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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 12 September 2013

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

The President read the Prayers.

ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Message received from the Legislative Assembly agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendments.

Pursuant to sessional orders Formal Business Notices of Motions proceeded with.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 1474 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

Private Members' Business item No. 6 in the Order of Precedence postponed on motion by the Hon. Penny Sharpe and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Private Members' Business item No. 7 in the Order of Precedence postponed on motion by Dr John Kaye and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Dr JOHN KAYE: I seek the leave of the House to give two notices of motions.

Leave not granted.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by the Hon. DUNCAN GAY agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 17 September 2013 at 2.30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY (Leader of the Opposition) [9.39 a.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 1455 outside the Order of Precedence relating to an order for papers regarding lobbyists be called on forthwith.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Ports) [9.39 a.m.]: Government members will not oppose urgency, nor will we oppose this Standing Order 52 request. We are aware of where the numbers are and, frankly, we have nothing to hide. But this Standing Order 52 request is just a stunt by the Labor Party. If

members opposite cared about the effect of lobbyists in this area they would extend it, but they are the party of Hawker Britton. Hawker Britton is in their DNA. The Hawker Britton alumni listed on Wikipedia includes Walt Secord, Robert Furolo, Sam Dastyari and several other members of the Labor Party. They are part of the alumni of lobbyists in this place.

Dr John Kaye: Point of order—

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: And their friends.

Dr John Kaye: Not for the first time the Minister is casting personal aspersions against a member of this Chamber. He should withdraw.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I did not hear the Minister casting any aspersions. The Minister is in order. Does the Minister have any further comments he wishes to make?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: We will grant this motion urgency even though it is hard to see urgency when we are getting on with the job of governing. As the Premier said, if people want to see members of his Government they do not need to employ lobbyists; they simply need to ring up and make an appointment.

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

Motion agreed to.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. LUKE FOLEY agreed to:

That Private Members' Business item No. 1455 outside the Order of Precedence be called on forthwith.

POLITICAL LOBBYING

Production of Documents: Order

Motion by the Hon. LUKE FOLEY agreed to:

That under Standing Order 52 there be laid upon the table of the House within 14 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 April 2011 in the possession, custody or control of the Premier or any Minister:

- (a) all documents including correspondence, emails, invitations and meeting requests, diary entries, briefing notes and papers, records of telephone calls, meeting agendas and minutes relating to lobbying activities undertaken by:
 - (i) First State Advisors and Consultants Pty Ltd, Three 888 Corporation Pty Ltd and St Joseph Enterprises Pty Ltd;
 - (ii) Mr Joseph Tannous;
 - (iii) Mr Neil Harley;
 - (iv) Mr David Zachary Miles;
 - (v) Mr Michael Ross;
 - (vi) Dr John Tierney, OAM;
 - (vii) The Hon. Peter Reith;
 - (viii) Amer Hussein.
- (b) any document which records or refers to the production of documents as a result of this order of the House.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. PENNY SHARPE agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 1458 outside the Order of Precedence relating to an order for papers regarding Transport for NSW contracts be called on forthwith.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. PENNY SHARPE agreed to:

That Private Members' Business item No. 1458 outside the Order of Precedence be called on forthwith.

CONRAD CONSULTING AND CAPITAL PTY LIMITED AND MR JOHN SIMOS

Production of Documents: Order

Motion by the Hon. PENNY SHARPE agreed to:

That under Standing Order 52 there be laid upon the table of the House within 14 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 April 2011 in the possession, custody or control of Transport for NSW, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, or the Minister for Transport:

- (a) all documents relating to the awarding of contracts to, and provision of services by, Conrad Consulting and Capital Pty Ltd and Mr John (Jack) Simos including but not limited to:
 - (i) meeting requests, agendas and minutes;
 - (ii) correspondence, including emails;
 - (iii) briefing notes;
 - (iv) all telephone records; and
 - (v) tender documents and any draft and final contracts for service.
- (b) any document which records or refers to the production of documents as a result of this order of the House.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ADVERTISING PROHIBITION BILL 2012

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 August 2013.

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA (Parliamentary Secretary) [9.44 a.m.]: I commend Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his efforts in bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. The Government and the community at large share the concern of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Paul Green of the Christian Democratic Party about the deleterious effects of excessive alcohol use. I know that the member's intentions are honourable in bringing this bill before the House. General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 recently inquired into drug and alcohol treatment. The committee members and I as chair heard much evidence from witnesses who were concerned by drug and alcohol abuse and made recommendations.

During the inquiry numerous participants said that alcohol presents the greatest challenge to public health. That has been acknowledged by many parliaments in this nation. I hope that the incoming Federal Government under the leadership of Tony Abbott will take the matter seriously, because this public health issue presents a financial, physical and social cost. The negative social and economic effects of alcohol abuse are more significant than those caused by any other substance, including drugs, and in its inquiry the committee took the issue seriously. Alcohol presents a unique challenge for policymakers. Unlike other substances, it can be used safely; however, it can also be used in a reckless manner. The majority of people in our society use alcohol responsibly. Growing up in a Mediterranean family I was taught when I was young to treat alcohol in a respectful manner and to enjoy it in moderation, which I do to this day.

In fact, the majority of people in this country use alcohol responsibly. However, our consumption has increased and public health officials are concerned at the apparent lack of knowledge regarding appropriate alcohol usage after taking into account factors such as gender, age and physical circumstances. We know that the use of alcohol presents great risks during pregnancy. I also commend the Hon. Fred Nile for his private members' bill relating to that issue. His interest in these public health matters has always been genuine. The inquiry conducted by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 was primarily directed at the use of naltrexone implants for drug treatment. It was therefore difficult for the committee to take the time appropriately required to make detailed recommendations on alcohol usage, which would have included advertising and its effect on this social and public health issue.

The committee acknowledged the many negative effects of alcohol abuse and welcomed all initiatives to address this important social issue. After the committee completed its hearings the New South Wales Auditor-General published a report entitled "Cost of alcohol abuse to the NSW Government", which indicated that the Government could better respond to alcohol abuse if it had more information on associated costs. No one party can solve the problem of alcohol abuse. Indeed, advertising is extremely important. One need only go to the internet to see the incredible deluge of alcohol advertising and anyone searching on any issue is bombarded with these temptations. It is easy for people to buy cheap alcohol online and have it delivered to their front door.

There are many stresses with ordinary, everyday living and if alcohol is consumed in people's homes some of the bad social effects of alcohol abuse can be contained. However, the committee did consider domestic violence and the part that excessive use of alcohol plays. If alcohol is consumed outside of the home, it impinges on the portfolios of Police and law enforcement, Attorney General, Corrective Services, Health and Mental Health. Young people see this cycle of abuse and can be influenced by the behavioural patterns of adults and their peers. Unfortunately, this cycle of using alcohol in an irresponsible manner can be perpetuated.

The committee in bringing down its recommendations believes that alcohol abuse is a nationally significant issue that requires the involvement of all levels of government, the alcohol industry and non-government organisations. Consequently, it is of the view that New South Wales can play an important role in instigating and supporting national efforts to deal with the issue by recommending that the New South Wales Government approach the Commonwealth Government to request that a national summit on alcohol abuse be convened in a timely manner. Indeed, this was the committee's first recommendation, which has gone to the Premier and Cabinet for consideration and determination shortly. Recommendation 1 of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 inquiry into drug and alcohol treatment was as follows:

That the NSW Government, noting the report of the NSW Auditor-General, entitled, *Cost of alcohol abuse to the NSW Government*, and the evidence submitted to the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 Inquiry into drug and alcohol treatment, approach the Commonwealth Government to highlight the need for a national response to the problem of alcohol abuse, and to request that a national summit on alcohol abuse be convened in 2014-2015.

I know that the new Prime Minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott, along with the former shadow Minister for Health and Ageing, who I assume will have the Health portfolio—it would be a likely fit as Peter Dutton has done an excellent job in the shadow portfolio—will take this issue very seriously. I was happy to read last weekend a press release by the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, who emphasised the dangers and risks of alcohol to pregnant women. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has highlighted this issue over a number of years. Minister Skinner welcomed a NSW Kids and Families call for pregnant women across New South Wales to say no to alcohol. Last Monday, the ninth day of the ninth month, was International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day [FASD]. It describes the range of potential effects on a child of a mother drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

NSW Kids and Families, one of the pillar agencies of NSW Health, is using the day to remind women that there is no safe level of consumption and a zero tolerance approach is best. I know that the issues in this bill are very important to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, including the effect on young people and the effect on women, particularly pregnant women, where tolerance levels are far different from males, even though the binge drinking culture among young men is very disturbing. When I drive home to the shire I pass a number of popular pubs on the beachfront. Often at 1.00 a.m. I see people lining up and I think, "Oh my goodness. What is this behavioural activity? Where is it all going?" I return now to the work of NSW Kids and Families. The senior clinical adviser for obstetrics, Dr Michael Nicholl, said that the latest Australian Government survey shows 47 per cent of pregnant women consumed alcohol and 20 per cent continued to drink alcohol once they knew they were pregnant. He said:

It is important that people realise that there is no safe time, no safe type and no safe amount of alcohol if a woman is pregnant or could become pregnant.

Pregnant women should understand that when you drink alcohol, so does your baby. High level or frequent intake of alcohol during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth or premature birth. It's just not worth the risk.

Minister Skinner said last Sunday that there have been recent mixed messages in the media about drinking during pregnancy and it creates a dilemma for pregnant women. Therefore, it is important that NSW Kids and Families gets through its message that a zero tolerance of alcohol during pregnancy gives the baby the best

possible start in life. The Minister believes that pregnant women can be guided by this expert view. It is the job of the New South Wales Government, in alliance with organisations such as NSW Kids and Families, to get this important message through to people.

