteria for board membership in this way will result in the board having the comprehensive skills set needed to fulfil its obligations. The amendments do not mean that every board member will have to meet all the selection criteria, but that the board as a whole, in line with other organisations, must satisfy those criteria.

Knowledge of local issues is particularly important in relation to agriculture, industry, local government and planning, and this is reflected in the revised criteria. The requirements for experience relevant to running a commercial entity and to water supply and asset management reflect the level of governance responsibilities that apply to boards of statutory authorities. Although all board memberships will expire on the proclamation of this bill, the bill provides for continuity between the existing board and the new board by allowing existing board members to be reappointed if they are eligible. The bill proposes sensible amendments to introduce merit-based selection for membership of the board. This will provide the Sydney Catchment Authority Board with appropriate skills and expertise, and allow for the broadest stakeholder representation. It will bring the board into line with governance arrangements for other statutory authorities and State-owned corporations. The provisions in this bill will commence on proclamation. I commend the bill to the House.

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

CO-OPERATIVES (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) BILL 2012

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts.

Agreement in Principle

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Fair Trading) [3.26 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Co-operatives (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012. The Co-operatives National Law is the proposed new national uniform template legislation for the regulation of cooperatives in all States and Territories, as provided for in the Australian Uniform Co-operative Laws Agreement. The main purpose of this bill is to enable the uniform Co-operatives National Law and the national regulations to be applied in New South Wales from the date of commencement of the Act. The law is set out in schedule 1 to the bill. The law will apply to the non-banking cooperatives, which are also known as general cooperatives. The banking cooperatives are sometimes called financial cooperatives, such as credit unions, building societies and friendly societies. They are regulated under separate legislation administered by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. Cooperative housing societies will also continue to be dealt with under the authority's separate laws.

Cooperatives are people-centred businesses and organisations. Cooperatives continue to be a significant part of the New South Wales, Australian and world economies. Australia wide there are approximately 1,700 registered cooperatives. Co-operatives Australia maintains a list of Australia's top 100 cooperatives and other mutual organisations on its website. New South Wales has several cooperatives on this list that make a significant contribution to the State's economy. About three-quarters of cooperatives are established as not for profit in that they have rules that prevent them from distributing any surplus to their members. Yet these cooperatives may provide crucial services to their members, such as health and medical care, job searching, training, housing or child care.

According to the New South Wales Registry of Co-operatives and Associations, for the financial year ending in 2010 there were approximately 680 cooperatives registered in New South Wales. They operate in a diverse range of industries, such as book sales, clubs, dairy produce, fishing and fruit marketing, rural grocery and petrol supplies, grain handling, cotton growing, labour hire, plumbing supplies, property sales, recycling, sugar milling, tourism and wine sales. New South Wales cooperatives have a total turnover of approximately \$2.9 billion, total assets of approximately \$2 billion, employ approximately 10,000 people and have a membership of about 1.8 million people. Cooperatives provide an organisational structure for individuals and small businesses through which to acquire goods and services in economies that increasingly are dominated by large corporate organisations.

Cooperatives are also important to rural communities. Cooperatives enable those communities to retain and develop services that have been eroded by the withdrawal of other corporate businesses, which seek to maximise profits for investors and so relocate elsewhere for bigger profits. Investor-oriented firms, member-oriented cooperatives and other types of organisations have a role to play in providing services in a modern, balanced economy. Governments continue to have a role in providing a legislative framework to assist with the operation of cooperatives and other forms of organisation. The International Co-operative Alliance, which is the worldwide representative body for cooperatives, developed seven cooperative principles to guide the operation of cooperatives, which gives them their distinctive member-owned, member-controlled and member-used focus.

Current States and Territories cooperatives legislation provides for those laws to be interpreted in a way that would promote the cooperative principles. The Co-operatives National Law will continue that approach. The objects of the Co-operatives National Law are the same as those in the current cooperatives legislation of New South Wales and include enabling the formation, registration and operation of cooperatives; promotion of cooperative principles; and protection of the interests of cooperatives, their members and the public in the operations and activities of cooperatives. I will now outline the major reforms in the Co-operatives National Law for members of the House.

First, there is the consistency of laws. The reforms will ensure consistency of content and administration of laws across all States and Territories. This will be achieved by jurisdictions either directly applying the uniform template Co-operatives National Law or making their own legislation consistent with the

law. All jurisdictions will use their best endeavours to administer the Co-operatives National Law uniformly, in line with the agreement. This improvement in the consistency and administration of the cooperatives laws will provide greater certainty to all parties with rights, duties and powers in relation to cooperatives and assist in lowering costs and red tape with cross-border operations.

Automatic mutual recognition of cooperatives by other jurisdictions, once they are registered in one jurisdiction, will facilitate cooperatives conducting operations across State and Territory borders. Currently, a cooperative needs to apply separately to each jurisdiction in which it wishes to operate. If a trading cooperative wishes to operate in all eight States and Territories, it would pay an average of about \$1,700 in registration and compliance fees to do so, as well as lodging reports annually to those jurisdictions. By comparison, the corresponding fee for a company registered under the Corporations Act is about \$450. Under the Co-operatives National Law, costs will be lowered and paperwork requirements simplified, which is similar to company requirements in this context.

Simplification of the financial reporting and auditing requirements for small cooperatives by using a risk assessment based system will reduce costs and red tape for those cooperatives. Responsibilities and duties for directors and officers of a cooperative have been updated and made consistent with those requirements applying to directors and officers under the Corporations Act. This will mean that directors and officers in similar circumstances in a cooperative will be treated similarly to those in a company. Director liability for corporate fault under the Co-operatives National Law has been revised according to the Council of Australian Governments director liability reform. As a result, blanket liability provisions have been removed and directors face liability where there is a clear link between the director's responsibility and action or inaction and the contravention of the law.

More flexibility for a cooperative to raise funds from both members and the public has been created by the introduction of the option to use cooperative capital units by cooperatives in all jurisdictions. A more restricted use of these units has been available under the New South Wales Co-operatives Act, as a result of New South Wales legislative reform in the 1990s. To save reinventing the wheel, cooperatives laws have for some time referenced Corporations Act laws where appropriate—for example, in dealing with disclosure of information for fundraising from the public, insolvency, liquidation and winding up situations. The referencing of the Corporations Act has been updated and made consistent across jurisdictions.

The introduction of enforceable undertakings is a cost-effective method of facilitating compliance with the law. For example, the registrar may accept a written undertaking from a cooperative to take action to prevent contravention of the law. This can be reinforced with a court order applied for by the registrar, provided there is agreement from the cooperative. The adoption bill and the law have been approved by all States and Territories via the Council of Australian Governments Consumer Affairs Forum out-of-session process. With these milestones having been met, it is now timely for the bill and law to be considered by this House in keeping with the terms of the agreement.

The Australian Uniform Co-operative Laws Agreement requires States and Territories to secure the passage and proclamation of their laws within a set time of 12 months from the assent of the New South Wales Co-operatives (Adoption of National Laws) Act, or such further time as may be unanimously approved by the Council of Australian Governments Consumer Affairs Forum. However, as the United Nations has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Co-operatives, the States and Territories, including New South Wales, are working towards the commencement of the Co-operatives National Law during 2012, to coincide with this international year. One of the three goals set by the United Nations for this international year is to encourage governments to establish policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of cooperatives.

Commencement of the Co-operatives National Law in 2012 would meet that goal and is therefore a fitting tribute to the celebration of the International Year of Co-operatives in New South Wales and in the other States and Territories. In concluding, I urge all State and Territory governments and sector participants to remain committed to the implementation and ongoing uniform administration of this national template cooperatives legislation, for the benefit of all in the cooperatives sector and the economy. The making of these laws will assist all cooperatives in New South Wales and in all the other States and Territories. I commend the bill to the House.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Standing and Sessional Orders

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.36 p.m.], by leave: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Agrees to the amendments to the sessional order on notices of motions adopted on 14 February 2012 and to the new sessional order on Disorder—Member Removed from the Chamber, to apply forthwith, as follows—

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 133 shall read as follows:

133.

- (1) A notice of motion for:
- (a) A bill;
 - (b) Government Business;
 - (c) No confidence in the Government, Minister or Speaker, or censure of Member or Speaker;
 - (d) Business with Precedence, (SO 118) with the exception of motions of condolence and the printing of papers; and
 - (e) A General Notice to be the subject of a motion for re-ordering must be given verbally at the time prescribed in the routine of business.
- (2) General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices):
- (a) May only be given when called for at the time prescribed in the routine of business each day;
 - (b) The period for giving General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) is limited to a maximum of 10 minutes. The Speaker has discretion to allow the giving of notices to exceed this 10 minute period.
- (3) (a) Up to nine General Business (Community Recognition Notices) may be lodged electronically with the Table Office each sitting week. Such notices must not contain:
- (i) Matters of policy;
 - (ii) Requests for the Government or the House, or another body to take some form of action or not; or
 - (iii) Criticisms or negative reflections on any person, including Members, Office Holders, the Government, the Opposition or a third party.
- A General Business (Community Recognition Notice) not conforming with this sessional order may be ordered not to be printed by the Speaker, or removed from the Business Paper.
- (b) General Business (Community Recognition Notices) must be lodged by 12.00 noon each sitting day.

DISORDER—MEMBER REMOVED FROM THE CHAMBER

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, the following sessional order be adopted:

- 249A. The Speaker may direct a Member who is grossly disorderly to leave the Chamber for up to three hours. The direction shall not be open to debate or dissent.
- (2) Agrees to the amendments to the sessional orders adopted on 14 February 2012 and to the new sessional orders, to apply from 1 May 2012, as follows—

REPLY

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 66 shall read as follows:

66. A Member may speak in reply if the Member has moved:
- (1) a substantive motion or
 - (2) a motion "That this bill be now read a second time" or
 - (3) a motion "That this bill be now read a third time".

MATTERS NOT OPEN TO DEBATE OR AMENDMENT

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 80 shall read as follows:

80. The following matters are not open to debate nor amendment:
- (1) Adjournment of debate.
 - (2) Adjournment of the House.
 - (3) Extension of time.
 - (4) Leave of the House.
 - (5) Motion that a Member be suspended.
 - (6) Motion that a message be sent to the Legislative Council.
 - (7) Motion that leave of absence be granted.
 - (8) To withdraw or postpone an order of the day.
 - (9) Personal explanation.
 - (10) "That inspection of the paper be restricted to members only and that no copies or extracts thereof be permitted".
 - (11) "That visitors be ordered to withdraw".
 - (12) "That the bill be declared urgent".
 - (13) "That this bill be read at a later time".
 - (14) "That the Order of the Day be discharged and the bill be withdrawn".
 - (15) "That the Committee report be printed".
 - (16) "That the Member for ... be further heard".
 - (17) "That the Member for ... be not further heard".
 - (18) "That the Member for ... be now heard".
 - (19) "That the petition not be received".
 - (20) "That the question be put as separate questions".
 - (21) "That the question be now put".
 - (22) "That the question be not now put".
 - (23) "That the Member's speaking time be extended".

MAXIMUM TIME LIMITS FOR DEBATES AND SPEECHES

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 85 be amended in part as follows:

Bills (SO 188-239)**Second Reading:**

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| (i) Introduced by a Minister | |
| Mover | - unspecified |
| Leader of the Opposition or
one member deputed,
next speaking | - unspecified |
| Any other Member | - 10 minutes |
| Reply | - unspecified |
|
(ii) Appropriation Bill | |
| Mover | - unspecified |
| Party Leaders | - unspecified |
| Any other Member | - 15 minutes |
| Reply | - unspecified |

(iii) Introduced by a Private Member

Mover	- unspecified
Premier or one Minister deputed	- unspecified
Leader of the Opposition or one Member deputed	- unspecified
Any other Member	- 10 minutes
Reply	- unspecified

Bill be now read a third time (SO 218)

All Members	- 10 minutes
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Omit reference to time limits for debate for Proceedings after consideration in detail.

† A Member may request and the Speaker shall put, without debate or amendment, a question that the Member be allowed to continue that speech for a further period of up to 5 minutes.

ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR DEBATE (GUILLOTINE)

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 90 shall read as follows:

90. The Premier, or a Minister acting on the Premier's behalf, may at any time state in the House the intention of the Government to deal with any business to a certain stage at a specified time at the next or a subsequent sitting.

Written notification must subsequently be given to the Speaker and the Party Leaders and the notice shall be published in the Business Paper.

To give effect to the notification a Member shall move at the specified time on the date given or at a later time at the same sitting the motion "That the question be now put".

The carrying of this question is an instruction to the Speaker to put to the vote every question necessary to give effect to the notification. No further debate, amendment or reply is permitted.

After the carrying of the closure, the Speaker shall put to the vote any amendments proposed by a Minister provided that the amendments were lodged with the Clerk and printed and circulated by the Clerk at least 2 hours before the specified time.

The closure may not be moved on any question contained in a notification of allocation of time under this standing order.

If the closure under this standing order is agreed to during the second reading stage and there have been no Minister's amendments circulated, the Speaker shall forthwith put to the vote the third reading of the Bill.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 188 shall read as follows:

188. The procedure for the introduction and the passage of a bill up to the mover's second reading speech is as follows:
- (1) The title of a bill must agree with the notice of intention to present it, and every clause must come within the title. It shall not be necessary to specify in the long title every Act which it is proposed to amend.
 - (2) A notice of motion shall be given: "I give notice of motion to introduce the [short title of the bill]". It is sufficient for the mover to read the short title.
 - (3) The motion to introduce the bill may be moved on the same day notice is given and shall include the long title.
 - (4) The question "That this bill be now introduced" shall be put without debate or amendment and the bill shall be taken as read a first time without question put.
 - (5) The bill as introduced shall correspond with the notice of motion.
 - (6) Three copies of the bill shall be handed to the Clerk.
 - (7) The bill shall be printed, with an explanatory note if applicable, without motion put.
 - (8) The motion "That this bill be now read a second time" may be moved forthwith or set down for a later time.
 - (9) Immediately following the mover's second reading speech the debate shall be adjourned.
 - (10) The mover shall ask the Speaker to fix the resumption of the debate as an Order of the Day for a future day which shall be at least five clear days ahead.
 - (11) On the reading of the Order of the Day a motion may be moved "That this bill be now read a second time", or "That the order be postponed" or, on a motion without notice, "That the order be discharged and the bill be withdrawn".

PROCEDURE FOR URGENT BILLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 189 shall read as follows:

189. The procedure for the consideration of a bill as an urgent bill is as follows:
- (1) Sufficient copies being available to Members, the Member in charge of the bill, after making a second reading speech, may declare a bill to be an urgent bill.
 - (2) The question "That the bill be considered an urgent bill" is put forthwith, no debate or amendment being allowed.
 - (3) If agreed to, the second reading debate and other stages may be proceeded with forthwith or at any time during that or any future sitting of the House.

COGNATE BILLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 193 shall read as follows:

193. The procedure for two or more bills to be dealt with as cognate bills is as follows:
- (1) The notice of motion for the bills shall state that the bills are cognate.
 - (2) One motion may be moved and one question put in regard to, respectively, the introduction, the second reading, the consideration in detail stage and the third reading of the bills together.
 - (3) The bills may be considered together in detail.

SECOND AND THIRD READING OF COGNATE BILLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 194 shall read as follows:

194. An amendment may be moved to a question on the second or third reading of cognate bills to leave out one or more of the bills from the question.

SEPARATE QUESTIONS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 195 shall read as follows:

195. In respect of cognate bills, a Member may move a motion for the question to be put on the second or third reading of cognate bills as separate questions.

SECOND READING

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 198 shall read as follows:

198. Amendments may be moved to the question "That this bill be now read a second time" to leave out all words after the word "That" and adding words to refer the bill to a committee (as specified).

DISPOSAL OF BILL

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 199 shall read as follows:

199. An amendment may be moved to the question "That this bill be now read a second time" to leave out all words after "That" and adding "this bill be disposed of". No amendment may be moved to this amendment.

AMENDMENT—DEFERRAL OF QUESTION

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 200 shall read as follows:

200. An amendment may be moved to the question "That this bill be now read a second time" to leave out the word "now" and adding a later time.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF SECOND BILL

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 202 shall read as follows:

202. An Order of the Day for the second reading (or any subsequent stage of a bill) having been discharged and the bill withdrawn, the House may direct on motion for another bill to be brought in.