Dr Elisabeth Murphy, a senior clinical advisor for child and family health, said that foetal alcohol spectrum disorders can result in children being born with facial deformities and impaired growth. This is obviously something that pregnant women do not know but they need to know. The diagnosis may not be evident at birth. Children affected by foetal alcohol spectrum disorders can experience lifelong problems, including learning difficulties and disrupted education. In Australia these foetal alcohol spectrum disorders are one of the leading preventable causes of developmental disability, so it is very important that women understand this message. Dr Elisabeth Murphy stated:

Remember that it's never too late to stop, seek help from your doctor or midwife or contact MotherSafe—a comprehensive counselling service at the Royal Hospital for Women Randwick.

I commend the efforts of the Royal Hospital for Women; it is a truly marvellous job that they do of informing women, pregnant and otherwise, on health issues. Earlier this year the Federal Government released, for the first time, the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Antenatal Care, which advised women who are pregnant or planning to have a baby that not drinking is the safest option during pregnancy. This Government will do all that it can to get that message out. I turn now to the portfolio of Mental Health. It is very pleasing to see the work that the Minister for Mental Health, and Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, the Hon. Kevin Humphries, is doing within his department.

Just last month Minister Humphries welcomed the release of the Auditor-General's report, which I mentioned previously, on the cost of alcohol abuse. The Auditor-General praised the strategies put in place by the New South Wales Government to deal with the issues. The report also found the number of alcohol-related assaults had declined by 23 per cent since 2008. However, there is much more that we can do. Minister Humphries said that while that reduction is extremely encouraging, alcohol abuse is a challenge for all governments that are grappling with it, and there remains a lot more work to be done to reduce these rates further. I quote Mr Humphries:

Currently in New South Wales almost one in three people aged 16 and over drink at levels that put them at risk of harm. That is an extremely alarming statistic. Binge drinking in particular remains a serious problem, with over 25,000 alcohol-related assaults and more than 49,000 alcohol-related hospitalisations in NSW in 2011.

Minister Humphries said the New South Wales Government is committed to reducing alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour by encouraging a change in the drinking culture and making licensed premises and communities safer for everyone. He added that currently in New South Wales almost one in three people aged 16 years and over drinks at levels that put them at extreme risk of harm. We see that from the juvenile justice system. Binge drinking is an enormous problem. To quote Minister Humphries:

There are few problems that we as a society face that are crueller and more debilitating than alcohol addiction, and that is why the New South Wales Government will not take a backward step on this issue.

The New South Wales Government has overseen a range of public education campaigns such as *Know when to say when* and *What are you doing to yourself?* that raise awareness of the social and health impacts of binge drinking and get the message across that it is important that people take personal responsibility for the negative consequences of their drinking.

And, I add, the behaviour related to it. The New South Wales Minister for Hospitality and Racing, the Hon. George Souris, said that the New South Wales Government has also taken several other steps to address the impacts of alcohol-related harm, including the introduction of a new offence for intoxicated and disorderly conduct; the introduction of the three strikes disciplinary scheme for licensees or managers convicted of serious offence under the Liquor Act 2007; a coordinated response to alcohol-related issues in Kings Cross, including expanding the area covered by the special licence conditions, a continuation of the freeze on new liquor licences in Kings Cross, imposing new licensing conditions on venues, increasing late-night transport options, and the forthcoming introduction of ID scanners in high-risk venues and the power to impose temporary and long-term precinct-wide bans on individuals; and trialling one mandatory and two non-mandatory sobering up centres to deal with intoxicated persons who are creating a public nuisance.

The New South Wales Government is serious about reducing problems associated with alcohol abuse in our society; that is why it has taken this strong and decisive action to address these issues. Returning to the private member's bill of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, we acknowledge that there is much more that can be done, and the New South Wales Government wishes to participate in a national approach on this very serious issue to improve the terrible statistics we see, particularly those involving young Australians and binge drinking.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD [10.08 a.m.]: I appreciate the chance to make a few comments on the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill 2012. I do not pretend to be an expert on this matter or the provisions of the bill. However, the impacts of alcohol abuse in our community touch a nerve for all of us. I am torn between the public policy involved in this bill and its infringement of liberties, self-responsibility and self-control. However, alcohol abuse has inexcusable costs for our community and our health, but particularly for Aboriginal welfare in my part of the world, which I have seen in places such as Moree and west of Moree. The impact of this abuse is on all of us, and we cannot hide from it. I am not sure that a prohibition on advertising or promotion of alcoholic beverages is the way to go; I will certainly be considering this matter more carefully. However, there is a comparison to be made between this bill and the tobacco legislation of 20 or 30 years ago. Back then, you would have been scorned and laughed at if you said, "We were going to prohibit tobacco advertising."

You would have been regarded as a wowsler and been derided. But now we do not give tobacco smoking restrictions a second thought; for example, we do not see smoking at the cricket or football. I think we are a better community for that. So, for those who want to categorise me, I am a work in progress on alcoholic beverages advertising. If you had asked me a year or two ago if I was in favour of it, I probably would have said no. I am not so sure now. But think of the families dramatically impacted by the consequences of alcohol abuse, such as the family of Thomas Kelly. Thomas Kelly was king hit in Kings Cross in July 2012. I have children of that age, so it is with some apprehension I think that, on coming into adulthood, they might for the first time venture into Kings Cross.

I think Thomas Kelly was with his first serious girlfriend when he stepped from a train in Kings Cross and walked down the road causing no harm to anyone, but was king hit. The back of his head hit the ground, and he was killed. We grieve for him and for his family. But is grieving enough? I think we all, whether at a government or personal level, have a responsibility to do something about that. The problems will never be completely solved by legislation and regulation; obviously, there is an element of self-control and self-responsibility involved in our behaviour. But my reading of that particular case was that a group of boys had started drinking an hour or two or three before they "hit the Cross"; they were in and out of night clubs, were rejected from some and went into others. Our Government has made some tremendous moves to tighten the rules around access to alcohol and inappropriate behaviour in the Kings Cross precinct. However, I think all of us would like to see more alcohol controls.

The Thomas Kellys of the world bring this situation into sharp relief because a young life has been tragically cut short. When I worked in Moree and further west I did not see people who had been king hit and died. Rather, I remember going to work and seeing drunken people passed out on the road at 8.30 a.m., and that is very confronting. The Northern Territory and other places like that are grappling with access to alcohol, but is what they experience much different from what we are experiencing in Sydney? We might say that it is a remote problem and that that does not happen here.

However, is it much different from what happens at nightclubs and in George Street? We might wear better clothes and this behaviour might be occurring at different times, but the consequences are the same. The man who has admitted to the manslaughter of Thomas Kelly will almost certainly go to jail for a long time, so his life has taken a dreadful turn. The consequences continue to affect many people. I will consider this bill carefully and the Government should provide a considered response. We are on a journey and if this legislation is not passed soon, a similar bill will probably be passed at some stage.

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

CARBON EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Debate resumed from 29 August 2013.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD [10.12 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Hon. Lynda Voltz and commend her for raising this important issue. It is imperative that parliaments in States around Australia recognise their critical role in reducing carbon emissions. That is why this motion is so important and I am pleased that we are debating it now. I acknowledge that Australian factories and power stations handed in carbon permits and offsets covering 212 billion metric tonnes of greenhouse gases emitted over the past year as the nation prepared for the cap-and-trade scheme legislated to be introduced in 2015.

Of course, Australia's approach to addressing climate change will change as a result of the election of the Federal Liberal-Nationals Government. I prepared my contribution to this debate about six weeks ago and much has changed since then, which is disappointing for me on many levels. Those changes will have a detrimental impact on this nation's capacity to address the serious assault on our environment that climate change has been over decades. The Federal Labor Government's cap-and-trade scheme was applauded by Hugh Bromley, an analyst with Bloomberg New Energy Finance in Sydney. Mr Bromley was quoted in *The Age* of 24 June as stating:

This is an important step forward as Australia's per capita emissions are the highest in the OECD.

Despite the change of government in Canberra, that remains true. I hope that Federal Government members, and particularly the senators, will carefully consider the serious state of our environment as a consequence of climate change when they cast their votes next year. I doubt that the Abbott Government will introduce repealing legislation before July next year.

The Hon. Marie Ficarra: It might take a sensible U-turn. Stay tuned.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: I acknowledge that interjection. I have observed that when tangible evidence of climate change is presented, when it is affecting people's lives and when they can see the impact on the environment, they expect our governments to respond effectively. When Australia was experiencing its worst drought on record we had the greatest level of community support for action on climate change. However, I acknowledge that once the drought broke it was no longer a high priority. If the high temperatures that we have already experienced this spring are indicative of the summer ahead—and I suspect they are—I believe that Australians will again see climate change as a very high priority and expect their governments to respond effectively to the serious risk that presents to the quality of our environment and the future of our planet.

In late May this year, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide rose above 400 parts per million for the first time in approximately three million years. Without deep and rapid cuts to greenhouse gas emissions over the next two decades we face a world of catastrophic climate change with rising average temperatures, rising sea levels and extreme weather events. These have all been well reported and have been verified by scientific evidence. That is the reason the Federal Labor Government acted. All governments in Australia and around the world must act. Like some of my colleagues on this side of the House, I applauded the Federal Labor Government's vision and fortitude in legislating for the introduction of the cap-and-trade scheme, which will benefit this country for generations, albeit that it is now temporary.

Putting a price carbon is an effective and the cheapest way to cut pollution. The carbon price applied to Australia's biggest polluters, who had to report on and pay a price for their carbon pollution, and thereby created an incentive to reduce emissions. That fact is well recognised by economists around the world and respected institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Productivity Commission. In 2009, the international community, including Australia, agreed to hold global warming to below two degrees Celsius. Developed nations and major industrial countries then pledged voluntary national mitigation targets for 2020. Australia adopted an unconditional short-term emissions target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 5 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020.

However, collectively these pledges fall short of what is required to keep warming below two degrees Celsius, or the much safer target of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Research shows that the collective effort of all those pledges will still lead to global average warming of about four degrees Celsius and catastrophic climate change. This deficit in international effort is now commonly called the "ambition gap". Climate scientists have put numbers to this gap by estimating a global carbon budget. This budget defines the amount of emissions that can still accumulate in the earth's atmosphere if we are to stay below two degrees Celsius. Using 2000 as the baseline we know that we can add a further one trillion tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere to keep warming under two degrees Celsius.

Human activities have already added some 420 billion tonnes—give or take 50 billion tonnes—of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere since 2000. In other words, we have used almost half our quota in 13 years. Climate scientists estimate conservatively that only another 500 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide can be added to give us a 75 per cent chance of staying below the two degrees Celsius limit. The world needs to cut its annual emissions of carbon dioxide equivalents by between eight billion tonnes and 13 billion tonnes by 2020, to have a reasonable hope of bridging the ambition gap. Cutting by the larger of these amounts offers a better chance of achieving the two degrees Celsius goal.

So, what is Australia's fair share of the effort necessary to avoid such outcomes? This question lies at the heart of the Climate Change Authority's issues paper, and its task of recommending on Australia's future targets. Australia's carbon regime was to shift from a flat charge of \$23 to \$25.40 a tonne from 2012 through to 2015, to a floating-price market system from 2015. That was in accordance with the legislation that was passed two years ago. In a recent article in *The Conversation*, Melbourne University's Associate Professor Peter Christoff said:

In 2012, Australia emitted around 578 million tonnes (Mt) of CO₂-equivalents. It ranks 12th among the planet's 190-plus nations for its domestic greenhouse gas emissions. Its per capita emissions are among the world's highest. Further, when emissions from Australian coal exports are added to its domestic greenhouse emissions, Australia is the source of nearly 4% of total global emissions. In all, Australia is a major emitter, a very significant contributor to global warming, and should shoulder part of this additional reduction burden.

If we take the first approach, using a per capita allocation of the remaining global carbon budget and Australia's present population, Australia's total remaining emissions budget is some 1.65 billion tonnes. At current emissions rates, Australia will exhaust its total remaining carbon budget within the next three years—unless our economy ceases to exist in that time, or unless we buy substantial amounts of international emissions units to compensate for our emissions. It seems Australia is destined to consume much more of the global emissions budget than is its fair share.

The second approach—which involves accepting a share of the extra 13 billion tonnes cut necessary to bridge the ambition gap—means reducing Australia's emissions by a further 195 million tonnes per annum by 2020 (1.5% of the 13 billion tonnes). This would be the same as raising Australia's present 2020 mitigation target of -5% to around -40%.

In Australia there is a bipartisan commitment to reducing carbon emissions by five per cent to below 2000 levels by 2020. So the debate is not about whether or not we should act but the best and cheapest way to achieve this common goal in the face of this bipartisan support. I have certainly found some of the contributions to this debate from members on the other side astounding and very concerning. I hope members will take the time to read this motion because as we have more extreme weather events in this country people are going to look at us as legislators—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: What was the carbon dioxide count in the 1890s?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Peter Phelps has had an opportunity to contribute to this debate. I doubt whether he was heard in complete silence, but he should allow other members to give their remarks in relative silence.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Of course, Australia's fair share in 2020 should be even greater because Australia ranks very high on the international indices of national and per capita development, wealth and gross domestic product. Ethically, halving our emissions by 2020 begins to look like the minimum appropriate option. From even this brief analysis it is clear that Australia has a fundamental responsibility and need, given our ecological vulnerability, to adopt a much tougher 2020 emissions abatement target. We are certainly not going to achieve this under a Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government. I had prepared a speech that went into great detail about the existing schemes but as Tony Abbott's Liberal-Nationals Government has been elected I think it is important that we focus on what the Government has planned.

There are certainly many concerns about the incoming Government's direct action policy. Indeed, we heard this week that Prime Minister-elect Tony Abbott has confirmed that he will not be adding any funds to the budget that he has announced. If the target is not reached then the Government is not willing to add any resources or funding to meet that target. A number of experts are very critical of this. Indeed, in *The Age* last week a number of experts expressed real concern about what is proposed. According to that article a number of studies dispute the economic modelling that has been used to develop the direct action plan. The article states:

One, commissioned by the Climate Institute, found the Coalition was \$4 billion short and direct action could instead see emissions rise 9 per cent above 2000 levels instead of 5 below. The assumptions made in Climate Institute modelling were kind to the Coalition.

Other work has found larger holes.

Voters have to take Abbott on faith that what is on the table is enough to meet our emissions commitments. And at this stage there is little to support his claim.

Australia's emissions per person are some of the highest in the developed world. And we have pledged to the international community we will make inroads on our contribution to the pollution problem warming our planet. If we do not—and fall short of our promises—we discredit ourselves as a global citizen.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE [10.29 a.m.]: I support the motion. It is hard to imagine a more crucial time to confirm the science on climate change and confirm the widespread damaging impacts that runaway climate change will have unless we as a nation—and, more generally, as a globe—take action than after a climate change-denying Prime Minister has just taken the keys to The Lodge in Canberra. This motion sets out some basic facts; they are worth recording.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Hon. Peter Phelps and the Hon. Charlie Lynn want to have a private conversation, they should sit together and do it quietly or leave the Chamber.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Australian Bureau of Meteorology noted that January of this year was Australia's hottest month on record. They also noted that the summer of 2012-13 was the hottest summer on record. The average Australian maximum temperature from September to December 2012 was the highest on record, with average temperatures across the country 1.1 degrees Celsius above normal at 28.6 degrees Celsius, and exceeding the previous record set in 1997-98 by more than 0.1 degrees Celsius. A new record was set also for the number of consecutive days when the average maximum daily temperature for Australia exceeded 39 degrees Celsius. During a seven-day period—between 2 January 2013 and 8 January 2013, which I am sure Government members have forgotten—temperatures exceeded 39 degrees Celsius, which was almost double the previous record of four consecutive days of such temperatures in 1973.

Long-term records for both daily and monthly maximum temperatures have been broken in numerous places across New South Wales. On 7 January this year Australia set a new record for the hottest day on record with an average temperature of 40.3 degrees Celsius, surpassing the previous record set in December 1972. When we look at the average temperature for Australia as a whole we find that it exceeded 39 degrees Celsius on seven consecutive days in the period 2 January to 8 January. The longest previously recorded period was in December 1972 and that was for only four days. Record temperatures were set in towns and cities across Australia.

Over the past 11 years we have experienced six of Australia's 10 hottest summers. We have had the heat of the summer of 2012, which occurred during what was generally considered to be a neutral period in the El Niño southern oscillation index when we should not have been having those extreme temperatures. Australia and the globe are experiencing rapid climate change and we know that since the middle of the last century Australian temperatures have, on average, risen by about one degree Celsius. Within that average we have seen more heat waves and more extremes of weather; we have seen changing rainfall patterns across Australia, the enormous dry weather pattern in Western Australia and the increase in flood risks and flood events reaching further and further down from Queensland and into northern New South Wales. With this consistent historical record of Australia warming over the past century surely it is time that we, as political leaders, gathered together and did something about it.

But we cannot do something about it by tearing down the one mechanism that has been effective in reducing our carbon emissions—a price on carbon that was put in place by the former Federal Government. It is remarkable that a so-called party of enterprise and free markets is going to tear down a pricing model on carbon and put in its place the back-of-an-envelope direct action model proposed by Tony Abbott. We have seen the impacts of climate change continue since this motion was put on the *Notice Paper*: we have had the hottest winter on record, we have had a long and unusual drying period over winter and just in the last month we have experienced record temperatures. The figures have got worse since this motion was put on the *Notice Paper* but as a nation we are going backwards in taking action on climate change. In the short to medium term that will have a real impact on residents in New South Wales.

In the past 48 hours bushfires have occurred as a result of the historically hot and dry winter we have just had in Sydney. We know that climate change will make these bushfire events more severe and more common. If there is a sign of climate change denial in the heart of the Coalition Government it would be that the Minister for Planning is putting forward some draft legislation that will remove the ability of the Rural Fire Service to stop people building in bushfire-prone land. The Minister for Planning thinks that there is too much red tape and too much regulation.

Mr Scot MacDonald: Point of order: The member is misleading the House. The figures for—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The member will resume his seat.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Minister for Planning is not allowing the Rural Fire Service to continue to do its job and ensure that we do not get development on the urban fringes—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: Is the member not anticipating debate on a bill—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: A bill that has not yet been tabled.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The response to the interjection has answered the point of order.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Rural Fire Service is not being allowed to do its job and ensure that development does not happen, particularly on Sydney's urban fringes but also in coastal developments—and that includes Shoalhaven as well as up and down the coast—where there is more and more pressure for development on those spines that go into the bush, where we know, from history, that fire can rush up the valley and envelop those urban fringes. We have seen that happen in Canberra and in Victoria and we have seen it happen recently in the Blue Mountains. Unless we give the Rural Fire Service the power to do its job and ensure that we do not get development in those fire-prone areas more and more property and more and more lives will be put at risk because this Government thinks that tackling climate change and dealing with bushfire risks is red tape. This Government, like its Federal counterpart, does not agree with putting an effective price on carbon—which is reducing emissions, not damaging economic growth, not killing jobs—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Carbon dioxide you mean.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I note the interjection from the Government Whip. It is not killing jobs but ensuring that the industries and the economy that we build are adapted for the twenty-first century. We must take steps to make ourselves less of a global polluter and change our economy so that we do not continue to be an international pariah on carbon emissions with the highest emissions per capita of any substantial developed nation in the world. If we do not start taking action ourselves and do it in our best interests in an economically and environmentally effective way, the rest of the world will eventually start forcing action upon us.

By that stage we will have spent 10 or 20 years going in the wrong direction and we will face far more damaging adaption than we would if we recognised the science and started building into our decisions at a State and Federal level the reality of climate change, the need to curtail the damage that we are doing to the climate and the need to adapt to some of the climate change that we know is already pre-programmed. The best evidence to governments comes from organisations such as the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre. I wish to read an excerpt from a paper published only recently.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Time for debate has been exceeded. The mover of the motion must reply.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I seek leave to move an amendment.

Leave granted.