PROCEEDINGS AFTER THE SECOND READING

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 203 shall read as follows:

203. After the second reading, the Member in charge of the bill shall move forthwith "That this bill be now read a third time" unless:
- (1) A Member requests consideration of the bill in detail; or
 - (2) The Member in charge of the bill:
 - (a) moves a motion for consideration in detail pro forma; or
 - (b) requests the Speaker to set down consideration of the bill in detail as an Order of the Day for a later time.

PRO FORMA CONSIDERATION IN DETAIL

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 204 shall read as follows:

204. The procedure for dealing with a pro forma consideration in detail is as follows:
- (1) After the second reading, the Member in charge of the bill shall move "That the House consider the bill in detail pro forma". The question shall be put without amendment or debate.
 - (2) The proposed amendments, which have been previously printed, shall be put in one question, without amendment or debate, "That the amendments as printed be inserted in the bill".
 - (3) If the motion is agreed to the bill shall be reprinted in its amended form, set down for reconsideration and, on reconsideration, be dealt with as if considered for the first time.
 - (4) If the question for the pro forma consideration, or for the inclusion of the amendments is negatived, the bill shall be proceeded with in consideration in detail in the usual manner.

RECONSIDERATION IN WHOLE OR PART

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 217 shall read as follows:

217. After consideration in detail a bill may be reconsidered in whole or in part by amendment to the motion "That this bill be now read a third time".

BILL PASSES

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 218 shall read as follows:

218. After the third reading no further question shall be put, and the bill shall have passed the House.

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 220 shall read as follows:

220. A bill having been read a third time, the Clerk shall certify, at the top of the first page "That this public [or private] bill, originated in the Legislative Assembly and, having this day passed, is now ready for presentation to the Legislative Council for its concurrence."

PROCEDURE IN THE ASSEMBLY FOR COUNCIL BILLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 229 shall read as follows:

- 229.
- (1) When the message from the Council forwarding a bill for concurrence is reported, the bill shall be introduced and read a first time without motion put.
 - (2) A message forwarding a private member's public bill or a private bill from the Council cannot be reported until the Speaker is advised which Member of the Assembly will have carriage of the bill. Once reported the bill will be set down as an Order of the Day.
 - (3) A motion "That this bill be now read a second time" may be moved forthwith or made an Order of the Day for a later time. Except in the case of a private member's bill which can only be moved when it is called on in accordance with the routine of business.
 - (4) A truncated second reading speech may be given if the bill is received in the same form as introduced into the Council.
 - (5) Immediately following the mover's second reading speech, the debate may be adjourned or proceeded with forthwith.

- (6) If adjourned, the resumption of the debate shall be set down as an Order of the Day for a later time.
- (7) The bill shall then be proceeded with in the same manner as a bill originating in the Assembly.

PROCEEDINGS AFTER CONSIDERATION IN DETAIL

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 238 shall read as follows:

238. After consideration in detail, the Member in charge of the bill may:
- (1) Request the Speaker to set down the motion "That this bill be now read a third time" as an order of the day for a later time; or
 - (2) Move the motion "That this bill be now read a third time" forthwith.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 246 shall read as follows:

- 246.
- (1) On a motion of a Minister, during the second reading debate on the Appropriation Bill, the House may appoint Estimates Committees.
 - (2) The Estimates Committees shall examine and report on proposed expenditures from the Consolidated Fund for each organisational unit for each Minister listed in the Tabled Estimates, and the corresponding clauses and schedules in the Appropriation Bill and the Parliamentary Appropriation Bill which shall stand referred to the appropriate committee
 - (3) The report of each Estimates Committee shall state whether the votes of each organisational unit in the Estimates and the corresponding clauses and schedules in the Appropriation Bill are recommended or otherwise.

The failure of an Estimates Committee to report on any part of the votes shall be deemed to be a report recommending the proposed expenditure.
 - (4) The Chair of each Committee or a Member deputed by the Chair shall, after the committee has concluded its deliberations and after the question on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill and the Parliamentary Appropriation Bill has been agreed to, present the Committee's report to the Speaker in the House.

The Speaker shall set down consideration of the reports in detail with the Appropriation Bill and the Parliamentary Appropriation Bill respectively as an Order of the Day.
 - (5) Consideration of a report in detail shall be deemed to be consideration of those clauses and schedules of the Appropriation Bill and the Parliamentary Appropriation Bill referred to that Estimates Committee.
 - (6) When considering a report in detail:
 - (a) The Speaker shall put the question in respect of each Committee report, "That the report of the (name of the Committee) be adopted".
 - (b) A Member may speak for a maximum of 5 minutes and the Minister in reply may speak for a maximum of 15 minutes on each of the questions.
 - (c) Those clauses and schedules of the Appropriation Bill and the Parliamentary Appropriation Bill not referred to an Estimates Committee shall be considered as one question, "That the remaining clauses and schedules of the Bill be agreed to".

LEGISLATION COMMITTEES

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 323 shall read as follows:

- 323.
- (1) Immediately after a motion for a bill to be read a second time has been agreed to, any Member may move without notice "That the (name of the bill) be referred to a legislation committee for consideration and report".
 - (2) A legislation committee shall consider and report to the House on amendments to the clauses and schedules of the bill which it considers could be proposed for consideration in detail, together with a schedule of amendments which should be proposed.
 - (3) A committee shall have a maximum of six Members – three shall be Members representing the Government and three shall be non-Government Members.
 - (4) The Chair and Deputy Chair shall be elected by the committee and shall be Government Members.

- (5) A quorum shall be four Members.
- (6) The Chair shall exercise a deliberative vote, and in the event of an equality of votes, a casting vote.
- (7) A committee may meet during the sittings or any adjournment of the House and shall have power to take evidence and call for persons, papers, exhibits and things and to report from time to time.
- (8) In all other respects a committee shall be conducted in accordance with the general provisions relating to committees.
- (9) A committee shall not travel.
- (10) The Minister having portfolio responsibility for the bill shall provide the committee with such drafting and support services as requested by the committee.
- (11) A committee shall table its final report no later than 6 months from the date of the committee's establishment.
- (12) When the Chair tables the final report of a committee the Speaker shall set down its consideration in detail as an Order of the Day with the bill.
- (13) If the House is not sitting at the time of report the Chair shall forward such report to the Clerk for report at the next sitting of the House.

PRIVATE BILLS

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 358 shall read as follows:

358. The procedure for the passage of a private bill on petition is as follows:

- (1) At least 3 months prior to the presentation of the petition, a notice of intention to introduce a bill containing a true statement of the general objects of the bill shall be published once a week for 4 consecutive weeks in the Government Gazette, in at least one major newspaper published in Sydney and in the district affected by the bill.
- (2) The petition, with a printed copy of the proposed bill attached and signed by one or more of the parties applying for the bill shall be presented and received by the House.
- (3) The petition must contain:
 - (a) proof of the publication of the notice in the Government Gazette and the newspapers.
 - (b) a true statement of the general objects of the bill.
 - (c) a request to introduce the bill.
- (4) When the petition has been received, notice of motion for the introduction of the bill shall be given, and such bill shall be brought in within 30 days.
- (5) The motion for the introduction of the bill cannot be objected to and the motion cannot be amended or debated.
- (6) Before being introduced and read a first time, the bill shall be printed and sufficient copies shall be delivered to the Clerk.
- (7) Before being introduced and read a first time, and from time to time thereafter, the Clerk shall be entitled to claim such expenses from the promoters of the bill as the Clerk deems reasonable.
- (8) After the first reading, the bill by motion on notice shall be referred to a select committee.

SPECIAL RULES

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, standing order 360 shall read as follows:

360. In the select committee:

- (1) The committee shall require proof of the allegations contained in the preamble.
- (2) The Chair shall have a deliberative and a casting vote.
- (3) Every petition in reference to the bill shall be deemed to be referred to the committee.
- (4) After taking evidence a question shall be put from the Chair – "That the preamble be agreed to"
 - (a) If the question passes in the negative, the committee shall not proceed further with the bill and report accordingly.
 - (b) If the question is resolved in the affirmative the committee shall consider the clauses of the bill and any amendments may be proposed.
- (5) The committee having reported in favour of the bill, it shall be proceeded with as in the case of public bills, and a later time set down for the second reading.

Members will recall that we had the great joy of commencing this parliamentary session on the day of love, 14 February 2012. On that very day—after much glasnost in previous weeks—we made a number of changes to the sessional orders that appear, to most members, to be working out quite well. They were developed in concert with the Opposition. There was a level of uncertainty as to how some aspects would work, but they seem to be doing so. I remind members that one change involved reducing a member's speaking time, particularly in general debate, from 15 minutes to 10 minutes. At the time there was a level of concern that members would be unable to define their message adequately and present it properly to the House. But it appears that members have succeeded in being much more succinct and focused in debate. The change appears to have worked well in that we are passing legislation but not requiring members to take additional time out of their electorates to attend Parliament. That helps members to perform the balancing act of attending parliamentary sittings and being in their electorates.

The second change on 14 February was the introduction of community recognition notices. That initiative has taken a little time to bed down, but it appears that most members are now happy to avail themselves of the opportunity to reflect properly on people who are deserving of community recognition. The essential difference is that the notices are recorded in *Hansard* many months in advance of when they might otherwise have been, thereby giving deserving community members the appropriate recognition in a much more timely manner. It is also opportune to consider other issues related to the sessional orders. As part of this process we will continue to work with the Opposition to make sure that members have efficient sessional orders that reflect the needs of the House and of the Speaker, ensuring that she has the mechanisms necessary to fulfil her role. I should mention also that the new framework adopted on 14 February involves three-day weekly sittings, which appear to be working very well. We have now examined various issues regarding better management and have determined that further matters need to be addressed.

About five years ago the former Government amended the sessional orders, I am sure with the best intent at the time. For example, speeches previously referred to as second reading speeches became known as agreement in principle speeches. I am sure no-one would detract from the intent of that change at the time, but it introduced an element of confusion into this Parliament, which comprises the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. The changes introduced by the former Government created constant confusion, and continue to do so, as the Legislative Council continued using the terms "second reading" and "third reading". The Standing Orders and Procedure Committee has determined for consistency, to help members in both places but, particularly, the public, to change the sessional orders to require this Chamber to return to using the same terms first, second and third reading speeches. Perhaps the simplest and quickest way to explain the reasoning is to quote the Speaker's foreword in the report presented to the Parliament yesterday:

In particular, the Committee reviewed the Standing Orders regarding the passage of legislation. In 2007 the procedures for the passage of legislation through the Legislative Assembly were streamlined to reform the "Committee of the Whole" process and the terminology was modernised to refer to "agreement in principle" and the "passing of the bill".

The replacement of the reporting mechanisms from the Committee of the Whole, with a consideration in detail stage, is considered to have worked well, and this process will be retained. Nevertheless, reverting to the traditional language of "first, second and third readings" of a bill would bring about consistency between the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council standing orders, as well as the necessary administrative support and database information across the Parliament.

The Committee also took the opportunity to confirm the Speaker's power to temporarily remove a Member on grounds of gross disorder for up to three hours. The proposed sessional order extends the range of exclusionary measures available to the Speaker and her panel of Temporary Speakers so that any response can be proportionate to the degree of disorder needed to be addressed.

The final amendment recommended in this report is a fine-tuning of the new sessional order adopted in February 2012 which introduced community recognition notices. While the new congratulatory procedure has been welcomed by members, it is felt that there needs to be a maximum number able to be lodged by individual members, in common with current limits on questions on notice, and general business notices of motion.

Accordingly the Committee is pleased to recommend to the House:

That the amendments to the standing and sessional orders adopted by the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee on 3 April 2012 be approved by the House and adopted as sessional orders for the current session.

The Speaker's foreword also contains two other issues that I shall highlight briefly. In respect to the disorderly conduct of a member, the Speaker has available to her a number of options with the ultimate sanction being to remove the member from the Chamber. Under the rules of this place, removing a member effectively means that the member is excluded from the Parliament for a day and may return the following day. However, that removal means that the member must leave the precincts of the Parliament and, therefore, cannot attend his or her parliamentary office. On some occasions perhaps another option might be better than to remove a member. Of course, when in government the temptation always is to have Opposition members out of the Chamber for as long as possible.

However, the Speaker being fair and equitable would like a further opportunity to deal with the disorderly conduct of members. The proposed provision provides for members to be removed from the Chamber at the time of discord for up to three hours—I emphasise, for up to three hours—but still be able to continue their work as a member of Parliament in their parliamentary office to attend to the various requirements in representing their electorates. That is a sensible alternative approach. The member for Mount Druitt may take a different approach to that matter. He raised issues worthy of consideration by the committee but, on the whole, the committee determined it appropriate to proceed down this path. The second aspect finetunes the sessional order regarding community recognition notices.

Some people may argue that members should be entitled to place as many community recognition notices on the *Hansard* as the House is prepared to allow. However, the counterargument is that when a member gives a community recognition notice, it should be done with appropriate recognition and gravitas. If those notices are given in great abundance, perhaps that depreciates the individuals being recognised for their contributions to the community. In the end, that is the decision of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee. The Government certainly supports that recommendation. This genuinely is a bipartisan result. I conveyed to the committee that we will trial these changes and will review them if they do not work out as well as we expect.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [3.45 p.m.]: The Leader of the House has moved a motion containing a number of points regarding the outcomes of the meeting of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee on 3 April. I shall make a few formal comments on behalf of the Opposition, but I shall make some personal comments that other Opposition members may not share. The member for Liverpool may comment also on the proposal. The Opposition supports the changes proposed by the Leader of the House. The first proposal is to remove the reference to debating a bill in principle or a bill being introduced and replacing that with the traditional reference to first, second and third readings. The Leader of the House said that these matters were changed to the "in principle" process a few years ago. The member for Liverpool was a major contributor to that process. The strategy for the change, which he would better outline, and probably with more passion, was that the wording of a second reading debate was not understood in the general community.

Certainly we understood the parliamentary speak if someone in this place said, "I move that this bill be now read a second time." However, the general community was not aware of the meaning unless, of course, they were students of parliamentary procedure et cetera. The strategy behind the change was to convert the parliamentary speak to everyday street talk, for want of a better term—that is, the second reading speech was a debate in principle, therefore it should be called such. I agree with the proposed change to revert to the second reading terminology in accordance with the motion. The Leader of the House indicated that the inconsistent language between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council should be addressed.

People following debates in this House and on the same bill in the upper House hear references to an address in principle or a second reading speech. Some uniformity is required. The Legislative Council showed no interest in changing its terminology to that of the Legislative Assembly and this motion addresses that issue. I stand to be corrected, but I believe that we were the only Chamber in the Commonwealth to adopt that language. Therefore, this motion returns us to the traditional parliamentary language of dealing with legislation in a form that has been with us for many years. In respect to limiting members making community recognition notices, I initially held some concerns. However, the Speaker and the Clerk produced statistics to the meeting that show that since its introduction this year few members exceeded the maximum number per week.

A few members exceeded the number but that may be attributed to a new process and the level of keenness involved. I think the maximum number limiting members is appropriate and consistent with the limitation put on the written questions on notice. We are going back to "questions on notice" as opposed to "written questions" but that is an issue for another meeting down the path. I will make a personal comment and not one that the Opposition has considered in a formal process; I intend to bring the community recognition motions to the House and read them out and present them to the Clerk. My reasons for that are not just traditional. As they will appear in *Hansard* and *Hansard* is a record of the spoken word I believe I should read those motions to the House for them to be recorded in *Hansard*.

For other members the process will be to email them and they will be incorporated into *Hansard*, although they are not the spoken word. I do not have a passionate objection to that but I do believe these motions are for special occasions about special people or organisations. Putting one or two of them on the record each week will make sure we maintain their significance and importance instead of recognising the whole electorate over the term of office. I do not intend to put nine of those motions into *Hansard* every week. The

meeting discussed giving the Speaker the ability to "sin bin" a member for a short period of time. This is consistent with an unofficial practice by a former Speaker: when members were ejected from the Chamber during question time they were allowed to come back into the Chamber once question time had concluded.

Mr Brad Hazzard: A Labor Speaker.