I move:

That the question be amended by inserting at the end:

- (5) That this House notes the recommendations in the Productivity Commission's report "Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation" and the Federal Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications report on "Recent Trends in and Preparedness for Extreme Weather."
- (6) That the New South Wales Government table a report before 1 March 2014 on the measures and actions taken to ensure continuity in service delivery of community, family, ageing and disability services to vulnerable people during extreme weather events.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ [10.39 a.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate. This is one of the most important issues facing future generations not only in Australia but also in the world. It is important that people in the community know the views of members of this Chamber about climate change and the science behind climate change. Several members raised the issue of China. An article in the radical magazine the *Economist*—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: The *Economist* backed Rudd.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: That article states:

If China were simply following the path of rich countries from poverty through pollution to fresh air, there would be little to worry about ... But the parallels fall apart, for two reasons. One is time. When Britain's industrial engine was gaining speed, levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere were the same as they had been for a millennia. Now they are half as high again, and not far off 450 parts per million—

It is surprising that the *Economist* can accept science but members in this Chamber cannot. The article continues:

... China will spend \$275 billion over the next five years improving air quality—roughly the same as the GDP of Hong Kong, and twice the size of the annual defence budget. Even by Chinese standards it is a massive sum ...

The place is vulnerable to climate change: in absolute terms, more people live at sea level in China, and so are threatened by rising oceans, than in any other country. The leadership therefore knows it needs to come up with a more effective means of changing behaviour. The obvious way is through a carbon tax, which would be more transparent and less subject to negotiation than targets. The government has promised to introduce one, and should get on with it.

The radical *Economist*, business people—indeed everyone—are arguing that carbon emission prices and a carbon tax are the way to go. Tony Abbott argued on Sky TV that if we want to do something about carbon emissions the simplest way is with a carbon tax. It is interesting that no members opposite addressed the issues raised by Malcolm Turnbull that an emissions trading scheme is a true market mechanism and that any Liberal would support that. Any true Liberal would support a market mechanism scheme. I now turn to several issues raised by members. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile commented that I had cited a number of matters related to climate change in my speech on carbon emissions reduction without giving references to where the data came from. He said that I should have read the report issued by the Bureau of Meteorology entitled "Special Climate Statement 43—extreme heat in January 2013." I did read that special climate report. Indeed, I have read all the special climate reports.

According to the Bureau of Meteorology, the heat during the 2012 summer occurred during a neutral period with the El Niño southern oscillation. Essentially, that means that the record was consistent with warming trends and achieved without any extra push from natural variabilities associated with El Niño. If Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile had read "Special Climate Report 45—a prolonged autumn heatwave for south-eastern Australia" he would know that the frequency of extreme high temperatures and lack of extreme low temperatures in Australia in recent months is consistent with long-term trends towards more extreme high temperatures and fewer low temperatures, which in turn is consistent with an overall warming in Australia's mean temperature of about 0.9 degrees Celsius since 1910. If he had read the seasonal outlook of the Australian Bureau of Meteorology for 2013 he would know that the spring indicates that both maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be above average over much of Australia.

The outlook for warmer than average temperatures over the remainder of the year is consistent with the bureau's knowledge of background temperature trends and the well above average water temperatures that currently surround Australia. Australian temperatures are now on average more than 1 degree Celsius warmer than during the 1950s. That information is not from a radical organisation or an environmental movement; it is from Bureau of Meteorology data, which has been peer reviewed by 95 per cent of scientists. However, members opposite refuse to acknowledge any peer-reviewed science data that is put before them, whether it is from the Bureau of Meteorology or the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [CSIRO], or whether it is based on consensus across scientists throughout the world, which is ridiculous.

I could go through a whole range of data. The Hon. Rick Colless claimed that climate change is about our movement towards the sun and getting closer to the fire. He does not look at the different levels of the atmosphere. He does not think that if that were the case we would have a warming trend on every level of the atmosphere. But, no, the Hon. Rick Colless cannot accept any scientific data that does not fit with his ideology. I thank members for their contributions to this debate. I look forward to hearing more from them on climate change in the future.

Question—That the amendment of Mr David Shoebridge be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 17

Mr Buckingham	Mr Moselmane	Mr Veitch
Ms Cotsis	Mr Primrose	Ms Westwood
Mr Donnelly	Mr Searle	Mr Whan
Dr Faruqi	Mr Secord	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Foley	Ms Sharpe	Ms Voltz
Dr Kaye	Mr Shoebridge	Mr Wong

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Leave is withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Leave has been withdrawn.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Can leave be withdrawn?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Leave can be withdrawn, but I will seek confirmation from the Clerk.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Leave has been granted.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The advice I have been given is that leave has been given for notice of the motion to be given. Notice of the motion has been given, but leave can be withdrawn to prevent the member from reading the entire motion. That is my ruling at this stage.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Dr JOHN KAYE: I seek leave of the House to give notice of a motion relating to an order for papers regarding Sydney Water.

Leave not granted.

RELAY FOR LIFE

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [10.59 a.m.]: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) in 2013, about 124,910 Australians are expected to be diagnosed with cancer, and an estimated 149,990 are expected to be diagnosed in 2020;
 - (b) Relay for Life is an overnight, community event where teams of 10 to 15 participate in a relay-style walk or run to raise funds for the Cancer Council;
 - (c) Relay for Life began in Australia in 1999, when the Victorian community of Murrumbeena raised more than \$75,000 for the Cancer Council, and Relay for Life is now in every state and raises more than \$18 million across the country each year for the cancer fight; and
 - (d) in New South Wales, around 40,000 people each year take part in Relay for Life.
- (2) That this House:
 - (a) congratulates the many groups who have successfully raised funds for the Cancer Council by organising Relay for Life; and
 - (b) acknowledges the many individuals who have selflessly sacrificed their time and put their effort into training and fundraising for Relay for Life.

On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party I speak on Relay for Life, which had its beginnings in the United States of America way back in 1985—just a couple of years after I was born.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: You are misleading the House. You should withdraw that.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I will withdraw that. I was born in 1966. Back then colorectal surgeon Dr Gordy Klatt wanted to boost the income of his local American Cancer Society office to support all of his cancer patients. He spent a gruelling 24 hours circling a track in Tacoma, Washington, and raised more than \$27,000 to fight cancer. One person can truly make a difference. Since then Relay for Life has become one of the largest fundraising events in the world for cancer. The event is held in more than 600 communities across 21 countries. It empowers and unites local communities in the battle against cancer.

This ongoing event celebrates the lives of those who have survived, remembers loved ones lost and seeks to fight back against this devastating disease. In developing countries where 70 per cent of cancers are detected in the late stages and the stigma against cancer remains strong, Relay for Life has proven especially

effective in educating the public about preventing and surviving the disease. Through International Relay for Life, survivors are given the spotlight to show that there is life after diagnosis; they inspire other community members touched by cancer.

Relay for Life began in Australia in 1999 when the Victorian community of Murrumbena raised more than \$75,000 for the Cancer Council. Relay for Life is now run in every State and Territory and raises more than \$18 million each year. Each relay is volunteer driven, with Cancer Council staff coaching volunteers. Committee members, led by a committee chair, are assigned responsibilities to recruit their new teams, find sponsors and survivors, and help teams learn more about Relay for Life and Cancer Council NSW. Other committee members focus on event production such as activities, logistics, planning ceremonies, advertising the event and much more.

In New South Wales alone, each year more than 49,000 people take part in this unique overnight community event. Some people take part in memory of a loved one who has passed away from cancer—I have joined with many people who have done that. Some people do it to show their pride in having survived cancer. Some take part to show that they are strong enough to beat cancer while others just want to be involved and make a difference. As I stated earlier, Relay for Life raises more than \$18 million each year throughout Australia and in 2010 the event raised more than \$6 million in New South Wales alone. This makes it one of the largest income sources for Cancer Council NSW and covers a large proportion of its research, as well as prevention and support programs.

My community of the Shoalhaven held a Relay for Life in April this year and raised a staggering \$312,847.97 for the Cancer Council. I commend all the volunteers and participants for that magnificent effort. Over the past 10 years an amazing 13,509 participants in the Shoalhaven have raised a whopping \$1,880,534 and I congratulate all those involved. As a former mayor, I was invited to participate in the Relay for Life on numerous occasions and on some occasions I was asked to make a speech to try to inspire people to continue the fight to defeat their cancer. On other occasions I had the opportunity to walk around the track. When my dad was diagnosed with bowel cancer we were, amazingly, running the Shoalhaven linear accelerator fundraising appeal, for which four groups raised about \$750,000. By the time I stood down as mayor of Shoalhaven city the fundraising team had increased that amount to about \$1.7 million. I was blessed to be a part of that team.

I remember walking around the track, thinking about the procedures my dad had undergone to remove the cancer. He came from the bush and he was a man of considerable stature. I was extremely proud of the way he coped with his colostomy bag. In my profession as a nurse I observed that most people did not always adapt well to the physical changes brought about by cancer. The first time I visited dad at home following his operation I remember being so proud of the way he was managing his hygiene and health. It was not easy for him to embrace this change, but he managed the transition extremely well. His cancer has gone and he is still very much alive. He is dealing daily with the changes that this ugly disease has inflicted upon his body. I remember walking around the Relay for Life track in kindred spirit with my community vouching for people who, like my dad, had survived battles similar to his; unfortunately many do not.

Relay for Life is probably the greatest community event I have been involved in. There are not too many community events where the atmosphere is one of kindred spirits, and feelings of hope and healing and championing the cause of others who may be dealing with cancer. In tents surrounding the showground people cheered or encouraged participants. Some tents were set up to fundraise for schools or the local Rotary club, but everyone was supportive. I was interested to note that there was no smoking or alcohol at the Relay for Life. It was probably one of the most clean air events I have attended—people were not subjected to cigarette smoke or alcohol.

People are able to enjoy a place of hope, healing and physical activity, where there is fun and laughter. One can see people being pushed in wheelbarrows around the track and others participating in their wheelchairs, making their way along the dusty, dirty, pot-holed track. Other people are in onesies; people have their faces painted, or their hair sprayed—all sorts of characters get out onto those tracks in that community. It is a wonderful event. I do not think that Relay for Life ever would have imagined what a successful event this would become, never mind that the fruit of that event being the raising of millions and millions of dollars for cancer research.