Mr RICHARD AMERY: It was a Labor Speaker. It is consistent with a practice that has been in the House of Representatives in Canberra and that is that a person can be ejected from the House for a set period of time or until the conclusion of a debate or another process. With some reservations, I think it is a positive step. It allows a Speaker to eject an unruly member who may be unruly in question time but who may have some important legislation to deal with during the rest of the day. Had that member been ejected for the whole day that member would not be able to stay within the precincts of the Parliament. That sort of flexibility and realism is important. I hope that the ability to remove a member from the Chamber for a short period of time—half an hour, an hour, three hours—that it is not overly used against Opposition members to silence dissent during question time or other significant debates.

The Opposition support the propositions put forward. I am pleased to hear from the Leader of the House in the House and in conversation in the corridors—if I could breach those confidences—that he intends to cooperate with the Opposition and if we do come up with any propositions that improve the processes in this Parliament we will get a receptive ear. I know the member for Wagga Wagga, the Government Whip, has also indicated that cooperative approach. I am interested in the standing orders of this place and there are a couple of areas where minor changes could be made from time to time. The Leader of the House said that these matters are a trial. They are adopted by the House. He has shown a willingness for the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee to look at them in the future if some of the provisions hit a hurdle.

We all agree that the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee debates these matters around the table and we do it as individuals rather than along party lines. That is an important part of how this particular committee operates. Overall most of it has been covered. Everyone got a fair hearing. Members on both sides of the House had concerns. The production of statistics showing how many people are using the community recognition notices addressed concerns. I conclude with our normal concerns and reservations about the time limits, particularly, for example, taking note of committee reports, which is something we might have to look at down the track. Where time limits are already restricted, for example on the censure motion that was moved yesterday, we hope that standing orders are not suspended too often to enable important debates to be truncated. If that were to occur we would destroy the reasons for having speaking times set down for all members to abide by.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [3.55 p.m.]: I will make a brief contribution to the debate in relation to the backflip, going back to the archaic language and moving away from the modernised language that was adopted unanimously in this place in 2006. The substantive reasons put forward to justify the change are unmitigated drivel. There is nothing of substance in the arguments that have been put forward. The real reason that we are going backwards is that the shell-backed reactionaries in this place cannot get their heads around the fact that we are using language and styles that are not from the nineteenth century or earlier. They seem to be intellectually inadequate and unable to understand standing orders that have been in place for six or seven years.

A number of people in this place seem to yearn for the days of first, second and third readings when members assaulted each other across the Chamber. Those days are gone and so should the language be. It is not just that we want to use language that people might, outside this Chamber, have a vague sense of understanding, but the terminology we are using is just stupid. First, second and third readings come from the days when members of Parliament could not read and the bills had to be read by the clerk. All of us on this side of the House can read. I assume the Government members can read. I make no assertion to that effect. It is blatantly absurd to use the terminology of first, second and third reading. Those opposite have had 16 years in opposition and a year in power and the best they can do is fiddle around with the wording of the standing orders.

What is really offensive, especially about the people who are so excited about first, second and third readings, is that they try to dress this up as a commitment to parliamentarianism, to getting it all right. There is a real commitment to the form but not the substance. First, second and third reading is old fashioned traditional parliamentarianism, but those who advocate this are the same people who yesterday allowed five minutes for someone to move a censure motion—the first time since 1856 that has been done. If you want to talk about being a parliamentarian, understanding this place and using the traditional methods, then maybe you should start with that. I exclude you, Mr Acting-Speaker, from this but some of the other acting-speakers have not the

slightest idea of the standing orders. They do not understand the basics of what you can and cannot say in an agreement in principle speech or a second reading speech. When you take a point of order there are completely blank faces: the lights are on but nobody is home.

The other day I had to take a point of order and attempt to direct an acting-speaker to the point that when you lead for the Opposition you are allowed greater latitude in what you can raise than at other times. The acting-speaker in the chair had no idea what I was talking about. I would understand if the acting-speaker in the chair at the time had said I was wrong on the facts, but she had no idea what I was talking about. It is a fairly basic principle in this place. That goes to the issue of whether people here actually care about the form of the place or the substance. Is it meant to be a Parliament in the traditional Westminster system where this Chamber holds people to account, where we can move censure motions that go for more than five minutes and we get sensible rulings in debates, or are we simply going to get caught up on making sure we use first, second and third readings—language that of itself is remarkably stupid and means nothing to people outside this place?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.58 p.m.], in reply: I would have been disappointed if we had not had a little passion from the member for Liverpool. The member's logic is a little on the short side. It is interesting that the member does not seem to understand that there is only one other parliament in Australia that does not adopt first, second and third readings and that is the Australian Capital Territory Parliament.

Mr Michael Daley: That's a Parliament?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member for Maroubra makes a point; I was going to be a little kinder. Perhaps I will let the member's words rest. I am delighted that the New South Wales Parliament is joining other parliaments of Australia.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I should say to my good friend the Leader of the House that my comments were in jest and in no way meant to disparage our colleagues on both sides of the political divide in the Australian Capital Territory.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am sure the comment was in jest and not said with any malice. I am sure this was the member for Maroubra, at the end of a long week, providing a little light humour. The views of the member for Liverpool were well known to the committee. We missed not having the member at the committee; we were hoping he would contribute to the discussions with vigour, vive and enthusiasm.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order: The Leader of the House speaks for himself; I was not put out by the member's non-attendance at the meeting.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! That is not a point of order. The member for Liverpool will cease interjecting. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It was the member for Liverpool who arrived late; he should not pick on the member for Coffs Harbour. The short answer is that I understood, as I think all members understood, the concerns that the member for Liverpool would have with the proposal. Notwithstanding the fact that he was unable to be at that particular meeting—he regularly attends meetings, so that is a non-issue—we understood his views on the issue. As the member for Mount Druitt has indicated, it was not a case of partisanship, or of either side of the Chamber lining up to achieve an outcome; it was a case of each of the members genuinely trying to do the right thing to make this place work the best it can.

The member for Liverpool is probably right about one thing: many members of the public may not have a great knowledge about first, second and third readings. Perhaps that is not the strongest point in the argument for a return to the language and procedures of other Parliaments. At least there will now be consistency. It really is a bit silly that the two Houses that constitute the New South Wales Parliament have different terminologies for the legislative process operating between the two Chambers. Walk 150 feet or steps across the—

Mr Paul Lynch: Do you want to become just like them?

Mr Michael Daley: The member does make a good point.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Walk 150 steps across this place—

Mr Michael Daley: The Minister wants to modernise the language, yet he still talks in feet.

Mr Richard Amery: No; we are going back to the old language.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I could have said 150 metres; my steps are getting a bit shorter. Walk 150 metres across to the other Chamber and the language is totally different. As the member for Liverpool points out, it may not be attractive to adopt the language of those members. However, the committee determined that the change is appropriate. I commend the sessional order changes to the House. Strap in, and we will see where we get to.

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

Motion agreed to.

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (OFFENDER NOMINATION) BILL 2012

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 3 April 2012.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [4.01 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members for Myall Lakes, Lakemba, Riverstone, Fairfield, Tweed, Cabramatta, Camden, Blue Mountains, Clarence, Orange, Granville, Menai, Gosford, Drummoyne, Tamworth, Port Macquarie, Rockdale, Parramatta and Oatley for their contributions to the debate. I do so especially on behalf of my colleague the Minister for Roads and Ports in the other place. That level of contribution obviously expresses the views of this place on this important piece of legislation, because the bill introduces additional measures to deal with corporations that continue to attempt to shield their drivers from the allocation of demerit points and possible licence suspension.

As members have noted in the debate, despite the success of existing measures that encourage companies to nominate offending drivers, there still remain a number of companies that are prepared to shield drivers at the expense of incurring these additional fines in the company name. The proposals in this bill complement and strengthen existing measures. They provide for efficiencies in the process of the penalty notice lifecycle and they also ensure that the nomination process keeps pace with the new technologies around camera enforcement. The measures also further target companies that fail to nominate. Increasing both the penalty notice fine and the maximum court fine will be a further deterrent to registered operators routinely caught electing the penalty notice in the hope of avoiding the higher penalty notice fine because they in turn run the risk of the increased court fine on conviction.

The increased monetary penalty for corporations for driving offences introduces a substantial incentive to a corporation to nominate the offending driver. Despite these increased pecuniary penalties, it must be pointed out that if the company does the right thing and nominates a real person as required, it does not have to pay any fines. Instead, a new penalty notice that will attract the current lower values is sent to the person nominated. This bill also takes the opportunity to correct oversights from previous reforms. These include amendments to section 218 (1) (a) of the Road Transport (General) Act 2005 to remove a redundant reference to the burnout offence. As foreshadowed in earlier contributions to the debate on this bill, minor amendments are also being made to section 8 (3) of the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999 to include persons with expired licences within the definition of "special category driver"; and an amendment to section 14 (1) (a1) to replace the reference to "the holder of a learner or provisional licence" with a reference to "a novice driver".

These amendments are required to ensure that the special lower blood alcohol provisions continue to apply to these drivers regardless of whether the person's licence has expired. I note the amendment made in the upper House with the support of the Opposition that provides that the reduced blood alcohol limit of 0.02 will not apply from the day the licence expires, but instead only after a period of six months from the expiry date. Roads and Maritime data show that the far majority of licences are renewed either before the expiry date or within a month after expiry. This change will ensure that only those who have not renewed their licence for a protracted period will be subject to the reduced legal blood alcohol level. There is little justification for these unauthorised drivers being treated any differently from other unauthorised drivers, and that is the intent of the proposal.

I thank all members for their support for the reforms in this bill. I especially acknowledge my colleague in the other place, the Minister for Roads and Ports, who introduced the bill, as well as all members who have contributed to the debate, including members in the other place who contributed to discussion on amending the bill. These measures, in total, will provide further deterrence to those remaining companies doing the wrong thing and not nominating offenders. This is a step forward on safety and ensuring the meeting of obligations in that regard. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now agreed to in principle—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Passing of the Bill

Bill declared passed and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.

JUDICIAL OFFICERS AMENDMENT BILL 2011

Agreement in Principle

Debate resumed from 28 March 2012.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.08 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill 2011. The Opposition opposes this bill. It is wrong in principle and will be bad in practice, with undesirable outcomes. The object of the bill is expressed to be to amend the Judicial Officers Act to require the commission to provide to the Attorney General certain information relating to complaints made about judicial officers to the commission. New section 37A sets out the information that the commission must provide to the Attorney if he requests it. This includes whether a complaint about a judicial officer has been made, when it was made, and when the conduct or matter complained of is alleged to have occurred. It includes the subject matter of the complaint, the stage that the complaint has reached in the procedure for dealing with complaints, and, if a matter has been finalised, the manner in which the complaint was disposed of.

If the complaint has not been referred to the Conduct Division the commission is not required to provide information about a particular judicial officer if it is not in the public interest. The section also provides that in any event the commission must notify the Minister when a complaint about a judicial officer is referred to the Conduct Division and when and how the matter is disposed of. New section 37A (4) provides for the commission to provide such other additional information that it considers relevant. A further section of the bill makes its operation retrospective; that is, it is applicable to complaints and referrals to the Conduct Division made before the Act commences.

This structure is particularly alarming. The Judicial Commission is an independent body: it was designed very explicitly so on a bipartisan basis, and "independent" must mean explicitly independent of the Executive. I believe the policy reasons for that are blindingly obvious. The determination of complaints against judicial officers should generally be done in an entirely independent manner—entirely independent of the Executive or, indeed, the Legislature. Complaints against police and public officials when inquired into by the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission or the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] are handled in a manner completely independent of the Executive or the Legislature, as should complaints against judicial officers. Indeed, stating that as a principle almost sounds trite because it is so obvious and so basic.

The importance of such independence is even more obvious for judicial officers than for other officials. Almost uniquely, a judicial officer can only be removed from office by vote of both Houses of this Parliament. That stems from the Act of Settlement over three centuries ago and arose from the struggle between Executive and the Legislature in the English civil war and the contested issue of Executive control over the judiciary. It is not mere rhetoric to say that it really is central to our constitutional structure. That history and the justly extremely limited way in which judicial officers can be removed emphasises how important is the independence of the judiciary, and thus the independence of their investigations against the judiciary. That is why the provisions of this bill are so extraordinary.

Giving the Attorney General or, as in the terms of this bill, the Minister, the power to demand information from the Judicial Commission is entirely inconsistent with that body's independence. That body cannot be allowed in any way to be accountable to the Attorney General, certainly in the terms of this bill. The bill is wrong in principle. Just how wrong it is can be seen by comparison and contrast with the legislative schemes of other investigative bodies. The legislation governing the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Police Integrity Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman is instructive. None of these schemes has legislative provisions comparable to the one proposed in this bill. No Minister has the power to demand information about particular complaints from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Police Integrity Commission or the Ombudsman.

Indeed, just think of what the response would be of Bruce Barbour—the Ombudsman—or the commissioners of the Police Integrity Commission and the Independent Commission Against Corruption if a Premier or an Attorney General started demanding information of them about a particular complaint. To put it mildly, the reaction would be likely to be explosive. The Police Integrity Commission, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Ombudsman are interesting in another respect in this context also. Each of these complaint handling or investigative bodies has parliamentary oversight committees; the Judicial Commission does not. I believe the reason for that is more than mere history, more than the fact that the commission was established at a time before parliamentary oversight committees were commenced.

The same could be said about the Ombudsman, who did not originally have an oversight committee but had one added later. That could also have been done to the Judicial Commission. The real reason there is no parliamentary oversight committee is the absolute primacy of the principle of the independence of the judiciary and, thus, the necessary independence of complaint handling procedures into judicial officers, which are the responsibility of the Judicial Commission. It is of concern that precisely that principle is being trampled upon by this bill. As I have said, the bill is wrong in principle. Turning to the agreement in principle speech by the Attorney General, it also becomes apparent that in practice the bill would result in very curious and undesirable outcomes.

Of course, what is missing from the bill is any indication of what it is the Attorney General can do with the information he obtains. His speech, however, made clear that this bill is designed to allow the Attorney General to become the spokesperson for the Judicial Commission. That is like making the Premier the spokesperson for the Independent Commission Against Corruption or the Minister for Police the spokesperson for the Police Integrity Commission—and it is about as appropriate. The agreement in principle speech by the Attorney General makes it crystal clear that this bill is about him making public comments about complaints and the commission itself being prevented from doing so.

In my view that is not the Attorney General's job; he is not the Judicial Commission's media officer. Not only is that not his job but public perceptions can easily become that the commission is not independent. In my view not only is there an argument in substance on the legislation that the commission is no longer appropriately independent but the public perception would be even worse if it is the Attorney General who is answering questions about what the Judicial Commission is doing. It does not matter much as an argument if the Attorney General says that is not how he sees his role; it is clearly a likely result from the legislation. The legislation cannot rely upon pious hopes or the personalities of individual Ministers, especially in such an inherently political environment that attracts so much media attention.

I note in passing that one argument the Attorney General did not use is that his office's traditional role is to defend the judiciary and that somehow that would justify him in being de facto media officer for the Judicial Commission. I believe that is a role that has been abandoned by attorneys general in recent years. That may arguably be a cause for regret, but I think it is undeniable. If that were not the case it would still not justify this bill. There may be a case for greater media commentary about complaints, although that is an area in which I would be instinctively cautious. I would also point out the Independent Commission Against Corruption's well rehearsed, and I think justified, position of usually refusing to confirm or deny actions it might take on complaints.

Whilst it is true that sometimes there are public hearings by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the overwhelming bulk of its work is also done behind closed doors. In relation to the Judicial Commission itself, the end result of its proceedings is a profoundly public exercise—a referral to this House and to the other House. Section 24 of the Judicial Commission legislation allows the commission to hold hearings in public if it so chooses. I also note that section 11 (1) already provides for the commission to give advice to the Minister on such matters as it sees fit.

If there is a case for greater public commentary about complaints against judicial officers in quite limited circumstances this is not the mechanism by which to do it. Although I am very cautious about

advocating that there should be, I can understand that there might be criticism that there needs to be public commentary, but it should not be the Attorney General that makes that commentary. That is entirely wrong. I note that in the week or so since I received this bill quite a number of concerns have been expressed to me about it. One comment I received from a member of the Bar stated:

It seems quite a dangerous development. It clearly will allow for a political witch-hunt to be organised against particular judicial officers. It seems to me to water down the independence of the Judicial Commission.