The slogan for Relay for Life is "Celebrate. Remember. Fight Back." This is incorporated into the event by the various activities that take place. Walking around the track thinking about dad and my role regarding the

linear accelerator, it dawned on me exactly what we are trying to do in the Shoalhaven, where some people have to travel by bus to Wollongong for radiation therapy and chemotherapy, and take a bus back. If the bus has an empty seat, people on the bus wonder about that empty seat. Had the person recovered, or had that person not made it? That is not a very pleasant thought. My dad would travel from Wingham to Port Macquarie for his treatment. There was a Rotary lodge on sight at Port Macquarie where he was able to stay while he had radiotherapy day in and day out for that week, before going home on the bus for the weekend. He was able to get meals from the hospital.

When I think about that, I think about the situation at the Shoalhaven. That is exactly why we were fundraising for the Shoalhaven linear accelerator: so that people like my dad can stay in their local area, get their treatment and not have to travel probably 150 miles to another facility, get their treatment in a foreign area and try to deal with all the challenges that radiation therapy inflicts on one's body. Walking around the track was something else—it was a surreal experience. One thing that Kevin Rudd did was allocate \$25 million to that cancer care centre; the former Government committed \$10 million. I am happy to say that that cancer care centre is now operational in the Shoalhaven and soon will be formally opened. I hope it will have a budget that will allow it to run at full capacity. Walking round the track thinking about my dad and thinking what part I could play locally was an amazing experience that came from taking part in Relay for Life.

There are many stories. By night you could see the brown paper bags with candles in them, with messages written to loved ones—messages of encouragement, messages of loss and messages of hope. It was an amazing experience to walk around the track at that time of night, seeing candles burning, seeing people in tears, seeing people comforting each other, and seeing others who were just glad that they had beaten cancer. Some people had broken down, still grieving at the loss to cancer of their loved ones. But this was a chance for all of us to come together as a community. It continues to be a chance for all communities that hold the Relay for Life to come together, embrace and encourage each other either to beat cancer, or to help those who are grieving because their loved ones lost their battle with cancer.

The three themes of those days are very prominent. The first was "Celebrate". This celebrates the lives of those who have battled cancer. The first lap honours cancer survivors and carers who take to the track proudly wearing coloured sashes. All participants gather around the track to applaud the courage and strength shown by those completing the lap. With motivation levels high, all are eager to hit the track as Relay for Life begins with all the participants walking the second lap together. Following the second lap, a special reception is held for survivors, carers and special guests. All cancer survivors and carers are welcome to take part in the walk whether they are part of a team or not. Survivors are those who are now cancer free or those who are currently undergoing treatment. Carers include those walking with the person they cared for and those walking in honour of a loved one lost.

The second theme was "Remember"—a time to remember, a time for hope. As dusk settles, candle tributes are placed along the inside of the track for the start of the candlelight ceremony. For a small donation, participants can light a candle to honour and support someone living with cancer or in memory of a loved one lost. Bags inscribed with messages of love, remembrance and hope give a warm glow to inspire relay participants as they walk through the night. The third theme is "Fight back." After the relay concludes and teams have celebrated completing the overnight challenge successfully, they take part in the special closing ceremony that celebrates the achievements of the relay, and provides everyone with an opportunity to keep on fighting. During this ceremony participants make a pledge to continue the fight against cancer in their own special way. It may be as simple as having a mammogram, recommending that family members get a health check, committing to losing weight, or telling a neighbour to call the Cancer Council Helpline to get more information on their cancer diagnosis. This is a way to help fight back. Such simple steps can and do save lives.

Cancer affects the whole community. An estimated 124,910 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in Australia this year, with that number set to rise to 150,000 by 2020. One in two Australian men and one in three Australian women will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85. Cancer is a leading cause of death in Australia: more than 43,700 people are estimated to have died from cancer in 2011. Cancer accounted for about three in 10 deaths in Australia. Nearly 15,000 more people die each year from cancer than they did 30 years ago. This is due mainly to population growth and ageing. However, the death rate—number of deaths per 100,000 people—has fallen by 16 per cent. More than 60 per cent of people diagnosed with cancer in Australia will survive more than five years after diagnosis. That is great testimony to the sorts of outcomes resulting from research. The survival rate for many common cancers has increased by 30 per cent in the past two decades.

The most common cancers in Australia are prostate, colorectal, breast, melanoma and lung cancer. These five cancers account for more than 60 per cent of all cancers diagnosed in Australia. More than 434,000 people are treated for one or more non-melanoma skin cancers each year, with 543 people dying in 2011. The Slip, Slop, Slap message is part of ensuring we cover up and do not aggravate those sorts of skin cancers. Every day in Australia, around 300 people are told they have a life-threatening cancer. Each day in Australia, more than 100 people will die of the disease. Cancer costs more than \$3.8 billion in direct health system costs, or 7.2 per cent of the Health budget; and \$378 million was spent on cancer research in 2000-01, making up 22 per cent of all health research expenditure in Australia. That is a large sum of money.

There are many initiatives that endeavour to raise awareness of cancer and funds for cancer research. They are all to be commended, in particular the volunteers who give of themselves freely for this important cause. I note in particular that Daffodil Day took place last week. This is another great initiative, with more than 10,000 volunteers expected to staff more than 1,200 Daffodil Day sites across Australia. Daffodil Day raises funds for the Cancer Council—rather like Relay for Life—to continue its work in cancer research, providing patient support programs and prevention programs to all Australians. The daffodil is the international symbol of hope for all touched by cancer.

Daffodil Day helps grow hope for better treatments, hope for more survivors, and hope for a cure. This year, the aim of Daffodil Day was to raise more than \$8.25 million to fund the cancer control initiatives, patient support and research services of the Cancer Council's eight State and Territory member organisations. We look forward to hearing the outcome of all the wonderful fundraising efforts. Last week the Speaker, the Hon. Shelley Hancock, hosted a barbecue to raise funds for Daffodil Day. That was a great event. I congratulate all who took part in Relay for Life all round New South Wales and the whole of Australia.

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.20 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Hon. Paul Green and I commend him for bringing this issue to the attention of the House. This motion calls on the House to note the fundraising work done by many to ensure the success of Relay for Life community fundraising events. These events unite many communities across Australia for a great cause; that is, raising awareness of the fact that cancer is curable and that it is no longer a death sentence. In the past people would freeze when they heard someone mention the word "cancer". However, that response is not as prevalent now because the survival rate from all types of cancer has improved dramatically.

I am very proud to have been associated with women's health issues—particularly gynaecological cancers, screening, prevention and promotion of the cervical cancer vaccine—before I entered this place. I pay tribute to former Prime Minister John Howard and former Minister for Health, now Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, for deciding to provide Medicare funding for the cervical cancer vaccine. Australia was the first country in the world to provide that funding and many other countries have now followed. That has resulted in a solid reduction in the incidence of cervical cancer.

Prior to making a contribution to this debate I spoke to the Hon. David Clarke about an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* today reporting exciting news about stem cell research. It is wonderful that many researchers around the world are now able to change the genetic programming of adult cells. A Spanish research team has achieved that with mice and a Japanese research team has done the same with adult skin cells. That outstanding Japanese team programmed an adult skin cell back into a pluripotent embryonic state 18 months ago. From a commercial point of view, that will make it much more cost effective for researchers around the world to undertake their work and will encourage the pharmaceutical industry to pour money into more cost-effective research. Given that these techniques are coming to the fore the rate of cancer survival will be even better, and hopefully cancer will be prevented as we develop cancer vaccines.

I also pay homage to Queenslander Professor Ian Frazer for his ground-breaking research. Many other teams around the world are expending a great deal of time, effort and money developing vaccines against other cancers. This work is happening because of the efforts of bodies like the Australian Cancer Council, Cancer Council NSW and communities that do whatever they can to raise funds and to increase awareness. Relay for Life is a relay-style community event during which teams walk or run overnight to raise funds to assist the good work done by the Australian Cancer Council and Cancer Council NSW. The first Relay for Life in Australia was held in 1999 in the Victorian town of Murrumbidgee following the success of similar fundraising events held in the United States since 1985. Despite this being the first time the event had been held in Australia, the campaign raised an outstanding \$75,000 for the Australian Cancer Council. Since 1999, Relay for Life events have been an important feature of the yearly calendar of communities across the country and have raised approximately \$18 million annually.

The Sutherland Shire Relay for Life is the largest event in New South Wales and raises more money than any other Relay for Life event in New South Wales. It is an exciting day with everyone gathering at Sylvania Waters Athletics Track. I have not walked for 24 hours, but I did my fair share of the laps this year and have done in previous years. It is a wonderful family and community event that also involves entertainment, sausage sizzles and many stalls. I pay homage to Mr Rod Coy, who has been the coordinator of the event since its inception 12 years ago. He and his team of more than 50 volunteers do an outstanding job. They have it down to a fine art: They use Facebook and Twitter to ensure that it is an inclusive event and that everyone gets behind them.

Of course, events like Relay for Life cannot succeed without the support of sponsors. I pay homage to the Sutherland District Trade Union Club for its long-term sponsorship. I also pay tribute to more recent sponsors such as the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation at Bardon Ridge. I acknowledge the sponsors who support Relay for Life events across the country because without them they could not be held. Rod Coy is very motivating. I still have a copy of the message that he sent out this year to rev up his volunteers. He informed them about how much they had raised and told them that they were about to achieve their \$4-million target. Of course, all of that money has been donated to Cancer Council NSW. He said that he and his team were taking an amazing journey together during the non-stop 24-hour event during which teams, family groups and individuals get caught up in the feeling and do a few laps.

The aim is to have a team member on the track at all times during those 24 hours. Many of the teams achieve that goal, although I am not sure mine did. However, we are proud of what we did achieve. The more than 6,000 people who participated in the event in May this year raised in excess of \$600,000, which was donated to Cancer Council NSW. Of course, that means we have passed the \$4-million target. Results like that ensure that everyone is motivated to be involved year after year. Seven-year-old Sam, who completed 106 laps, is now a Shire hero and says that he will do even more laps next year. In 2010, New South Wales alone raised \$6 million for the Cancer Council through this campaign.