If it is not about witch-hunts it seems to me that this bill is wrong in principle and, in practical terms, has some very serious possible implications. This bill is wrong in principle. It is the equivalent of making the Premier the spokesperson for the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The Attorney General should not be the media officer for the Judicial Commission. The Opposition opposes the bill.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) [4.16 p.m.]: I support the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill 2012. It will amend the Judicial Officers Act 1986 to enable the Attorney General to be provided with certain information about the existence, nature, progress and outcome of complaints before the Judicial Commission of New South Wales. Part 3 of the Judicial Officers Act establishes the Judicial Commission of New South Wales. Part 4 of the Act sets out the functions of the commission. These functions relate to sentencing consistency, judicial education and various other matters. Part 6 of the Act also provides for the examination of complaints against judicial officers and provides procedures for suspension, removal and retirement in certain circumstances.

Within part 6 of the Judicial Officers Act, section 15 allows any person to complain to the commission about a matter that concerns or may concern the ability or behaviour of a judicial officer. Under section 16 the Attorney General may refer any matter relating to a judicial officer to the commission, and that reference is then treated as a complaint. The Act then sets out the procedure to be followed by the commission upon receipt of a complaint. Under section 18 the commission must conduct a preliminary examination of a complaint. Under sections 20 and 21 the commission must summarily dismiss the complaint, refer it to the relevant head of jurisdiction or, for more serious matters, refer it to the commission's Conduct Division.

If the commission refers a matter to the Conduct Division for investigation, under section 28 if the Conduct Division decides that a complaint is wholly or partly substantiated the Conduct Division can also decide that the matter could justify parliamentary consideration of the removal from office of the judicial officer complained about. If the Conduct Division so decides, under section 29 the Conduct Division must then present a report to the Governor setting out its findings of fact and its opinion, and must also provide a copy of the report to the Attorney General. Under section 29 the Attorney General must then lay the report before both Houses of Parliament.

Section 37 of the Act prohibits a member or officer of the commission or Conduct Division or a member of a committee of the commission from disclosing any information in relation to a complaint except in limited circumstances, namely: with the consent of the person from whom the information was obtained; in connection with the administration or execution of the Act; for the purposes of legal proceedings arising out of the Act; or for another lawful excuse. Section 21A of the Act provides that when the Attorney General refers a matter relating to a judicial officer to the commission under section 16 the commission must report to the Attorney General whether the matter has been summarily dismissed, referred to the Conduct Division or referred to the relevant head of jurisdiction.

However, the commission is not required to provide, and is in fact prevented from providing, the Attorney General with any information about the outcome of complaints about a judicial officer by a member of the public except in the limited circumstances listed in section 37. The bill will ease this restriction by inserting new section 37A into the Judicial Officers Act. The proposed amendment will enable the Attorney General to seek and be provided with basic information from the commission about whether a judicial officer is the subject of any complaint and about the progress or resolution of that complaint. New section 37A will require the commission, at the request of the Attorney General, to provide the Attorney General with information that discloses the following in relation to a particular judicial officer:

- (a) whether a complaint has been made, when a complaint was made and when the matter about which a complaint was made is alleged to have occurred,
- (b) the subject-matter of the complaint,
- (c) the stage of the procedure for dealing with a complaint that the complaint has reached,
- (d) for a complaint that has been disposed of, the manner in which the complaint was disposed of, in other words, whether it has been summarily dismissed, referred to the Conduct Division, referred to the relevant head of jurisdiction or dismissed by the Conduct Division.

However, the commission will not be required to provide information about a complaint against a particular judicial officer if the commission considers it is not in the public interest to provide the information, unless the complaint has been referred to the Conduct Division. The commission must notify the Attorney General when a complaint about a judicial officer is referred to the Conduct Division, and when and the manner in which such a complaint is disposed of, whether or not the Attorney General has requested information about the complaint. The commission may, when providing the Attorney General with information about a complaint against a judicial officer, also provide other information that the commission considers relevant. The commission will not otherwise be required to provide the Attorney General with details of the examination or investigation of a complaint by the commission.

I will address the concerns raised by the member for Liverpool in relation to this bill. They essentially fall into two categories: independence and the perception of independence. He quite rightly makes the point that the independence of the judiciary is a fundamental part of our system of government. Indeed, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary are a fundamental hallmark of a liberal democracy. But this bill does not undermine judicial independence. Giving information to the Attorney General in a basic and rudimentary form does not undermine judicial independence. The Attorney General cannot give directions or interfere in the work of the Judicial Commission. The Attorney General is merely receiving information, and that cannot undermine judicial independence.

The second point raised was the perception of independence. A suggestion was made that the Attorney General will be perceived to be a kind of spokesperson for the Judicial Commission. The Opposition claims that will somehow undermine the appearance of independence. It does not. The Attorney General's traditional role is to defend the judiciary against attacks in circumstances where it is thought inappropriate for judges to engage in public debate about their acts. The Attorney General will not be a spokesman to justify or otherwise comment upon what the commission is doing. The bill only allows for the Attorney General to be given basic information. If the Attorney General considers it appropriate he will disclose that information. That is important because without this amendment a complainant can already tell the media that he or she has made a complaint about a judicial officer. That person can also provide the media with information about the substance of the complaint. At the moment the Attorney General cannot go to the media and correct misinformation.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Bankstown will have an opportunity to contribute to this debate.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: This bill reinforces the independence and functioning of the judiciary because the Attorney General will be able to correct any misinformation that a complainant or some other person may release to the media.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro): Order! The member for Bankstown will cease interjecting. He will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The Opposition's concerns are unfounded and in fact the reverse is the case; this bill will strengthen the independence of the judiciary and the appearance of independence. For that reason I support the bill. It will allow the Attorney General to respond to media reports and confirm whether a complaint has been received and whether it has been resolved. It does not give the Attorney General the power to interfere with or direct the Judicial Commission. The independence of the judiciary will remain. The Attorney General will not be the spokesman for the Judicial Commission but will correct misconceptions. In the era of social media where people can basically tweet and say whatever they like on Facebook it is fundamental that the Attorney General can correct any misconceptions or misinformation in the public domain. This bill preserves the independence of the judiciary and the Judicial Commission and allows the Attorney General access to basic information about the existence of complaints to the commission, their progress and outcomes. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.25 p.m.]: I support the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill 2012. The object of the bill is to amend the Judicial Officers Act 1986 to require the Judicial Commission to provide the Attorney General with certain information about complaints made to the commission about judicial officers. The bill also makes a consequential amendment to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. The Judicial Officers Amendment Bill enables the Attorney General to seek and be provided with information from the Judicial Commission with respect to whether a judicial officer is the subject of a complaint and about the progress or resolution of such complaint. Currently the Judicial Officers Act prohibits officers of the Judicial Commission from disclosing any information in relation to a complaint before the commission except in limited circumstances.

This bill was considered by the Legislation Review Committee. The committee noted the Attorney General's concern that he is currently unable to obtain information about complaints before the Judicial Commission even though the existence of a complaint about a judicial officer may already be in the public domain. The Attorney General is the principal adviser to the Government and Cabinet on legal, constitutional and policy issues, and the Attorney General is also responsible for the appointment of judges and magistrates. Therefore the committee considered it reasonable in the circumstances that the Judicial Officers Act 1986 be amended to provide the Attorney General with certain information about complaints made against a particular judicial officer, given that the commission would not be required to provide information about a complaint against a particular judicial officer if it considers that it is not in the public interest to provide the information unless the complaint has been referred to the Conduct Division.

Members of the House might remember the background to why this legislation was brought before the House. Two magistrates were referred to Parliament by the Judicial Commission. During the hearings in the upper House one of those magistrates was asked whether he had any other matters before the commission and he said that he did not. During the hearing in the upper House it became apparent that there may have been other matters. Inquiries were then made and it became known that there were. The point is that the Attorney General could not obtain that information prior to the matter coming before the Parliament. If this legislation had been in place he would have been able to obtain that information and provide it to the House. Members of the House who had to make the decision as to whether that person could continue to practise as a judicial officer would have had that information before them. They would have been able to resolve the matter straightaway instead of having the matter adjourned for some time.

At the same time information was also leaked into the public arena as to what those other matters might have been. If the Attorney General had been allowed to obtain that information he could have corrected any misinformation that was in the public arena. The amendment will enable the commission to disclose to the Attorney General whether a complaint has been received about a particular judicial officer and whether the complaint has been summarily dismissed, is still under investigation or has been resolved. The amendment aims to ensure that basic information can be provided to the Attorney General and will also ensure that the Attorney General is aware of any complaints serious enough to be referred to the Conduct Division of the commission.

The Judicial Officers Act 1986 establishes the Judicial Commission of New South Wales and confers on it functions relating to sentencing consistency, judicial education and various other matters. The Act provides also for the examination of complaints against judges and other judicial officers and provides procedures for suspension, removal and retirement in certain circumstances. The Act enables the commission to receive a complaint about a judicial officer via a member of the public or referral of the matter by the Attorney General. The Act sets out the procedure that must be followed by the commission upon receipt of a complaint or a referral. The Act requires the commission to conduct a preliminary examination of a complaint, which may be summarily dismissed, referred to the head of jurisdiction if it appears substantiated but not justifying the attention of the conduct division—

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

MULGOA ELECTORATE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL WASTE RECYCLING AND DUMP PROJECT

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [4.30 p.m.]: The matter being debated today is a proposal by Dellara Pty Ltd to commence an industrial and commercial waste recycling dump in rural, peaceful Orchard Hills, a six-day a week operation that will bring hundreds of trucks along local roads each day. Heavy duty trolleys will tumble and sort rubbish, magnetic machines will extract metals, and crushers will be used to break down waste material, all within 500 metres of families. The Dellara proposal for our rural and peaceful Orchard Hills environment is a noisy, dusty, contaminated operation within 500 metres of an estate where families are being raised, retirees have settled and home-based businesses are being run.

Dellara submitted the first of what would become six versions of its proposal to the former Government under part 3A. Following strong community opposition, unanimous opposition by Penrith City Council and the recommendation for refusal by the Department of Planning, the then Minister for Planning rejected the proposal.

Dellara then lodged an appeal with the Land and Environment Court. Now the matter is in the hands of the courts. The Land and Environment Court permitted Dellara to amend its proposal not just once, not twice, but three times.

Dr Geoff Lee: How many?

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: Three times. Each time the court permitted Dellara to amend its proposal it gave Dellara an opportunity to remove the unsavoury elements and edge the proposal closer to a successful outcome. The Department of Planning has heard of the court allowing proponents one or two opportunities to tweak their plans, but rarely has it heard of the court allowing proponents three chances. How is this justice if the court allows one side of an argument to continue to change its proposal to ensure its final proposal is more acceptable? This is not impartial, unbiased justice at work and the community members in the gallery today rightly hold grave concerns regarding the fairness of this process.

No matter how Dellara amends its proposal, the impact of dust, noise and contamination can never be adequately addressed. The concerns of the community about the process continued to grow when the court gave Dellara more time to amend its proposal but did not provide equal time for the community to gather its objections. Since the community objections are considered to relate to the original application, any subsequent amendments precluded the community objections being taken into consideration. Members of the community have had to go out on three separate occasions to request the same people to write letters and sign petitions against what is essentially the same proposal. The emotional, physical, financial and mental strain that this has placed on my community over the past two years is shameful.

The Dellara proposal remains flawed. Dellara purchased a quarry which was already in breach of its development application conditions because the quarry built bund walls significantly higher than those conditions allowed. The court's decision also is flawed because it allows Dellara to use these illegal bund walls filled with illegally dumped rubbish, some of which contains asbestos, as the starting point for its proposal. It is like a council saying, "It's okay to build an illegal extension to your home; we'll turn a blind eye. You can continue to build your one-storey extension on top of the illegal addition to your home." Local authorities would not endorse such a proposal, yet in the Dellara case the Land and Environment Court has done just that. While the community awaits the Land and Environment Court decision, we live on the edge.

Will our local environment, community and homes be kept safe from this intrusive and damaging proposal or will people's lives be forever changed for the worse? I now place on the record in the strongest possible words that over 14,500 petitioners call on the Premier and Minister for Western Sydney, Barry O'Farrell, in the event that the Land and Environment Court approves Dellara's proposal, to do all within his and the Government's power, accessing the best barristers and regardless of the cost, to fight such approval. The Premier must ensure that the over 14,500 petitioners of western Sydney have their wishes respected and that their community and lives be protected. I ask the Premier to take on notice the wishes of our community in western Sydney. This proposal is in the Land and Environment Court and is separate from the political process. I call upon the court to listen to the views of 18,000 objectors

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [4.35 p.m.]: I congratulate the community for gathering the signatures for the petition. I have been involved in a similar exercise and I know it is an enormous task. I am also very familiar with the area around Orchard Hills. When I was a teenager I lived at Penrith for a long time and I attended Penrith High School, so I am familiar with the land in question. This debate is an opportunity for the O'Farrell Government to oppose the proposed tip at Orchard Hills once and for all. Members of the community who are in the gallery will know the history of this matter. The previous Minister for Planning rejected this proposal. Of course, it is the right of any proponent to take that rejection to the Land and Environment Court and the member for Mulgoa has outlined that process.

We need to understand the politics of this matter. The speech members of the public in the gallery just heard from their member I hope was well organised with the Premier's office. Such speeches generally are on these occasions otherwise the member for Mulgoa would not have been able to say what she just said. I hope that gives people confidence that somehow a resolution of the matter can be achieved. We need to be realistic. I put on record that Labor has rejected this proposal all along. Members of the public know that and they also know very well that Prue Guillaume has led the campaign objecting to the development within Penrith council.

It is such a challenge to try to find a balance between developments of various kinds and their impact on where people live. I believe also this facility is completely inappropriate for the area of Orchard Hills. I know

Orchard Hills has changed since I lived at Penrith. It is primarily a residential area and a number of faith-based organisations are located in Penrith. I also think it is important to take on board the issues for western Sydney. Of course, parts of western Sydney have been slated as growth areas and I hope that is something that will be considered by the O'Farrell Government. It seems to me that the record of the O'Farrell Government in western Sydney, particularly its broken commitments, is not a happy one. In particular, I refer to the area of Mulgoa. The people in the gallery would also know that the mother of all broken promises for western Sydney related to Kemps Creek.

Mr Stuart Ayres: Point of order: The standing orders relating to petitions are very clear. There is a clear issue for debate and the matters being referred to by the member for Canterbury do not relate to it. I ask you to draw the member back to the leave of the petition.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: I make the point that in this case I hope the commitment given to people in the gallery by their local member can be delivered by the Premier. We need to be realistic. I am the shadow Minister for Planning, Infrastructure and Heritage and I am very familiar with the planning system. As far as the Land and Environment Court is concerned, I know that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to effect political interference in a judicial process, and that is what we have here. Let us be realistic about what a government can do and what it can deliver. Of course, there is always the opportunity for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW to step in, particularly in relation to such processes, and bring about some rethinking and changes to outcomes.

I know that the people who are in the gallery have had a very long fight and I congratulate them for that. It seems to me that the people who placed 14,000-plus signatures on this petition know that this development is wrong for all the reasons that have been outlined. At the end of the day one of the enormous challenges for urban areas, such as Penrith or inner-city areas, is trying to find the balance between the type of development that is the subject of the petition and where people live. In this case, this development is absolutely inappropriate: it is where people live. I hope that this debate leads to influencing an outcome that the people in the gallery need. [*Time expired.*]

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith) [4.40 p.m.]: I support my colleague the member for Mulgoa who has moved the motion for discussion of a petition concerning a proposed waste facility at Orchard Hills in Mulgoa. It would be remiss of me not to point out that there has been no greater champion for the Mulgoa community and for residents' rights throughout the Penrith local government area than the member for Mulgoa, Tanya Davies.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order.

Mr STUART AYRES: The advocacy of the member for Mulgoa for her community is not limited to her role as a member of this House but includes her service to her community as a councillor on Penrith City Council. Regardless of the interjections that have been made by Opposition members, this is one of the few occasions when both sides of politics appear to be in vigorous agreement in relation to the situation that exists at Orchard Hills. Both the previous planning Minister and the current planning Minister have opposed the development. The proposal has undergone various iterations and amendments by the proponent. Through the process that ensures everything is above board, the proposal has now found its way to the Land and Environment Court.