The Relay for Life campaign also assists in raising funds for the Cancer Council by selling merchandise online, at events and in the lead-up to events at local community venues. Indeed, on event days massive funds are generated. I love seeing people walking around—not only in the shire but in all communities—wearing Relay for Life polo shirts. They are good-quality shirts; I have a collection of them. To save money we are encouraging people to recycle them—we do not need a new one each year. But it is terrific to see people proudly wearing those shirts during the year.

Relay for Life aims to raise funds vital for cancer research but the festivities also hold a solemn and reflective overtone in tribute to those who have either died from cancer or are currently battling its various strains. The Relay for Life motto: "Celebrate. Remember. Fight Back." echoes the reflective nature of the event. Participants are encouraged to celebrate the lives of those who have cancer or who are currently battling it, to remember those who have died from cancer, and to fight back. It celebrates also the achievements of the event participants and those it aids. The event provides a positive outlet for individuals to reflect on and raise money for a tragic disease that affects approximately one in every two Australians each year. That is a pretty solemn statistic, but survival rates are continually improving.

Through these community events the Cancer Council aims to spread a message of hope—hope for those suffering and hope that one day, with the help of selfless volunteers and dedicated medical professionals, we will live in a world without cancer. Relay for Life is a tremendous charity that not only seeks to raise funds to one day see a cure for cancer, but also allows families and friends to grieve their losses. It allows survivors to celebrate their great strength and achievement and to share their great stories of survival with others who may have just been diagnosed or who have had family members diagnosed with cancer. People may be very nervous or anxious about the treatment that is to follow.

Some may not have a great support base; it is amazing how people group together. People who may have had trouble finding transportation to hospital for treatment are amazed by the number of volunteers who will say, "We can help you with that," or "We know someone who can help you with that." So much neighbourly, Christian help is given to help lift the load for people. Relay for Life is a wonderful bonding weekend but a lot of the atmosphere continues throughout the year. The message spreads by word of mouth. People love volunteering and getting involved in community transport services. I commend all who volunteer so selflessly. It is truly encouraging to see people helping others.

This event plays a crucial role in raising awareness about the impacts of cancer on the lives of many throughout every community across this country. It allows communities to band together as a united front

against this tragic and deadly disease. Today we reflect on the great successes that the Cancer Council has had in many fields of its operation. We reflect also on the success of the Relay for Life campaign in fundraising and in the great message of hope that it gives to all Australians. This fundraising recognises all those researchers and healthcare workers who help victims to survive and thrive.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ [11.35 a.m.]: I support the motion and congratulate the Hon. Paul Green on moving it. I also congratulate the volunteers in our community who put so much effort into fundraising for Cancer Council NSW's Relay for Life. As the Hon. Paul Green pointed out, Relay for Life had its origins in early 1985 when a United States surgeon, Dr Gordy Klatt, attempted to raise money for his local American Cancer Society to support his patients who were suffering from cancer. He spent a punishing 24 hours circling a track in Washington and raised over \$27,000. Since then the event has spread across the United States of America and the globe; it is held in more than 600 communities spanning 20 countries. Relay for Life is held in all Australian States and Territories and raises over \$18 million each year. In fact, in 2010 more than \$6 million was raised in New South Wales alone.

In 2011 cancer killed almost 44,000 people in Australia. Each year around 40,000 people take part in Relay for Life in New South Wales. Teams of up to 15 people keep a baton moving in a relay-style walk or run for 18 hours straight. In that time they celebrate cancer survivors and remember loved ones lost to cancer. But the event is not just about the experience of spending the weekend with people from a local community, it is also about fun ways in which teams can raise money in the lead-up to the event. Relays are interactive occasions that bring people together—the essence of togetherness. Cancer Council NSW does not receive government funding and Relay for Life is one of its largest income sources for funding its research, prevention and support programs. This event is a unique opportunity for the community to come together in a show of strength, camaraderie and good will to raise funds and create hope.

Cancer Council NSW funds more cancer research than any other charity in this State. Bringing promising research out of the lab and into treatment centres is an important priority. Raising money for quality research and researchers will produce breakthroughs to ensure ongoing improvements in preventing, diagnosing and treating cancer. Cancer is a leading cause of death in Australia; it accounts for about three in 10 deaths. One in two Australian men and one in three Australian women will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85 and more than 60 per cent of people diagnosed with cancer in Australia will survive more than five years after diagnosis. According to Cancer Council NSW, cancer costs more than \$3.8 billion in direct health system costs. In 2000-01 some \$378 million was spent on cancer research, which accounted for 22 per cent of all health research expenditure in Australia.

Anyone can participate in Relay for Life. You do not have to be over 18 to get involved and you do not have to be fit. It is all about getting involved, regardless of your motivation, and being part of something great. Volunteers help to deliver services and opportunities that otherwise might not have been provided. As the Hon. Paul Green said, some people do it in memory of a loved one who has passed away from cancer; some do it to show how proud they are to have survived cancer; some do it to show they are strong enough to beat cancer; and some just want to make a difference. Most of us probably have experienced a loved one who has passed away from cancer. It is often the case that when a loved one is suffering from this insidious disease, you feel devastated and hopeless.

Relay for Life is a proactive thing to do, and the people who participate are doing something to help find a cure. It is a positive way to combat that feeling of helplessness. When my brother's wife was diagnosed with breast cancer he started behaving erratically. He had thought he could fix everything, but this was one thing he could not fix. His behaviour was erratic because of his distress. Programs like Relay for Life give people a positive way to get through the stress of people being diagnosed with cancer. Research also indicates that volunteering enhances social cohesion, strengthens communities and provides benefits to the volunteers themselves. It is ultimately about helping others and having an impact on people's wellbeing. In conclusion, I share with members what a positive experience participating can be. For example, the team captain of the North Shore Relay for Life in 2011, 2012 and 2013 said:

A good friend of mine from high school passed away from pancreatic cancer a few years ago only a few months after she had gotten married. I wanted to do something to remember what a wonderful person she was and when the opportunity came up to captain a Relay Team, I jumped at it! It's a great way to meet new people, raise money for a fantastic charity, and hear plenty of inspiring stories. I've captained a team two years in a row now, and will be joining the committee for the 2012 North Shore Relay.

And a tribute in the *Hawkesbury Gazette* stated:

Editorial and advertising staff from the Hawkesbury Gazette participated in the Relay because at the paper we'd been heavily involved in promoting it and knew exactly what it was about. We had an absolute blast participating – the cold watches of the late night shift and the wee early hours were some of the most fun as the camaraderie of the teams all working to the same goal was just fantastic. We'll be there with bells on for the next one.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.40 a.m.]: I join my colleagues in recognising and celebrating Relay for Life and thank the Hon. Paul Green for moving this motion. I take this opportunity to congratulate and highlight the work of Cancer Council NSW. This outstanding organisation does very important work, particularly in rural and regional New South Wales and fundraising is critical as 96 per cent of its income comes directly from the community and investments. Cancer Council NSW continues to be the largest funder of cancer research in the not-for-profit sector in our State.

In 2011-12, Cancer Council NSW funded \$15 million in research through internal and external research programs. It collaborates with scientists and leading researchers throughout the world and is achieving outstanding results. One of its key projects is brain cancer. Brain cancer is extremely hard to treat. It is the leading cause of cancer death in people below the age of 39 and accounts for more than 30 per cent of cancer deaths in children under the age of 10. There have been no significant improvements in long-term survival rates for glioblastoma—the most common and difficult-to-treat form of brain cancer—in more than two decades. This year, Cancer Council NSW has increased its commitment to research targeting brain cancer to \$4.1 million.

Melanoma is the fourth most common cancer in Australia. There are essentially no effective treatments for the advanced stages of melanoma. Each year in this sunburnt country more than 11,000 new cases of melanoma are diagnosed and more than 1,380 people die from it. In June 2012, Cancer Council NSW contributed \$500,000 to the \$5.5 million Australian Melanoma Genome Project—a national research program that aims to identify the common genetic mutations that lead to melanoma and to develop new treatments that will target the genetic characteristics of individual melanomas. This ground-breaking research is relevant for a variety of cancers.

Cancer is the second most common cause of death for Aboriginal people, who have a 60 per cent higher rate of cancer mortality than non-Aboriginal people. For some cancers, such as cervical, oesophageal and kidney cancers in females, the mortality rate is three times higher for Aboriginal people. The Cancer Council's Aboriginal Patterns of Cancer Care project [APOCC] is investigating the cancer journey for New South Wales Aboriginal people in order to reduce the impact of a cancer diagnosis. The council is investigating whether the increased mortality from cancer for Aboriginal people is due to lower treatment rates or later diagnosis compared with non-Aboriginal people, or both. In particular, it is keen to better understand the barriers that may contribute to Aboriginal people not receiving the best possible cancer care.

I recently attended a presentation by the Professor of Oncology at James Cook University, Queensland. The use of telehealth in remote areas of Queensland is stunning. An oncologist team at Townsville can look after patients in rural and remote areas via telehealth, particularly Aboriginal people, four, five, six or seven hours away. This is an outstanding breakthrough for people in rural and remote Queensland. The professor who gave the presentation said that he turned on his computer one day and found that he was able to talk to someone in another part of the State. It is an extraordinary development. Clinical trials are at a critical stage in the evaluation of the potential of new cancer diagnostics and treatments. Cancer Council NSW has played a pioneering role in supporting staff conducting multicentre trials in New South Wales, most recently through a five-year partnership with the Cancer Institute NSW. Their contribution constituted 18 per cent of the annual costs of the New South Wales clinical trials network.