Unfortunately, I think that means that the people of Orchard Hills will no longer have the opportunity to have their local representatives play a role in decision-making on this issue. It must be said that the existence of part 3A, which is exactly how this development began, is the reason that we are in this position. If there had been no part 3A, the decision would have been made by local community representatives. That was a core tenet of the election of the O'Farrell Government. If a political issue is sought to be raised during this debate, that is the political issue that must be focused upon. We should focus on the fact that this development began under part 3A and was allowed to progress all the way to the Land and Environment Court.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Ms Linda Burney: My point of order relates to honesty. The member for Penrith knows absolutely that this was rejected by the previous planning Minister.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Ms Linda Burney: So do not try to make out that it was not.

Mr STUART AYRES: What is the point of order?

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! Is the member for Canterbury taking a point of order? The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Mr STUART AYRES: As I pointed out, this is an issue on which the Government and the Opposition are in vigorous agreement. Both the Government and the Opposition do not support this development. I repeat: Both the Government and the Opposition do not support this development. The member for Mulgoa has been passionate in her advocacy for her local community. It is important that the Land and Environment Court consider all the wishes of local residents. It must be considered in this debate and in the Land and Environment Court that upwards of 14,000 people oppose a particular proposal. If that is the case, there is no logical argument that this is an appropriate development for that particular region, and the Land and Environment Court should find in favour of the community.

Discussion concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ST MARYS AND WALLACIA-MULGOA VALLEY ROTARY CLUBS POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

ST MARYS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB COMPETITION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [4.44 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House two important events that were held in my electorate and the neighbouring electorate of Londonderry. The first is St Marys and Wallacia-Mulgoa Valley Rotary clubs which held their third Police Officer of the Year Awards. It was an incredible night. The community and the police recognised extraordinary levels of hard work, compassion, professionalism and care within the NSW Police Force. The awards chairman, Chris Miller, advised there were 17 nominations from the public for 15 officers while St Marys officers submitted 21 nominations for the Peer Award. Special guest was NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Denis Clifford.

Congratulations to Sergeant Anthony Fokes, who won the Peer Award. He was nominated for his courageous intervention in a domestic dispute in February 2011 at Bligh Park. After a female called 000 for emergency assistance, Sergeant Fokes diverted from his current duties and provided assistance to a neighbouring local area command. Sergeant Fokes drove to the Bligh Park residence on urgent duty as a single unit police officer. Sergeant Fokes enacted a forced entry into the premises and rendered aid to the victim, who was gasping for breath. The direct action of Sergeant Fokes caused the male offender to stop assaulting the victim, and he fled the premises to avoid apprehension.

The award recipient of the 2012 St Marys Police Officer of the Year Award was given to Detective Senior Constable Shane Wheeler. He was nominated for professionalism and commitment to duty in relation to a historical sexual assault investigation. In 2009 allegations were made that a 60-year-old male molested his nine-year-old granddaughter in 2004 when she was only four years of age. Due to investigative difficulties, the investigation was suspended. Later that year Detective Senior Constable Shane Wheeler commenced an investigation in relation to the same 60-year-old male, who was alleged to have molested one of his daughters during incidents that occurred between 1984 and 1985 when the victim was six or seven years of age.

Having reviewed the male's history, at Detective Wheeler's insistence the earlier investigation was reopened. Detective Senior Constable Wheeler conducted a comprehensive investigation in relation to this matter. In September 2011 the offender stood trial for sexual assault offences against his daughter and granddaughter; it resulted in convictions. Taking all sentences into consideration, the offender will not be eligible for release until 2017. Throughout the whole investigation and trial, Detective Senior Constable Wheeler demonstrated great empathy and support to the victims and their family, which was greatly appreciated and is testament to his professionalism. I place on the New South Wales parliamentary record the heartfelt congratulations and thanks of this House to Detective Senior Constable Shane Wheeler, who has brought justice to this family and has enabled them to achieve closure on this heinous part of their lives.

We also had a quiet moment in remembrance of the death of Senior Constable David Rixon; it was a very poignant and sad time of the evening. The second event was the launch of the 2012 St Marys Rugby League Club Competition. I thank the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Graham Annesley, who officially opened the launch on the night. Congratulations to President Warren Smith, who organised another wonderful night for more than 300 people that was full of entertainment, humour and reflection. We recognised the sad retirement from the board of Merv Smart, who had provided 33 years of service on the board, 25 years of which were continuous years of service. Congratulations to the board, life members and the chief executive officer, Rod Desborough, for a successful start to this year.

Last year saw the club achieve a record-breaking 19 out of 20 premierships, so the starting bar for this year certainly has been set extremely high. There are 47 teams comprising more than 700 players. St Marys Rugby League Club not only supports its own club but also supports other sporting clubs—even sporting clubs in Fiji. The club also hosts and provides sponsorship for the Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge. I extend to the club the best wishes of this House for the 2012 season and express the hope that the players remain safe from injury and that personal bests are again achieved. I hope that this season will result in the club securing 20 out of the possible 20 premierships. I commend the club's very great and strong commitment and its giving back to the local community. The club is focused on the community and on putting the community's needs first and foremost. I thank the club's president, Mr Warren Smith, for his great vision of and focus on how the club can serve the community, not only now but way into the future.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.49 p.m.]: As Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services, I support the member for Mulgoa, who referred to the horrendous case involving Detective Senior Constable Wheeler. Together with Deputy Commissioner Nick Kaldas, I was fortunate to attend the State Crime Command awards ceremony at Merrylands last Monday evening, when awards were received by members from the Sex Crimes Squad and a number of other major crimes squads. In this small way the community recognises our fine men and women of the NSW Police Force who work in extreme circumstances, particularly when dealing with horrendous crimes involving children. It takes real dedication and commitment on their part.

DEATH OF ATILIO VILLEGAS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.50 p.m.]: Today I speak to the House about Atilio Villegas, who was killed on 27 March—Tuesday of last week—in a workplace accident at a building site. Atilio was many things, including a friend of mine and a proud 15-year veteran of the Green Valley Branch of the Australian Labor Party. I note that the branch observed a minute's silence in tribute to Atilio at its monthly meeting, held last Monday night. He was obviously a constituent of mine, whom I knew for all those 15 years. He was 53 years of age when he died. He leaves a distraught widow, Jacqueline, and four children aged from 14 to 21 years. I met with his family last Sunday morning. He and his family were very close, and he was extremely proud of his children—I know that because he told me so. All of them are musicians, following in their father's footsteps.

The eldest son, also called Atilio, is a teacher. Another son is dux of his school. His daughter is studying politics and economics, and asked me for a list of books about the history of the Australian Labor Party, which I supplied to her several months ago. Atilio is also remembered as being a fine cook. His family proudly showed me a photograph of Atilio's empanadas. Atilio was buried yesterday. My parliamentary duties precluded me from attending the funeral. He would often approach me about matters in our area that he thought I might be able to attend to. Quite tragically, the last ministerial response I received in relation to representations I had made on his behalf was dated 26 March—it arrived in my office the day after he died.

Atilio was of Chilean heritage; he was a proud Chileno. He was quite well known as a good man within the Latin American community. That is attested to by the number of community members who told me about his tragic death. The Colo-Colo and Cobrelola clubs in the Chilean community both organised events last weekend to commemorate his life and to mourn his death. To call his death a tragedy is, I think, an understatement. He died as a result of multiple injuries and not, as inaccurate early media reports claimed, of a heart attack or stroke. We assume that information was sent around by the employer. He fell three metres from scaffolding on a construction site at Belmore Park in Haymarket, Pitt Street. The builder on site was Leighton. Atilio was employed by a subcontractor.

Atilio is now to be added to the tragic list of deaths in the construction industry in this country. An average of one construction worker per week is killed in this country, and that toll is far too high. It is also a

reminder why members on our side of the House are so insistent upon maintaining proper standards of occupational health and safety, and proper workers compensation entitlements. It is never acceptable when someone dies in a workplace accident. As Atilio's partner, Jacqueline, said on Sunday, she just cannot accept that her husband can go to work one morning and not come home that night because he was killed at work. She cannot accept that, nor should she have to.

There must be a full and proper investigation into the circumstances surrounding Atilio's death. He was a careful and a sensible man. He had never taken risks in his work and he was very experienced in the type of work he did. I note that the union has very serious concerns about some aspects of safety on the site. Atilio was a long-term member of the New South Wales Construction and General Division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, better known as the CFMEU. State Secretary Brian Parker, who is also a resident of Green Valley and a member of the Green Valley branch, and other officials also met with the family on Sunday morning. The work of the union over many years has ensured that benefits are available in such situations in this industry that are not always available in other industries. Money can never replace Atilio, but the family understands that the union will do everything it can to ensure that the family receive everything they are entitled to. After all, Atilio worked for it all. A proper investigation and, if necessary, prosecution are critical. Atilio, his son, asked us to ensure that his father did not die in vain.

I should also point out the quite awful impact that his death has had on Atilio's co-workers. They were very badly affected by this incident, as indeed were the whole Leighton's workforce and the industry. This is the second workplace death in this State in two weeks—a young plumber died in the western suburbs the previous week. The union is also concerned that competitive pressures are leading to inadequate regard for safety on site. Once again, that is a reason to maintain current occupational health and safety standards, and workers compensation entitlements. The union will ensure that a plaque is placed on the site of the incident when the building is completed. His name will also be added to the union's Wall of Remembrance. Atilio Villegas will be sorely missed by his family, his workmates, and his party and union comrades. His union and I will do everything we can to ensure that his death is not in vain and that proper investigations occur into this appalling loss.

ALFORDS POINT BRIDGE UPGRADE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [4.55 p.m.]: As we pass the one-year-in-government mark, more than ever I am excited to be working for such a community-minded electorate. Not a week goes by without hearing about a local achievement or learning about a hardworking organisation making a difference to the community. A recent local achievement—and one I am pleased to have been involved with—is the completion of the Alfords Point Bridge upgrade. This bridge was finally duplicated in 2008 by the former Government. Although it made a difference, I was quite disappointed that, while we already had a contraflow of two lanes one way and one lane in the other direction, the millions and millions of dollars spent on building the additional bridge gave us only one extra lane—or two on each bridge. Our community was pretty disappointed to learn that under the former Government the reality of the word "duplication" was only one extra lane.

As a lifelong local and a regular commuter on this stretch of road, I knew the issues motorists faced: the kilometres of traffic that stretched back into Menai on one side and Padstow on the other. These roadworks were essential to improve the efficiency of the road and to cut travel times for motorists. When the northern approaches road work took place, I was particularly happy that our Government built a third lane on each bridge. I thank the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, MLC, for acknowledging the importance and for helping to ease the traffic flow. I joined the member for East Hills and the Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, in November last year to announce the completion of the \$44-million Alfords Point northern approaches upgrade. This has greatly improved traffic flow, especially when accessing the bridge from the north.

The completed project also provides: a new road bridge over Henry Lawson Drive; a concrete safety barrier to separate northbound and southbound traffic between the Alfords Point Bridge and Clancy Street, Padstow; the extra lane, changing it from two lanes to three; a new dedicated pedestrian-cyclist path connecting Padstow Heights and Illawong; and a dedicated acceleration lane at the on ramp from Clancy Street for southbound traffic. The Alfords Point northern approaches project follows the bridge duplication project that was completed in August 2008. The works have now been completed. However, as many of my constituents know from driving this road each day, work has not yet been finalised on the sound barriers and some other minor works need to be done to finish the entire project.

Work to widen the northern approaches to Alford's Point Bridge was carried out by Reed Constructions on behalf of Roads and Maritime Services, and was completed in November 2011. Reed was also contracted to build noise walls along the Henry Lawson Drive on ramp and the northbound off ramp to Clancy Street. As reported in the media, Reed Constructions has declared financial difficulties and as a result a number of its projects remain incomplete. This project is now on hold while negotiations with Reed proceed. The worksite can still be seen on Alford's Point Bridge. Roads and Maritime Services has paid Reed everything owed to date for the bridge approaches and noise wall project but is aware that some subcontractors have not been paid by Reed.

I met with a local subcontractor who has been affected and who is out of pocket because of these developments, and I hope for a resolution for him soon. The Government has already paid for this work but, in the event that Reed is unable to fulfil its contractual obligations, Roads and Maritime Services will ensure that the remaining work is carried out by other experienced contractors, with a preference given to using current subcontractors working with Reed, where possible. Regarding the incomplete works on the Clancy Street on ramp and the sound barriers, the Government has been in ongoing discussions to determine whether Reed Constructions is able to complete the work on this project.

As a consequence of discussions with the Minister's office, I am advised that Roads and Maritime Services will ensure that the final project is completed as early as possible, while ensuring that public funds are spent responsibly. In the meantime, while we work to finish the sound barriers and the Clancy Street ramp, I know that pedestrians and cyclists are ready to benefit from the path connecting the two communities. Now that the northern approaches upgrade is complete, we finally have our three lanes and traffic is moving so much better, taking motorists out of what was a car park and getting them to where they need to go sooner. I am pleased with what the Government has achieved and I hope that our community is experiencing the benefits.

COFFS HARBOUR EDUCATION CAMPUS

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [5.00 p.m.]: The Coffs Harbour Education Campus was established under a Coalition Government and opened in 1995. It incorporates a senior high school, a TAFE college and university. It has basically gained a reputation for being second to none because of the integration of the three campuses and the ability of students to carry credits from one level to the next. On the weekend I had the opportunity to attend a graduation ceremony for the Southern Cross University. The Hon. John Dowd, the Chancellor, was also in attendance. He was Attorney General in the Government that developed this education campus. The previous week I attended a TAFE graduation ceremony at the Coffs Harbour Ex-Services Club. The number and diversity of students there, from mature-age to younger students, was fantastic. I have been to a number of graduations at the senior college, which is excelling. A large number of its students attain all-but-perfect marks in their examinations. The complex is a phenomenal resource not only for Coffs Harbour but for the entire North Coast.

Last week I had the opportunity to visit the National Marine Science Centre, which is auspiced by the Southern Cross University, at Charlesworth Bay. There I met Professor Les Christidis, an energetic fellow whose heart and soul is in marine science not only on the North Coast but worldwide. I toured the new facilities at the centre. There are six brand-new laboratories awaiting researchers. I visited the centre with the Minister for Primary Industries before the renovations were completed and Professor Les Christidis, the vice-chancellor of the Southern Cross University, the head of campus, Bob Prader, and Professor David Lynch, also from the campus at Coffs Harbour, expressed interest in relocating some research staff from Cronulla to the centre.

Coffs Harbour presents unique opportunities to researchers, with the adjacent Solitary Islands Marine Park. There is a confluence of hot and cold currents, and it is suggested that if climate change is occurring any researcher would give their eye teeth to study in this unique marine environment that has corals and a vast array of marine life. It will be one of the first areas to be affected and to show real signs of climate change. I understand that my friend and colleague the member for Cronulla does not wish researchers to relocate from his electorate, but I urge him and those researchers to come to Coffs Harbour and visit this magnificent new facility, where we have saltwater on tap—the facility is probably 400 metres from Charlesworth Bay. The facilities are second to none.

When I visited the centre with the Minister for Primary Industries I spoke to an Australian research scientist who had returned from a world-renowned research centre in Scotland. He said that this facility was the best he had ever seen—and I would say now it is even better. While policy units are relocating to Coffs Harbour from Cronulla, there is a real opportunity to get some research scientists also to take advantage of the Marine Science Centre, with its brand-new laboratories and facilities that I believe are second to none in Australia.

I make that plea to the Minister. I compliment the Coffs Harbour Innovation Centre, which is also located at the campus on Hogbin Drive. Julianne McKeon is the coordinator. It has a technology park that offers opportunities to people with new business ideas to hire office space and to receive assistance and advice on establishing their enterprises. It emphasises the phenomenal service that the whole campus provides not just to the people of the Coffs Harbour electorate but to the people of New South Wales.

**TRIBUTE TO LIONEL FROST BOWEN, AC, A FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,
MINISTER OF THE CROWN AND MEMBER FOR RANDWICK**

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY (Heffron) [5.05 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to the Hon. Lionel Frost Bowen, AC, who died earlier this week at his home in Kensington, surrounded by his wife, Claire, and his family. Most people would be aware of Lionel's great contribution to public life in this country. He served on local council as the Mayor of Randwick in 1951 and again in 1955. He represented the electorate of Randwick in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1962 to 1969. In 1969 he was elected to Federal Parliament as the member for Kingsford-Smith—a seat he held until 1990. From 1972 to 1975 he served successively as Minister for Manufacturing Industry, Special Minister of State and Postmaster-General in Cabinet. Following the election of Bob Hawke in 1983, Lionel Bowen became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade. In 1984 Lionel Bowen was appointed as Australia's Attorney-General.

Following his retirement from politics, he was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia, and also received a Centenary Medal. Lionel Bowen is a man who gave his energy, his talents and his entire career to making his local area and his country a better place. His dedication to his local community, his commitment to serve his nation as a Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, and his unswerving allegiance to improving the lives of working men and women marks his as an exemplary life of generous and committed service to the people of Australia. I am honoured, as Lionel's local member, to pay tribute tonight to such a great man, such a servant of the people, and such a kind and humble person.

I came to know Lionel Bowen when I was preselected for the State seat of Heffron. He had me around to his place for a bit of sage advice. "Serve the community with humility", he said. "Remember that you are a servant of the people. Never take the people for granted. And remember that local Australian Labor Party branch members are your eyes and ears in the community—take heed of their advice and respect their commitment to the Labor cause always." Even though my election as the member for Heffron came 13 years after Lionel Bowen left Federal Parliament, I still today hear from community groups, schools and sporting clubs about the dedication Lionel Bowen had for the local area. For example, one school, St Spyridon's, still speaks reverentially of Lionel's support for it, and how he used to continue to attend events at the school long after he had ceased being the elected representative.

On a personal note, my husband, Ben, and I were fellow parishioners with Lionel and Claire Bowen at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in Kensington. Over the years we have had the pleasure and privilege of supporting the local parish with the Bowens, through helping to put on parenting weekend retreats or serving on the parish council. In fact, at one point our parish council consisted of a Keneally, a Bowen and a Keating. Lionel was well regarded and cherished by the parishioners of Our Lady of the Rosary church. No matter whether they vote Labor or Liberal, the people of the Kensington Catholic parish proudly claimed Lionel Bowen as one of their own, and they will very sadly miss him.

Lionel has so many great legacies to his name, including the passage of the Schools Commission legislation, which provided needs-based funding for non-government schools—something that he described as "the most fundamental gain for the cause of greater equality in Australia." He also took some of the first key steps to establishing closer relationship between Australia and its Asian neighbours, leading the first Australian parliamentary delegation to China and playing a key role in establishing an embassy in Hanoi whilst the Vietnam War was still underway. But perhaps his two greatest legacies are these: his humility and integrity, and his family.

Lionel Bowen was a great family man. He and Claire raised eight children in their Kensington home—the house Lionel himself grew up in—and passed on their values of generous service. Today his children keep that legacy alive. I particularly acknowledge Lionel's son Tony and daughter Anne, who serve on the Board of the Randwick Labor Club. Tony, of course, is also a councillor in the city of Randwick. I am certain that the entire House joins me in expressing our deepest sympathies to Claire and to the whole Bowen family on the death of their father and grandfather. Everyone from Keating to Hawke to Carr to the former President of the

Legislative Council, Johno Johnson, has paid tribute to Lionel's integrity and humility, his humble and genuine service to the people of Australia and to the Labor cause. They are right to do so—it remains a hallmark of the man. New South Wales lost a great servant of the people this week. Vale Lionel Bowen.

MAITLAND TOURISM

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [5.10 p.m.]: With the Easter long weekend coming up I invite all members to come to Maitland—the tourism gem of New South Wales. As many in this place would be aware, Maitland is proud of its heritage. One of the earliest locations for European settlement in the Hunter Valley was the river port of Morpeth, which is near my home. The member for Wallsend is familiar with the area. Morpeth remains a popular destination for visitors to this day and a great place to embark on a tour of Maitland.

"It must be Morpeth" is how this picturesque village promotes itself with the welcome mat awaiting those in search of the Hunter Valley's premier boutique shopping and dining experiences. On the subject of food, where would Australia have been if a young William Arnott had not emigrated from Scotland to Morpeth to begin his trade and lay the foundations for the biscuit company that became a national icon? The family tradition continues in the twenty-first century with a local bakehouse run by great-great-great-grandson Stephen, who has restored the Arnott's original biscuit oven on the site which dates back to the 1860s.

As people head down the road in East Maitland they will find a grand landmark that accommodated thousands over its working life but now hosts a new clientele. The New South Wales Government closed the maximum security Maitland jail in 1998 after 150 years of operation and Maitland City Council took on the challenge of tapping its tourism potential. I am pleased to report that just under 29,000 people visited the jail last year for tours, functions or events. Having spent a night at the jail myself, I can recommend the serve time experience and encourage visitors to learn about the history of the facility, past prisoners and daring escapes. I must admit that I did not enjoy sleeping in what I believe was Ivan Milat's cell. The Lieutenant Governor's residence of Maitland jail also boasts an attraction for the students of fashion. The Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles is preserving and displaying clothes, footwear, accessories and textiles dating from 1860 to the present.

On the subject of bringing history to life, Maitland Steamfest, which is held annually in April, has firmly established itself as a regional tourism event. For 25 years this event has celebrated the ways steam helped to develop the Hunter Valley and, in particular, the South Maitland Railway Line, which hauled the output from the coalfields for a century. I highly recommend Steamfest to everyone from the fans of *Thomas the Tank Engine* to those old enough to remember the days of steam trains. Whether it is to see the remnants of Australia's early industrialised past for the first time, to reminisce about yesteryear or to have a family outing on a warm Autumn afternoon, Steamfest has united the community and become a must-see event.

Maitland city centre deserves praise for its contribution to developing the festival culture by making the central business district Heritage Mall another focal point for community gatherings. Maitland Taste, the food, wine and jazz festival held on the last weekend of March—it was held last weekend—has shown how this convivial atmosphere can be enjoyed by all and also be a family event. It was great to see so many people in town grazing their way through the two-day food and wine smorgasbord featuring celebrated Hunter chefs and the finest Hunter Valley wines.

Of course, great food is available year round in Maitland. Some of my favourite restaurants include the Old George and Dragon restaurant, which won the Best European Restaurant in the 2010 Hunter Region Restaurant and Catering Association Awards, the amazing cafes of Morpeth and Lorn, the great pub food at the Bushrangers Bar and Brassiere in Largs, and the views are as good as the food at Lavendars Riverside Cafe on the river in Maitland, the 305 Restaurant in the heart of Maitland is famous for its cuisine and wine list, and the new restaurant, Le Fleuve.

If travellers want to enjoy the great outdoors then the open spaces of Maitland Park and Walka Recreation and Wildlife Reserve are popular, family friendly locations close to the centre of town. The Maitland Regional Art Gallery is definitely worth visiting and is open on Saturday 7 April and Sunday 8 April. There are several great exhibitions on at the moment, including River Stories, a creative response to the river in different forms and with different messages. The Maitland International Salon of Photography, now an annual tradition, has more than 100 prints from countries across the globe in display at the moment.

Finally, for the adrenalin junkies, Rutherford Aerodrome could have just what the traveller desires with tandem skydives and aerobatic joy flights awaiting thrill seekers. I have watched my son jump out of planes a number of times at the aerodrome, but I have never been comfortable doing so. It is a great place to visit and it offers many sporting pursuits. However, I hope that no-one ever gives me a jump as a birthday present. I invite everyone to Maitland to enjoy our attractions during the Easter holidays. Of course, everyone is welcome throughout the year.

ALBURY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.15 p.m.]: It has been just over 12 months since the State election. While the Premier has outlined the many achievements of this Government and movement through its statewide policy agenda, it is also time to celebrate the impact on Albury. Since winning government in March 2011, we have committed more than \$88 million to projects in the Albury electorate. I will provide the House with details about where some of that money is going. Work has commenced on the 20-bed Albury Wodonga Carers' Accommodation Centre adjacent to Albury Hospital. The New South Wales Government has provided \$750,000 following my speech to Parliament and representations made by the Fight Cancer Foundation and many local individuals and organisations, including me.

Local health services received \$2 million and opened 10 sub-acute beds at Albury Hospital under the second year of the Council of Australian Governments National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services. This money supports a range of services, including general rehabilitation, palliative care and mental health. In December the Government announced a further \$1.455 million in funding to Albury Wodonga Health to assist in meeting national access targets for Emergency Departments and elective surgery. Kalianna Enterprises will receive over \$580,000 to provide transport services to assist frail aged and people with disabilities.

A staggering \$64 million has been provided for infrastructure and roads projects in the Albury region. As a result, we enjoy faster and safer commuting and encourage jobs and economic development. Leading the way is \$27 million contributed for the Holbrook bypass. Steadily we are delivering a modern highway from the border all the way to Sydney. Travel times are decreasing and safety is improving. Other infrastructure highlights include \$4.9 million for the restoration of Mannus Dam at Tumbarumba following flood damage. The sum of \$2.7 million has been allocated for the repair and painting of the historic John Foord Bridge at Corowa. The creation of an industrial park and rail hub at Ettamogah required new roadworks, and I note that \$1.35 million was provided to facilitate local industry. Mr Ernie Hacker, the General Manager of the Norske Skog paper mill situated in Ettamogah, north of Albury, said in a letter to me:

We particularly note the support of our regional forest industry through the upgrade of the Coppa Bella Road. The region and the State will receive an excellent economic multiplier for the \$1.7 million investment.

For some considerable time I have been seeking action to improve one of the remaining local road/rail crossing points, at Tynan Road off the Hume Highway north of Albury. I am pleased that the Government allocated \$300,000 for safety improvements at this dangerous intersection. During 2011 funding was obtained for a significant range of projects to benefit local schools and education institutions. The largest single grant was for the Albury TAFE library project, which has received \$7 million. Sums from \$8,000 to \$118,000 have gone to local government schools to provide shade structures, covered walkways and outdoor areas. Murray High School received \$200,000 for roofing and guttering works and Rosewood Public School received \$35,000 to ensure that an electrical upgrade is completed.

The Koori Kindermanna Preschool in Albury received \$5,000 to buy books and other educational resources. Arts establishments such as the Flying Fruit Fly Circus and Hothouse Theatre have also been supported, with \$110,000 allocated to the former and \$153,750 to the latter. In an unprecedented boost to police numbers in our area, 12 probationary constables commenced work for the Albury command in late December. Tourism is a major source of income for the regions. In the first two months of this year \$239,000 was allocated to tourism projects and assistance in the Albury electorate. In addition, \$25,000 will help establish a heritage trail in Corowa's town centre with signage and an audio tour. The Billy Cart Championships in Corowa received \$5,000—I will be there this Easter.

A \$20,000 cool room will be a great help at the Tumbafest festival in Tumbarumba. The Boggy Creek Show near Tumbarumba received \$69,000 for regional tourism product development, while \$80,000 was allocated to training and development for tour operators in relation to tourism products handled by the Murray River Tourism Board. Sports grants have been provided to Corowa Rowing Club and Howlong Cricket Club.

Fire disaster grants totalling \$220,000 have been allocated to those in need. Not every helpful piece of funding is massive in amount. Small amounts of financial assistance can be crucial in the development of an individual and their career.

In November I was pleased to present a \$15,000 scholarship to Ms Tiffany Motton of Gloss Hairdressing 'n' Bean Bar in North Albury. This money provided by the New South Wales Government to support apprentices in country areas will assist Tiffany to complete her Certificate III in hairdressing. There is a direct link between strong local representation and the obtaining of government funds, and this has been a most successful year for the Albury region. While it is only fair to say that some of this money was initially allocated by the previous Government, it is also true that we are seeing that the money actually gets delivered and that programs are accountable. Of course, this Government has added significantly to the funds heading Albury's way. Importantly we have ensured that taxpayers' money is spread far and wide across the community, improving schools, TAFE, roads and hospital services, supporting excellence, repairing flood damage and providing grants to those affected by natural disasters. [*Time expired.*]

TRIBUTE TO RON MASSEY

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY (Miranda—Minister for Sport and Recreation) [5.20 p.m.]: In recent months the shire of which I am very proud to be a resident, as are you, Madam Acting-Speaker, has been in the media spotlight. Consecutive victories by the Cronulla Sharks over the past three weeks see them firmly entrenched in the National Rugby League top four teams. Who would have thought that would have been the case? A recent article in the *Daily Telegraph* highlighted the positive community feeling about employment, small business and life generally in the shire—it was great to read. Of course, those who live in the shire are parochially proud of the sun, surf and scenery of the region, even if it has attracted the attention of reality-style television producers. However, it was a story about a long-time friend of mine and local resident, Ron Massey, that caught my eye recently; I am certain it also captured the attention of many thousands of readers and sport fans.

The *Daily Telegraph* article was written by well-respected journalist Paul Kent, and the accompanying photograph shows Ron in Sutherland hospital reading a rugby league magazine following major surgery to amputate his leg. They say every picture tells a thousand stories: in the case of Ron Massey I am sure that it would be 10,000 stories and then some more. Ron Massey has been dubbed the Benjamin Button of rugby league and, despite not being in the best of health, this sharp-as-a-tack octogenarian continues regularly to offer advice on all aspects of rugby league to the likes of Ricky Stuart and Wayne Bennett. Ron first came to prominence in rugby league circles as the right-hand man to legendary master coach Jack Gibson. He was also a former chief executive officer of Cronulla when I was still on the field refereeing, and he worked on the National Rugby League judiciary when I was an administrator. He was also a selector for the code's Team of the Century in 2008.

They say the apple does not fall too far from the tree. Ron's son Luke showed that that was the case when he played 53 first-grade games with the Cronulla Sharks in the back row. Ron's other son, Paul, recently worked for the more recent master coach and legend of the game, Wayne Bennett, as football manager at the St George-Illawarra Dragons. But it was Ron's time with Jack Gibson at the Eastern Suburbs Roosters, Parramatta and Cronulla which included five premierships that created the aura around their successes and special bond. Reverting to the photograph and story I have mentioned, it is fair to say that Ron has not enjoyed the best of health in recent months, necessitating the removal of first his toes, then his foot and ultimately his leg. His response was typical of the one-liners attributed to the Gibson-Massey duo during their halcyon days. Ron said:

I don't remember any of it. I looked down one day and I had no leg.

As the product of a bygone era where respect, honour and mateship are badges of honour, Ron Massey typifies a person who chooses to look on the bright side of life. He is one of those people who refuse to blame others for his problems, preferring to highlight the positives in his life. Ron now has a new challenge while calling Sutherland hospital his temporary home. He is learning to walk again with an artificial leg, or the scooter boot as he likes to call it. In the true spirit of mateship, the magnificent Men of League Foundation—a charitable organisation established to help former players, officials, and administrators who have fallen on hard times—sent workers to Ron's home to build ramps and railings so that when he finally gets home the place will be user friendly. I need also to commend the Men of League Foundation for assisting in organising a wheelchair for Ron.

I cannot pay adequate tribute to the Men of League Foundation under the guidance of its chairman and former international Ron Coote in applauding its continuing efforts to care for those involved in the sport of rugby league who need comfort and support. It would be no surprise to anyone that Ron Massey and Jack Gibson were among those who made it their mission to help rugby league people in the formative years of the foundation. In a true demonstration of "What goes around comes around", the Men of League Foundation is holding a Ron Massey benefit on 9 May at Doltone House. I certainly encourage anyone who likes a good night out with plenty of quips and a stroll down memory lane to consider attending. I am certain that every person who has had the privilege to meet Ron Massey is all the richer for the experience.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.25 p.m.]: I acknowledge the contribution of the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and member for Miranda. He reminded us of some past champions of rugby league. Indeed, there were no greater champions than Ron Massey and the late Jack Gibson. On Saturday evening I had the great pleasure of being invited by my good friend Jack Iori to sit beside him whilst we watched our beloved Parramatta team annihilate Manly at Parramatta Stadium. It was a pleasure to see Parramatta score its first win of the season, but equally pleasurable was that it beat Manly. Also that evening I met up with some of the late great champions of Parramatta: Mick Cronin; the Bear, Bob O'Reilly; Stan Jurd; my great friend Peter Wynn; and the Guru, Eric Grothe. It was wonderful to catch up with them and to be reminded of their past glories. On behalf of the House and the Government I extend our best wishes to Ron Massey for a speedy recovery.