Cancer Council NSW has led the InterSCOPE Study, an international collaboration with researchers across nine countries, which this year suggested that there may be an association between certain forms of human papillomavirus [HPV] and oesophageal cancer. Oesophageal cancer has a poor prognosis and is under-investigated in Australia. To remedy this, Cancer Council NSW funded the Progression of Barrett's Esophagus into Cancer Network [Probe-Net] consortium more than \$1.25 million through its Strategic Research Partnerships funding scheme. This has allowed Australia's four existing independent research groups with expertise in the area to combine their existing activities into a coordinated national endeavour to investigate the link between Barrett's esophagus and oesophageal cancer.

We know that lifestyle factors, including smoking and alcohol consumption, are the main causes of this form of cancer. We also know that in some animals, papillomaviruses cause oesophageal cancer. But in humans the association has been unclear. Investigations will continue to discover more about the role of human papillomavirus in human cancer and the potential impact of the human papillomavirus vaccine in preventing not only cervical cancer but also other human papillomavirus-related cancers.

The phenomenon of Relay for Life continues to get stronger because people know that the money raised is going towards incredibly important research. Cancer Council NSW's gross revenue for 2011-12 was

\$71.5 million or \$47 million net, with the Relay For Life event increasing its income significantly: a growth in gross income of 19 per cent to \$7.7 million—which is a massive increase of 36 per cent from 2010-11. This remarkable result was driven by 763 relay committee members, who generously volunteered their time to create 58 successful events involving 48,000 participants, 3,969 teams and 2,225 cancer survivors.

Members in both Houses regularly support Relay for Life within their electorates, and have done so for a number of years. This year Team Williams, led by Leslie Williams, the member for Port Macquarie, joined 90 teams and 1,003 people who have taken part in this event annually for a number of years. The Hastings Relay for Life event raised \$125,415 for the Cancer Council in a team effort with great support from Tracy Ayrton and Terry Sara from Leslie Williams' office. John Barilaro once again led a team in the Queanbeyan Relay for Life, joining some 35 teams—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: I was there.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps also joined in the event in Queanbeyan. He joined some 35 teams and almost 400 people who participated in this year's Queanbeyan relay. How much did Queanbeyan raise?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Heaps.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: The team raised \$102,667 for cancer research. The eleventh Orange and district Relay for Life was held on 9 March. The local member, Andrew Gee, slept out overnight in support. The target was to raise \$150,000 towards cancer research and support, which was achieved, with the result of \$169,154. Andrew mentioned that one highlight of the event was the candlelight ceremony of hope featuring the lone piper. Another Nationals member who is actively involved in supporting this amazing event is Chris Gulaptis. He supported this event in Casino in his electorate of Clarence, where more than 520 participants and 45 teams took part on the day and raised \$50,577. Shelley Hancock knows how to raise money. She continues to champion this cause in the Shoalhaven in her electorate of South Coast, with both Nowra and Ulladulla. Those communities raise impressive amounts each year. In 2013 the Shoalhaven-Nowra Relay for Life raised \$314,969.

The Hon. Paul Green: Woo hoo.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I note that interjection. Ulladulla Relay for Life raised \$116,706. Gabrielle Upton also joined her team in May, and Mark Speakman in Cronulla commended the Sutherland shire Relay for Life, which involved more than 6,000 attendees and raised \$550,000 in the shire. A record 2,127 people and 217 teams took part—

The Hon. Marie Ficarra: It was actually updated to \$700,000.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I stand corrected by another shire resident, the Hon. Marie Ficarra, who said that the amount was \$700,000, which is \$150,000 more than the update I had. That is great news. The member for Smithfield, Andrew Rohan, did an amazing job. He walked around Western Sydney and raised \$30,000, of which he should be proud. David Elliott and Ray Williams were involved in the Hills Relay for Life, as was Bart Bassett. They made a wonderful contribution. Every year in New South Wales 36,000 people are told that they have cancer. That is about 100 people every day. I congratulate the Hon. Paul Green on moving this motion and providing us with an opportunity to thank the 36,000 volunteers who contribute \$8.8 million in pro bono work and the 160,000 supporters, and to acknowledge the more than \$2 million in pro bono legal and financial assistance provided.

Ultimately, without the ongoing money raised through the Relay for Life event, the Cancer Council would not be able to continue with its innovative and world-class research, which benefits all. That is why events such as the Relay for Life are so important in our community. I mention an important issue in terms of cancer charities across New South Wales. The Cancer Council is our leading cancer charity. About 75 charities in New South Wales raise money for cancer. I urge those cancer charities to perhaps start conversations with each other about sharing the administrative burden so that they can be more efficient, cooperative and proactive in ensuring that the moneys donated overwhelmingly by the community find their way most efficiently through to research and support for patients. I think that is why people donate money. I urge the cancer charities across New South Wales to come together, talk about some of the challenges they face and take a lead in ensuring that the administrative part of the process continues. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES [11.53 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Hon. Paul Green. I congratulate him on bringing this forward. It is extremely important to not only raise awareness of cancer but also acknowledge the valuable contribution that community groups make not only in New South Wales but across Australia. According to the Cancer Council, cancer is the leading cause of death in Australia. More than 43,700 people are estimated to have died of cancer in 2011. In Australia one in two people will be affected by cancer by the time they reach the age of 85. This year it is estimated that close to 125,000 new cases will be diagnosed in Australia, with 36,000 of those coming from New South Wales. The numbers are staggering. Like the Hon. Paul Green, before coming to this place I worked in health; I worked as a nurse and in the pharmaceutical sector.

When I started nursing training I remember working in palliative care for a period. It was probably one of the toughest units in which to work. At the time I was very young—19 or 20 years old. It also opened my eyes to not only the challenges that individuals diagnosed with cancer face but also the impact it has on the immediate family, particularly when it is a child. But it is difficult for family and friends when a loved one is diagnosed with cancer. I acknowledge the valuable work of the Cancer Council and other organisations that not only support the family but also provide funds for research. When I worked in the pharmaceutical industry I saw a lot of the work being done by pharmaceutical companies and scientists. Often we forget to acknowledge the work of scientists who undertake clinical trials and work towards identifying not only cures but also targeted technologies and medicines that ensure that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme costings do not get too high or blow out. Obviously that is one challenge facing the Federal Government in managing pharmaceutical products in this country.

Again, I acknowledge the work that scientists and industry beyond the charity organisations are doing. As I said, funds raised by charity events, such as the Relay for Life, ensure the continuation of cancer research, prevention, education and support programs. One great thing about Relay for Life is that anyone can become involved. We have heard that about 40,000 people participated in Relay for Life this year alone. One of the first Relay for Life events that I participated in was on the Central Coast back in 2006. I was with the then Federal member for Dobell, Ken Ticehurst, at the Mingara Recreation Club. I do not want to be too political but I acknowledge the hard work and contribution of Karen McNamara and her team. Hopefully, we will see the Dobell electorate returned to the Liberals.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: It already has. Emma has conceded.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Emma has conceded, so congratulations to Karen McNamara. From memory, close to 100 teams and thousands of local volunteers participated in the Relay for Life in 2006. One important thing I noticed at the time—and several speakers have spoken about this—was community involvement. Not only do family and friends come together but also local sporting groups, churches, schools, recreation clubs, local councils and local businesses participate in this important event. One example is the Hawkesbury Relay for Life. The member for Londonderry, Bart Bassett, has been involved with that Relay for Life since it started back in 2003, when it was founded by Bob McMullan. At the time it began at the Turnbull Oval; then it had to move to the Hawkesbury Showground several years ago, which is where it is currently held, because of the number of participants.

Another local participant is the local Royal Australian Air Force, which is located across the road from the showground. It volunteers one of its hot air balloons. All the participants on the day can have a free ride in a hot air balloon to thank them for raising funds for cancer. Another great local member is the member for Smithfield, Andrew Rohan. He became involved a number of years ago; indeed, he has been the patron of the Smithfield Relay for Life for the past three or four years. He said that from 2004 to 2008 more than 3,500 cases of cancer were detected in the local Fairfield area; sadly, it resulted in 1,500 deaths. This year Andrew participated in a 55-kilometre walkathon around his electorate. He chose to do it over four days because it gave him an opportunity to engage with local communities, schools and businesses to talk about and raise awareness of cancer. He visited 12 local schools and spoke to not only children but also parents.

Mr Rohan also visited several local shopping centres, including the Stockland centre at Wetherill Park, as well as a number of clubs such as Club Marconi and the King Tomislav Croatia Club. As has been mentioned, his target is to raise \$30,000 by 2 November, and as of yesterday close to \$24,000 has been raised. All those funds will go towards clinical trials and research into combating and preventing cancer. The annual Biggest Morning Tea is another fantastic fundraising event that occurs on 23 May. Last year close to \$12.3 million was raised. This year \$12.6 million has been raised but its target is \$13 million. I acknowledge the work of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Shelly Hancock, who organised the Biggest

Morning Tea in Parliament House. More than \$110 million has been raised since its inception and it is one of the biggest and most successful fundraising events. I thank the Hon. Paul Green for moving this motion which I support.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN (Parliamentary Secretary) [12.01 p.m.]: I congratulate the Hon. Paul Green on moving a motion relating to the Relay for Life. On average, one in two men and one in three women living to the age of 85 will be diagnosed with a form of cancer. The five most common cancers are prostate, bowel, breast, melanoma and lung cancer which account for 63 per cent of all new cancer cases in New South Wales. It is estimated that in 2016 there will be more than 45,000 new cases of cancer and in 2021 there will be 51,000 new cases. Cancers kill more than 13,500 people in New South Wales every year, but the survival rate is increasing. In the past 30 years the five-year survival rate for all cancers in New South Wales has increased from 48 per cent to 66 per cent. Established evidence supports population-based screening programs for bowel, breast and cervical cancers because they have been demonstrated to reduce mortality.

Between 1999 and 2008 in New South Wales the incidence rates of cervical cancer fell by 25.1 per cent and the mortality rates fell by 21.6 per cent. Between 1999 and 2008 breast cancer mortality rates in New South Wales declined by 11 per cent. People used to think of cancer as a single disease, but we now know that cancers are a multitude of complex diseases. Cancer treatment will become increasingly personalised, as the ability to genetically define each person's cancer becomes more accessible. The New South Wales Government focuses on all aspects of cancer control—prevention, early detection, treatment and care—and research that will translate rapidly into clinical practice and system-wide improvements.