AUSTRALIAN LONGBOARD SURFING OPEN

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.26 p.m.]: I inform the House of a very great event held in my electorate: the 2012 Australian Longboard Surfing Open at Kingscliff from 21 to 25 March. This prestigious event features both men's and women's Association of Surfing Professionals [ASP] Longboard Qualifying Series [LQS] divisions with \$20,000 in prize money, plus several other divisions, including a pro stand up paddle [SUP] event. The longboard surfing event is set to take Australian Longboard Surfing to a new level of fun and entertainment with the Association of Surfing Professionals Longboard Qualifying Series men's and women's divisions, a noserider event, stand up paddle surfing and racing, and amateur surfing divisions.

The 2012 Australian Longboard Surfing Open caters for surfers of all ages and abilities. Once again Huey smiled upon the event, offering terrific surf conditions in front of the surf lifesaving club at Kingscliff. Waves ranged from three to five feet over the five competition days. The great Cudgen Surf Lifesaving Club provided excellent amenities from which the judges and administrators could work throughout the five-day event. Kingscliff Beach has suffered much erosion over the past two years and council is working hard to repair the damage, so it was great to use it as the venue for this event. Although overall competitor numbers were down this year, the competition still attracted competitors from around the world, including from Canada, Reunion Island, Spain, Japan, New Zealand, Hawaii, California as well as Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland and, of course, the east coast of New South Wales.

The most notable names in attendance were the current Association of Surfing Professionals World Title holder, Taylor Jensen; the 2009 Association of Surfing Professionals World Title holder, Harley Ingleby; the 2006 Association of Surfing Professionals World Title holder, Josh Constable; and the dual Association of Surfing Professionals Women's World Title holder in 2007 and 2009, Jen Smith from California. Other notable attendants included the recent World Stand Up Paddle Surfing Titles world number two, Justin Holland, and world number four, Jackson Close, as well as the first and second placegetters from the same World Stand Up Paddle Titles, Jamie Mitchell and Travis Grant. Australia's first ever Women's World Surfing Champion, Phyllis O'Donnell, was on hand to help with presentations. Phyllis, who is aged over 80 years, is virtually the unofficial mayor of Kingscliff.

Event activities ranged from surfing in pro and amateur divisions to historical surfboards, tandem and alaia displays. On the land were surf movies, a book signing, cooking demonstrations, bands, a bikini parade, art classes, coaching clinics, and classic cars and surf vehicles. The 2013 dates for the Australian Longboard Surfing Open have been set for 20 to 24 March. Some winners of the various overall categories were Taylor Jensen, Green Aussie Cleaner Association of Surfing Professionals men's pro; Chelsea Williams, Cancer Institute NSW Association of Surfing Professionals Women's pro; and Dane Wilson, Mohwak Noserider. Finally, I refer to the winner and placegetters of Classic Surf Vehicles: first prize, the 1940 Woodie; second prize, the split window Kombi; and third prize the rusty Kombi ute.

This was greatly assisted by the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, and Minister for the Arts. It was his department that granted the organisers \$10,000 for this year's and next year's events. Surfing is a strong culture both in my electorate and in many other electorates in New South Wales. The Tweed is close to the Gold Coast and it attracts a large number of international events and brings a lot of income into the great State of New South Wales. It was a pleasure to be there on the day. I declined the request to go on a lift tandem ride on a longboard, mainly because one of the previous world champions informed me just before he was to take me out that he had dropped his wife the week before and she had broken her leg, although next year I will probably have to do it. Surfing is a great sport. The event brought back a lot of memories of surfing legends. Beach Boys music was being played up and down the beach and all the restaurants benefitted, as did the surf club. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

**TRIBUTE TO LIONEL FROST BOWEN, AC, A FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,
MINISTER OF THE CROWN AND MEMBER FOR RANDWICK**

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [5.31 p.m.]: In my inaugural speech I spoke about the strength of a good example for a budding politician. A person who stands as a good example and a positive role model is one of the most powerful influences in the world. Such a person can change lives and make the world a better place. I am fortunate that in my sphere of politics and community representation I have had some terrific local representatives as role models—men such as Laurie Brereton, Bob Carr and a fellow by the name of Lionel Frost Bowen. This evening I to pay tribute to Lionel Frost Bowen on behalf of the people of Maroubra and—in so far as I am able to—on behalf of the Marist community in Australia. I certainly do so on behalf of the Marcellin College Randwick: Lionel Bowen was our favourite and most famous Old Boy.

My first political activity goes back to the 1984 Federal election when I was asked to hand out how-to-vote cards for Lionel Bowen. I stood in the sun all day at St Joseph's school at Maroubra beach and I got sunburnt. That evening I celebrated Lionel's re-election for the electorate of Kingsford Smith and the re-election of the Hawke Government. I thought it was terrific. It is possible that it is through the influence of Lionel Bowen that I stand here this evening to pay tribute to him. I remember Lionel as a lovely man. He was a person of some physical standing and he was sharp and impressive but he was—above all—a gentleman. He had strength but he displayed that strength in humility, gentleness and civility. That was the real gift of the man who strode the political stage to become the Deputy Prime Minister. He began in politics as the youngest ever mayor of Randwick, he then became the member for Randwick, the member for Kingsford Smith, and the rest is history. Lionel Bowen was a very good orator. He had a charisma of his own—not copied from anybody.

Lionel was an old-style gentleman and his own man. One of the things that set Lionel apart—particularly amongst politicians who package their style up for television—was that his style was almost without ego. He was a very confident person but above all, a lovely man. He was one of our greatest Labor tribesmen and I am very proud of the work he did. He can be proud of the family he has left behind, a family of eight children—three daughters and five sons. For 73 years he lived in the Kensington home where he died. He first lived there with his deserted mother and then, for the past 59 years, with his wife, Claire, a pharmacy graduate whom he married in 1953. His family was reciting the rosary at his bedside on Sunday when he died—good, strong, Catholic Labor, Marcellin College stock. Lionel had some tremendous successes to his credit. One of the things that he took great pride in was negotiating through the Senate the 1973 groundbreaking legislation that provided for needs-based funding of non-government schools.

Lionel was a revolutionary—one of the first people in the Whitlam Government to recognise that the Commonwealth had a role to play in assisting non-government schools and particularly the Catholic school sector. As the president of its Ex-students' Association I also want to speak on behalf of Marcellin College Randwick. I speak on behalf of past headmasters and principals of the college who have worked closely with Lionel over the years. Lionel is fondly remembered by Brother Roger Burke, Brother Pat Howlett, Brother Bill Sullivan and Brother David Hall and by all of the Marcellin College family at Randwick. The staff, parents and students of the college looked up to him as our greatest Old Boy. He is also one of the greatest Labor tribesmen in our area and we thank him for everything he has done, but particularly for the great example that he was and will always be.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Vale Mr Lionel Frost Bowen.

GERRINGONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [5.36 p.m.]: I inform the House about the recent Gerringong Parents and Citizens school fete that I had the pleasure of attending on Saturday 10 March 2012. This fete was about

raising much-needed funds for Gerringong Public School—a school situated just streets away from where I grew up. In particular, the goal was to raise funds to enhance the performing arts and technology capacity of the Gerringong Public School by upgrading its school hall facilities with new sound and lighting. I am thrilled to inform the House that the fete far exceeded initial expectations and managed to raise a record-breaking total of \$36,451 for the school community—an outstanding result by any standard. I was pleased to take part in the popular dunk tank, which had everybody amused. It is always a beautiful day in Gerringong and with the sun shining, needless to say the locals were queuing up for miles to try their hand at hitting the bullseye and dropping me in the drink.

I trust that if I had advised my parliamentary colleagues of this particular attraction, the school would have been able to double its fund-raising efforts. I note Madam Speaker's attempts to arrange for Shane Warne to attend on the day proved to be unsuccessful. I pay tribute to all those who lined up to be dunked to raise funds for such a good cause. In particular I thank my friend and local Gerringong Uniting Church Minister, Peter Chapman, who donned the full episcopal clobber and was on the wrong end of the solid bowling of some sharp-shooting locals. Given the good minister seemed to be drenched to the bone, I reiterate my allegation to him that God must be an Anglican, given that I spent more time on the plank than I did in the water. The dunk tank was a great highlight and a most popular attraction on the day which I am informed by the parents was the talk amongst all the students at the school assembly on the following Monday morning.

I take this opportunity to thank Kent Lamkin of the Natural Necessity Surf Shop in Gerringong—definitely worth the drive—who did me a good deal on a beach towel, which was certainly a necessity on this particular occasion. This year was the first time the committee had introduced sponsorship packages to the fete and without question this was instrumental in achieving the record-breaking amount raised for the school. I was pleased to be able to lend my support by being one of the gold sponsors on the day. The good people of Gerringong also showed their generosity and community spirit to proudly support their local public school.

I particularly acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Karina Shepherd, Natalie Werfel and Sam West of the Gerringong Public School Fete Committee who did an outstanding job organising and promoting such a fun and successful event to support the local school. No matter where one looked around the school, the school ground was a hive of activity with a full program of events throughout the day. I acknowledge all the hardworking students, parents, teachers and staff who were supportive of the Gerringong Parents and Citizens fete and thank them for their great contributions. I pay tribute to the local Lions and Rotary Club that made a considerable contribution to assisting with the fundraising effort on the day of the fete.

I also acknowledge the fantastic local businesses that strongly supported the fundraising effort. The naming rights sponsor was Global Music Network. Gold sponsors included Bass Electrical Engineering, Gerroa Boat Fisherman's Club, Lands Edge, MS Building Constructions, Platinum Travel Corporation and The Good Guys Nowra. Silver sponsors included Global Crushers and Spares Pty Ltd, South Coast Holidays and The Mortgage Professionals. Bronze sponsors included Speering Financial Planning and LJ Hooker Kiama. The amount raised from this local fete is a stunning tribute to all involved and a wonderful result for all the students who will benefit from funds spent on providing more opportunities in their educational environment. I will continue to stand up and fight for the best education our State can offer our community and I look forward to supporting Gerringong Public School along with all my local schools in their efforts to provide a quality experience for their staff, teachers, parents and students.

Gerringong is where I grew up. Gerringong is where my mum and dad ran their small business. It is home to a host of local heroes including stars of the football field such as Mick Cronin. Gerringong is a remarkable community because of the strength of locals who are so parochial about their town. The fete demonstrated that when a community gets together it can achieve huge and significant efforts. The fundraising efforts are a great tribute to the parents and citizens, the school community and the Gerringong community in general. I have no doubt if it was not for their passion for their town and a great local school this outcome would not have been possible. I thank the House for the opportunity to put on the record my thanks to the Gerringong Public School parents and citizens.

CAMP KEDRON

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.41 p.m.]: My community of Pittwater has a wonderful facility called Camp Kedron on Emmaus Road in the wonderful rural community of Ingleside. Camp Kedron has been serving generations of schoolchildren, community groups, church groups, and other social groups as a conference facility, camp site, and as a site for the community for 50 years. This year

represents 50 years since the site was originally acquired from the Department of Lands in terms of a special lease. It was then administered by a non-denominational Christian group that has subsequently, over many years, developed this wonderful piece of Pittwater paradise into a facility for people across the State. Lasting friendships have been formed at the camp site and many children from disadvantaged backgrounds have had the opportunity to share community, love, home-cooked meals and a wonderful learning experience in an environment surrounded by Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, which is listed on the Register of the National Estate as a place with outstanding biodiversity values.

In particular I commend Mr Rob Alan, Brad Taylor and Mr Greg Clark who serve as directors of Camp Kedron. They have literally put hundreds of volunteer hours into wisely managing this facility for the benefit of the community, school groups, and church groups that use the facility. They have been custodians of this place for many years. They follow in the footsteps of other wonderful directors including the founders, Megan and Livingston Clark, who have sadly passed away but who had the vision to establish this wonderful camp site. Camp Kedron is uniquely situated. While it is situated close to the metropolitan areas of Sydney it is surrounded by national park and rural lands. There are all too few places like this where city kids can get away and experience rural living and the bush.

I note that it was Sir Robert Askin, the first member for Pittwater, who presided over the conversion of this site from a special lease into a public reserve for the purpose of the camp site for which it is currently used. I recently had the opportunity to join the directors to visit a camp that was underway in Camp Kedron. The directors explained to me as I toured the facility the wonderful opportunities that exist to expand the camp site on the unused allotment of Crown land immediately adjacent to Camp Kedron. The camp has been a victim of its own success and is under pressure. There are great opportunities to expand the wonderful facilities and community that Camp Kedron can offer by utilising the vacant and overgrown block of Crown land adjacent to the camp site.

I look forward to working with the Minister to explore what opportunities might exist to extend the vision and opportunities of Camp Kedron. Expanding the campsite would extend the opportunities for children and other groups around the State to use this amazing facility. It is appropriate this matter is before the House as we approach Easter. This is a time when families are often looking for ideas as to what to do with the kids during the holidays and Camp Kedron has a full program of camps during holiday periods to help busy households. The underlying Christian message that Camp Kedron is custodian of is worth reflecting on at this time of year. In the Christian church we are about to celebrate the sacrifice and miracle of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The element of love is what Camp Kedron is all about.

ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [5.46 p.m.]: On Sunday 1 April 2012 I attended the Assyrian New Year festival at the Fairfield showground in my electorate of Smithfield to commemorate the beginning of the 6,762nd year in the Assyrian calendar. It was an honour for me to be present at the 6,762nd Assyrian New Year celebrations as the State member for Smithfield. I am proud to be an Australian of Assyrian heritage and as such I have unique insight into the importance of this occasion. It was a greater honour for me to represent the Premier of New South Wales the Hon. Barry O'Farrell and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, Victor Dominello, who both conveyed their warmest greetings and best wishes for another successful year for the Assyrian community in New South Wales.

It was an impressive festival that attracted a large number of dignitaries from all levels of government and both sides of politics, evidencing the importance of the Assyrian Australian community. About 8,000 people braved the rainy conditions and packed the main area of the festivities. There was a big presence from many other Assyrian community organisations. However, I take particular interest in acknowledging the presence of His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, Archbishop of the Assyrian Church of the East, who blessed the festivities with a prayer at the opening ceremony. Assyrians throughout the world gather in churches, function centres and their homes to celebrate Akitu, also known in Aramaic as Reeshet Sheeta, or the Head of the Year, which was an ancient Assyrian and Babylonian festival to celebrate the beginning of spring, a symbol of rebirth.

Celebrations like this are important to preserve the ancient Assyrian culture that is so unmistakably in dire danger of extinction. Thankfully today we live in the best country in the world. Australia has welcomed Assyrians as well as other people from every corner of the world to form this unique multicultural fabric of our society, which has worked so well for our State and my electorate of Smithfield. This year's celebrations were dampened by the unexpected and sudden passing of one of our community's dearest sons, Mr Nenos Nissan.

Nenos was an active member of the Assyrian Universal Alliance and a respected member of the Assyrian community. I have known Nenos for most of my adult life. He will be sadly missed by his family and the Assyrian community. He passed away a week before Assyrian New Year. I pay tribute to him and extend my sincere condolences to the Nissan family and the Assyrian community on this great loss.

I congratulate the Assyrian Universal Alliance, the Assyrian Australian National Federation and the Young Assyrians, for organising this successful festival. In particular, I express gratitude to Mr Hermiz Shahen, Mr David David, Mr Ninos Haroon and their organisations for hosting yet another successful Assyrian New Year festival. I look forward to continuing support for the Australian-Assyrian community in the future and I wish all members a successful, joyous and happy Assyrian New Year.

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN CLARKE

Mr CHRIS HOLSTEIN (Gosford) [5.50 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about Mr Stephen Clarke, the Gosford City Town Crier, who was crowned Australian Champion of Champions in the twenty-second Australian National Town Criers Championships held in the beautiful city of Moree between 30 March and 1 April 2012. Town criers from across Australia attended the championships as part of a week-long celebration as Moree celebrated its 150th anniversary. Moree is situated in the electorate of my colleague the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and Minister for Western New South Wales.

Mr Stephen Clarke was born in 1955, lives at Umina Beach and has been a Central Coast resident since 1958. He attended Point Claire Public School and Gosford High School. He has been a justice of the peace since 1983 and is a member of the NSW Justices Association. In 2010 he was appointed to the council of St Philips Christian College School. I have known Stephen since becoming a councillor some 20 years ago and I have followed his progress with interest. In May 1990 Stephen was appointed as Assistant Town Crier to then Town Crier Brian Trotter. In September 1993 Brian resigned as Town Crier due to health issues. Stephen took over his role and was officially appointed Gosford City Town Crier in March 1994.

Since his appointment as Assistant Town Crier in 1990 Stephen has represented Gosford City in town crying championships both nationally and internationally. In 2000 he was placed second in the national championships held at Ipswich, Queensland, and since then he has posted two other runner-up positions. In the 2004 championships at Coffs Harbour he came third in the Champion of Champions category and third in the Best Cry category. In 2005 he came third in the world championships against competitors from Europe, Canada and the United States of America—he was placed third in the world but he had not cracked it as the national champion. Proudly, in 2012 Stephen cracked it. Stephen is now our national champion and no finer ambassador does Gosford city and the Central Coast have. Stephen was involved also in two successful bids to have national championships held at Gosford in 2001 and 2006, which resulted in great economic benefits to the area.

In 2007 Stephen was elected president of the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers by his peers; a position he held for several years. He is married to Patsy, who encourages him in his passion for town crying. He lists his hobbies as a love of music. Why not? He plays bass and acoustic guitar, trumpet and drums and has been a member of a country music band for many years. He is also a church leader and musical director at his church. He received a community service award, and in 2003 and 2007 was recognised by Gosford City Council for his services. In 2004 he received a Centenary Medal from the Governor-General. When Stephen performed at this year's championships he had to do a cry of 100 to 125 words about Gosford and a second cry of 100 to 125 words about Moree's 150th anniversary. Hopefully the Minister will see what Gosford has to say about Moree—I am sure it will be very compelling.

Stephen plays a fanfare on the bugle prior to performing his town cry. Significantly, at the top of the Gosford coat of arms a cockerel stands upon a bugle and Stephen, as a proud citizen of Gosford, honours the heraldry of our city. Stephen Clarke is a gentleman, devoted husband, talented musician, town crier, community worker, church stalwart and an outstanding ambassador for Gosford and the Central Coast. One would need several lifetimes to meet a more caring individual or someone who gives more freely of his time to assist those in need. Stephen, you do the City of Gosford proud, congratulations.

ROTARY YOUTH DRIVER AWARENESS PROGRAM

Mr DARREN WEBBER (Wyong) [5.55 p.m.]: Tonight I highlight a most significant road safety program which operates in the electorate of Wyong. This year the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program, commonly known as RYDA, took place at Wyong Race Club from Monday 5 March to Friday 30 March 2012

and I had the opportunity of witnessing this excellent program firsthand. This was the ninth year the program has been run on the Central Coast. The program was developed and provided by Road Safety Education but it was delivered by the combined Central Coast Rotary clubs. Sadly, we lose far too many young people on our roads and statistics show that young drivers are at a much higher risk of being involved in serious or fatal road crashes. As a member of the current Standing Committee on Road Safety, or Staysafe committee, and a surviving passenger of several major traffic incidents involving youth, I am acutely aware of these tragic statistics. Young people aged 17 to 25 represent fewer than 15 per cent of the population, yet they account for around 25 per cent of deaths and injuries on our roads. This program was developed in response to that tragic loss.

The Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program is an evidence-based educational program developed in consultation with relevant government departments and designed to complement and supplement the school curriculum and government road safety messages. This year nearly 1,800 year 11 students from 19 Central Coast high schools participated in the program, as well as several young people from non-school vocational programs. The six sessions, "Stopping Distances", "Crash Survivor", "My Wheels", "Police", "Hazards, Distractions and Risk" and "Plan B: Alcohol, Drugs, Fatigue and Driving", were presented by professional facilitators, including police, NRMA driving instructors, the Central Coast Disability Network, the Brian Hilton Motor Group and youth educators.

One of the most emotional and thought-provoking sections of the program is where students speak directly to someone who has experienced a devastating road crash. It really helps to bring home the importance of road safety to them when they meet someone who has suffered serious injuries from road trauma. The program was attended each day by eight to 10 local Rotarian volunteers who managed the overall running of the program and the venue. More than 100 Rotarians participated in this four-week program. We also had volunteers from Probus, Rotoract and employees of the ANZ Bank. Each day the State Emergency Service provided a truck and a team of volunteers to supervise the road closure for the braking demonstration. A total of 145 non-paid volunteers assisted in the program, which would not exist without those magnificent volunteers.

The program is funded by the students who pay \$10 each, contributions of \$6,000 from Wyong Council, \$6,600 from Gosford City Council and donations from the Central Coast Rotary clubs. The Brian Hilton Motor Group provided the "people mover" car for the braking demonstration free of charge for nine years. The students also contribute to bus hire to and from their schools, which makes the total cost for each student closer to \$20, which is a significant cost to many families on top of other cost-of-living pressures. The cost of providing the program is closer to \$30 per student but it would be much higher without the voluntary labour. The Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program is seeking more funding from the New South Wales Government and I will be supporting any applications that are made for additional funding.

Road safety education programs such as the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program remain a high priority for the O'Farrell Government. I will be working closely with the Minister for Roads and Ports to continue to highlight the importance of the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness program, not only for the Central Coast but also throughout New South Wales. We must continue to do all we can to ensure our young people have the best road safety education available to equip them with the skills and knowledge to help them stay safe on our roads and make educated decisions. I commend all those involved.

WAVERLEY ACTION FOR YOUTH SERVICES

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.00 p.m.]: Last Thursday 29 March I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the annual Waverley Action for Youth Services [WAYS] youth centre in Bondi Beach, in my electorate of Vaucluse. This year's forum focussed on the theme "Mental Health First Aid: Help a Mate", and coincided with National Youth Week. I was joined by my parliamentary colleagues the member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith; the Mayor of Woollahra, Susan Wynne; and Waverley councillor and Waverley Action for Youth Services committee member, Sally Betts. The special guest was one of my parliamentary colleagues, the Minister for Mental Health and Healthy Lifestyles, the Hon. Kevin Humphries.

More than 110 students from 14 different schools attended this year's forum to discuss the important issue of mental health and to learn ways to help and support each other through greater understanding of the issues. Some of the schools attending the forum included Kambala, the Scots College and Ascham—all in my electorate—as well as Moriah, Randwick Girls High School, South Sydney High School and Alexandria Park Community School, to name just a few. I acknowledge my son Nicholas is in the public gallery. Nicholas, who attends Scots College, has attended the forums over the years and enjoyed them very much.

Waverley Action for Youth Services was founded in 1979 by a group of concerned local citizens seeking to find ways to help support and assist young people at risk. Since Waverley Action for Youth Services was founded they have held more than 30 of these youth forums, focusing on a range of issues affecting young people. In 2010, Waverley Action for Youth Services celebrated 30 years of commitment to the community—an outstanding achievement and testament to the dedication of all those involved in the organisation. I would particularly like to acknowledge, as I am sure my colleague Bruce Notley-Smith would, the inspiring work of Mr Russell King, the chief executive officer of Waverley Action for Youth Services. He has devoted more than 20 years of leadership and service to the organisation. Russell is universally respected for his passionate advocacy and commitment to youth; his enthusiasm is infectious. Russell and the Waverley Action for Youth Services committee have railed against adversity on several occasions to continue to provide the essential grassroots youth support services that are so welcome and necessary in my electorate and beyond.

Back in 1979, when Waverley Action for Youth Services began their services, they worked from a terrace house in Bondi Junction. In 1992 they moved to a purpose-built youth centre facility at Bondi Beach where they continue their work to this day. This facility is their head office and the site for the youth centre that is at the heart of their organisation. With the help and support of the local community, staff and volunteers, Waverley Action for Youth Services has grown to become one of the largest community-based, not-for-profit youth organisations in New South Wales. As well as their Bondi Beach facility, Waverley Action for Youth Services also supports another office located in Bondi Junction, employing 15 permanent full-time and part-time staff, supported by a team of casual staff and volunteers—all working with young people across the Sydney area.

Over the years, the range of programs at Waverley Action for Youth Services has expanded to meet a wider range of needs for young people, to help tackle the variety of issues they face in an ever-changing society. The range of programs at Waverley Action for Youth Services covers issues such as youth health and mental health, self-esteem and body image, alcohol and drug usage, peer relations and bullying, and career options—just to name a few. These issues are explored in a variety of formats such as personal development workshops, workshops for parents, counselling, training programs and health clinics. I think it is particularly important to reiterate that the services of Waverley Action for Youth Services reach much further than a small pocket of suburbs around Bondi.

Waverley Action for Youth Services covers all or part of the local government areas of Botany Bay, Randwick, Sydney City, Waverley and Woollahra, in the electorates of Coogee, Heffron, Maroubra, Sydney and in my electorate of Vaucluse. And that is because, as Waverley Action for Youth Services recognises, the issues confronting our youth—like peer pressure, body image, bullying, drug use and binge drinking—confront them regardless of where they live. That is why Waverley Action for Youth Services is such an important part of our Sydney community and the community in the electorate of Vaucluse. So I thank Russell King, the Waverley Action for Youth Services committee and dedicated staff for their commitment to our youth and our community over the past 30 years, and also for their warm welcome last week. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

WALLSEND ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [6.04 p.m.]: It is with regret and disappointment that I must reveal to our community the blatant neglect of the O'Farrell Government in choosing not to deliver 90 per cent of the promised public works for the worthy electorate of Wallsend. I remind the House of the essential public works that Wallsendians need. The first is the urgent construction of the Glendale police station. Second is the shortening of the long waiting lists for paediatric care in the Hunter and northern regions which demand a paediatric intensive care unit be built as soon as possible at John Hunter Hospital. Third is the Barry O'Farrell vision for Hunter Transport by funding the Newcastle inner-city bypass, stage 5. Lack of funding is deterring investors, stunting growth in the Hunter, and frustrating commuters. Fourth, the Minister for Transport needs to be reminded that Cardiff commuters demand the money for the Cardiff rail lift installation—which was fully funded by Labor in May 2010.

Fifth is the Barry O'Farrell Government's failure to adopt its stated belief in sustainable practice; his true colours are showing in his abandonment of funding for cycleways in Wallsend and the Hunter. Sixth is the security of knowing that the Minister for the Environment has control of air quality in the Hunter by monitoring Orica and other industries. Seventh is the need for the Minister for Health to keep her promise to maintain staff-to-patient ratios for nurses in New South Wales. Eighth is the need for leadership, not sabotage, on the

Newcastle inner-city bypass, stage 4, by releasing funding to long-suffering workers and subcontractors, as failure to do so is stagnating progress of the project. Ninth is a commitment that electricity prices will not bankrupt the community and small businesses with the impending sale of electricity assets.

It is funny how time changes people's priorities. In January 2011 the member for Charlestown, as a candidate, passionately endorsed the resurrection of the Cardiff central business district. At this stage, not a stone has been turned nor rock removed in Cardiff. Cardiff small business owners are now pushed to the brink. Let us not forget the Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian. Will the Minister accept responsibility for promoting crime at Waratah train station? The Minister's decision to axe regional rail staff, leaving stations unattended, is encouraging dangerous and costly criminal activity on Waratah train station. Grants for research, too, have been ignored by the O'Farrell Government and the Liberal members for the electorates of Newcastle, Maitland and Charlestown. The Liberal Government has wrongly decided to cut a \$150,000 annual grant to the Hunter Valley Research Foundation. This major cut will jeopardise both invaluable local research and local jobs.

Most of the projects mentioned in this speech had been signed off for funding by the previous Labor Government. Where have the approved funds gone? In the case of the much needed Glendale police station, the approved funds were siphoned from the Labor seat of Wallsend—from the Cardiff, Glendale, Argenton and Edgeworth communities—to the electorates of Liberals and Independents. I challenge the Premier and his Cabinet to visit the electorate; to take off their rose-coloured glasses and see the big picture. The Hunter region—including my electorate of Wallsend—must be part of the grand plan for New South Wales, not part of a plan that excludes funding for infrastructure in Labor electorates. I make this prediction: in this Parliament's four-year term whatever building works are undertaken in the Wallsend electorate will suddenly start in the fourth year, and of course be completed just before the election. You can bet your bottom dollar that as we move towards the next election the member for Charlestown will announce with huge fanfare the installation of lifts at Cardiff railway station—fully funded by Labor in May 2010.

WYONG HOSPITAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [6.08 p.m.]: The provision of infrastructure and services in fast-growing areas of Lake Macquarie is failing to keep pace with population growth and does not even meet existing demand. I have raised related matters in this House many times, particularly in regard to the poor provision of health services in the Morisset area and the difficulty for public transport users to access these services. Poor planning has seen hospitals such as Wyong and John Hunter difficult to access by means of public transport. There are many unresolved problems with public transport: a shortage of route-kilometres for bus services, the substandard and congested Main Road 217, poor integration of bus and rail services, and poor railway station infrastructure.

In raising the issue of poor public transport access to Wyong Hospital I acknowledge the South Lake Macquarie Public Transport Action Group and its effort to highlight the transport problem faced by residents in the areas around Morisset. Historically, there is poor provision of public transport in the Morisset area, and even residents who have ready access to existing services need to change modes twice on their lengthy trips to Wyong Hospital. A typical return trip takes at least six hours, even with optimal use of existing timetables and presuming services run on time. On arrival at Wyong Hospital there is a walk of approximately 400 metres from the bus stop to the outpatient clinic. This may not be an imposition for young and healthy people but the segment of the population using public transport to visit a hospital is more likely to experience difficulty.

While a round trip by public transport may be insufferably long, a return journey from Morisset to Wyong Hospital by private vehicle is approximately 50 minutes. While this is a tolerable journey for those travelling by car, the times involved also demonstrate that the use of taxis and hire cars make this option unviable for most people. Ambulances routinely take all patients from the Southlake area to Wyong Hospital, except for major emergencies or where other arrangements have been made in advance. This means that follow-up treatment for Southlake residents is required at Wyong Hospital, hence the ongoing problems for those affected. Because no direct or reasonable public transport link from the Southlake area to this hospital exists, patients are frequently unable to attend for follow-up care unless private transport is available. This can also mean that family members or others are unable to visit during periods of hospitalisation.

The prospect of using public transport to get to Wyong Hospital is particularly daunting for elderly and infirm people. The significance of this is illustrated by 2006 census data on the age profile of the Morisset area. The 15 to 54 age group is 7.7 per cent below the national average, while the 55 and older group is 9.0 per cent

above. The median age is five years above the national average. This has significant implications for both health services and transport. The area's income profile exacerbates the problem, with the 2006 census showing the median individual income and median household income as being more than 20 per cent below the national average. The Southlake area currently has 754 independent living units for seniors and 540 residential park sites occupied by permanent residents over the age of 55. Information from the Central Coast Local Health District for the 2010-11 financial year shows that a total of 1,428 residents from the extended Southlake area were admitted as inpatients and a total of 5,191 residents attended the emergency department.

No information is available on the number of outpatient treatments, but surely it would be a significant number. This shows the scale of the problem and makes it worth closely examining the impacts. As an example, a Cooranbong resident using the public transport system to attend a 10.00 a.m. outpatient appointment at Wyong Hospital would take almost 6½ hours and involve the following: the 7.23 a.m. to 7.59 a.m. bus from Cooranbong to Morisset Station, the 8.07 a.m. to 8.25 a.m. train from Morisset to Wyong Station, and the 8.45 a.m. to 8.58 a.m. bus to Wyong Hospital. Allowing time for walking, waiting and an appointment and a packed lunch, the return trip would start at 12.21 p.m. and finish at 1.52 p.m. The option of using taxis or a hire car to access the hospital from the Southlake area is simply unviable for almost all residents, with a typical fare of \$75 each way. I believe the community argument for improved access to medical services in the Southlake area is compelling, and I call on the Government to take action to address the current and future needs of this community.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I take this opportunity to wish all members a safe return to their electorates, as well as a happy Easter holiday season.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.14 p.m. until
Tuesday 1 May 2012 at 12 noon.**