The Cancer Council NSW is one of the leading cancer charities in New South Wales, focusing its expertise on the delivery of cancer research, prevention and support programs to the community. The Cancer Council NSW is a key partner for NSW Health in conducting research to inform policy and regulation, and providing community focused education services around cancer prevention issues, such as healthy lifestyles. The Cancer Council NSW is almost entirely community funded, through initiatives such as the Relay for Life. Relay for Life is a community-based event, aimed at bringing the whole community together to honour those whose lives have been affected by cancer. Each Relay for Life event is organised by a local volunteer organising committee on behalf of the Cancer Council NSW.

The Government's commitment to provide cancer treatment care will mean that people can be treated close to home. But for rare and more complex cancers the commitment to quality cancer treatment means providing people with access to high-quality services in specific centres where difficult and complex procedures are performed frequently. The Canrefer website, which was launched in February 2012, links general practitioners and their patients with multidisciplinary care teams in the location of their choice. Almost 210,000 unique visitors have visited the website to date. The Cancer Institute NSW website of treatment protocols, eviQ, is an internationally recognised resource that provides evidence-based cancer treatment information to help health professionals identify the best course of cancer treatment.

The Government recognises the importance of funding the infrastructure that is needed for world-quality research. The co-location of researchers and clinicians in translational research settings provides the environment for solving problems in clinical practice and developing basic science to support a range of applied researchers. It also facilitates more rapid uptake of new knowledge into practice. Seven translational cancer research centres and units, supported by the Government through the Cancer Institute NSW, were established in mid-2011 and are providing new platforms for the development of translational cancer research across New South Wales. In addition, investment in cancer research through the Cancer Institute NSW is attracting and retaining researchers in New South Wales; supporting a statewide cancer biobanking network; continuing to support cancer clinical trials through support for cooperative cancer clinical trials groups; and providing funding for nurses and data managers to recruit patients to clinical trials.

In the late 1980s when I left the Army I was recruited by the Australian Cancer Research Foundation—which was funded and established by Sir Peter Abeles and which planned to have 20 people from the Army run more than 10,000 kilometres right around Australia over a period of three months—to raise funds for cancer research, which was a very noble cause. I was given a campervan, a credit card and I headed off to organise about 185 fundraising committees in every town and city throughout Australia. I did not have a plan but I found it easy to go into each town and to advise the local mayor or shire president of what I was endeavouring to do. I established three things. First, every town or city has a small body of people who make that town or city tick. The relevant mayor or shire president only had to make about half a dozen phone calls and very soon the local bank manager, Rotary, Lions, Apex and other community leaders would be involved and would commit to putting together a fundraising committee to raise funds to present to the Army team on its arrival in their town.

As everybody has been affected in some way or another by cancer it made it easy for me because I did not have to convince communities of the need for research. The second thing I established well before I ever became involved in politics was that no matter the political persuasion of community leaders they all believed in building better communities. I never asked them about their political persuasion but sometimes it was easy to work out. One of the great strengths in Australia is that the Lord Mayor of Perth could be installed in Brisbane, for example, and our country would not miss a heartbeat because we are all very much the same. However, if that were done in the United States of America there would be a second Civil War and if it were done in Europe we would have World War III. Australians often take for granted that egalitarian commitment and our community strength.

The third thing I established was that one does not have to join politics to be political; a considerable degree of politics was evident in the national and State cancer research bodies. After I had been on the road for about a month and people knew that I was coming, the State bodies would approach councils and tell them not to support the Army team because they wanted the funds that were raised to go towards State rather than national research, which resulted in a political dog fight between State cancer councils and the national research body. When I went into communities seeking funds I also established that outback communities in particular had many problems of their own to fix.

I remember sitting in a place outside Mount Isa with a fellow who was the president of the local Lions club. He lived with a disabled child in a small house in a very small community. I spoke to him about cancer research and he said, "Look, I understand, but we have a few problems of our own here." I thought then that we should not take money raised from those small towns to go to a national organisation. We should commit to leave half the money raised in small towns to help them with their own problems. They would be more willing to give if they knew they would get an immediate benefit and a national benefit would flow. I hope the various cancer research organisations have solved the political problems because everybody wants support. Relay for Life is a wonderful opportunity to allow people to make a small commitment through this wonderful community event, which has the other wonderful community benefits of improving health and creating awareness. I commend the Hon. Paul Green for moving this motion.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR [12.10 p.m.]: I, too, support the motion and congratulate the Hon. Paul Green on moving it. It is important to acknowledge all our communities for their great work in supporting all members affected by cancer. As the Hon. Charlie Lynn has stated, there would not be any person who does not have a family member or know someone who has been affected by cancer. I note that the Relay for Life began in 1999 in Victoria. I have participated in a number of Relay for Life events and they are successful for a couple of reasons. First, it is an event in which everyone can compete or participate. People do not need to be very fit, to climb a mountain or run a marathon. They can choose to do as much or as little as they like, which means everyone can participate.

I last participated in the Relay for Life event in Bowral on the little athletics track where it was easy to walk around the track on flat, soft, even ground. Young children and older people took part in the event, so it was easy to participate and raise money. The event also encourages people to ask their families and friends to sponsor them, which aids in the raising of money. Second, people can walk in memory of those who either are suffering from cancer or have lost their battle with cancer. This makes Relay for Life a special fundraising activity. People feel they are making a positive contribution by raising money for and awareness of cancer research and prevention. They are also doing it in memory of someone.

At the last event I attended a series of candles were lit and people could write the names of their loved ones or friends. During the night a particular area was lit up with candles dedicated to people who had lost their battle with cancer. That is why Relay for Life is such a special event. I know that the money raised is put to very good use. Throughout New South Wales in particular, but also throughout Australia, dedicated health services are being set up for research into the prevention of cancer, to find the causes of cancer and to help ease the pain of sufferers. This motion is vital. Members could give examples of friends and loved ones who have suffered in different ways, which is why this motion is receiving support from all members of the House.

Relay for Life also encourages communities to talk about preventative measures such as bowel and breast screening tests and discussions about prostate cancer that to date have been taboo topics. Although some of these screening methods are not all that pleasant and may be a little uncomfortable, early detection of cancer is essential. Relay for Life is a multifaceted event in that it raises money for research and early prevention measures. It allows communities to do something in memory of people who have lost their battle with cancer

and it raises awareness about cancer prevention and living healthy lifestyles. There can be no better exercise than walking and talking with friends. A real community spirit is involved, with bands playing music throughout the evening, sausage sizzles and other activities that make the Relay for Life such a great success.

All members of Parliament regularly participate in Relay for Life events. I acknowledge a colleague in the other place John Barilaro, the member for Monaro, who at last year's event in his electorate held the record for walking the greatest distance. He walked for many hours and as a consequence suffered from severe blisters. When I spoke to him after his marathon effort he put things into perspective and said, "To suffer a few blisters is nothing compared to those in my electorate who are suffering from the effects of cancer, or those who have lost family members through cancer." I am happy to associate myself with this motion and I commend the Hon. Paul Green for moving it. It deserves the support of all members and for that reason I commend the motion to the House.

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

TABLING OF PAPERS

The Hon. David Clarke tabled the following paper:

- (1) Law Reform Commission Act 1967—Report No. 139 of the NSW Law Reform Commission entitled, "Sentencing", dated July 2013, together with a companion report No. 139-A entitled, "Sentencing—Patterns and Statistics".

Ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. David Clarke.

BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

Debate resumed from 27 June 2013.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS [12.20 p.m.]: I continue the speech that I commenced when the motion commemorating the Battle of the Coral Sea was before the House on 27 June this year. When I commenced my speech I mentioned that there were 19 or 20 Japanese attacks on Australian soil. I must correct that record as there were in fact 97 attacks on northern Australian towns and airfields during 1942 and 1943. I think there were some 64 attacks on Darwin alone, with other raids made on Townsville, Katherine, Wyndham, Derby, Broome on four occasions and Port Headland. Then of course there was the Japanese submarine attack on Sydney Harbour on 1 June 1942 in which the HMAS *Kuttabul* was sunk, killing 21 sailors; and a second attack by larger submarines about a week later which, fortunately, did not inflict much damage at all.

I again congratulate the Hon. Charlie Lynn on bringing forward this motion to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. The Battle of the Coral Sea, from 4 to 8 May 1942, brought home the threat of war to the men, women and children of Australia in a manner that they had previously never dealt with. The Coral Sea is located between the Solomon Islands and the north-east coast of Australia. Japan wanted to capture this area as it would have provided it with a free rein to operate in Australia's north and east. The capture of the Coral Sea would have placed Australia at the mercy of Japan's whims, allowing it to choose whether it was or was not going to invade Australia. This battle goes down in history as the first naval battle in which aircraft carriers engaged directly with each other. It is also the first battle where warships engaged each other without direct line of sight. In that regard, I guess it was a precursor of things to come in warfare technology.

Japan had captured Rabaul, the Admiralties, New Ireland and Bougainville in the upper Solomons. Japan had realised that in order to hold onto Rabaul it needed to capture Port Moresby. This concern was combined with the fact that in February 1942 the Japanese had performed raids on Darwin. The threat of Japan at that stage was very real to Australia. The Japanese called it "Operation MO", and they wanted better access to allied bases in Townsville and Cooktown, which were un-bombable from Rabaul and Lae. By capturing the Coral Sea, the Japanese were hoping to halt supply lines between Australia and the United States, thus cutting off one of Australia's greatest allies.

Intelligence units based in Australia had deciphered communications that indicated that Japan planned to capture Port Moresby, and this allowed them to pre-empt the planned attack and move warships into place. The Imperial Japanese Navy had intentions of landing and occupying New Guinea at Port Moresby, which at the time was Australian territory. The Japanese were attempting to strengthen their position in the South Pacific and

involved two fleet carriers and a light carrier to provide air cover for the invasion fleets. For the Japanese it was a major offensive and joint operation with the objective of capturing Port Moresby. For Australia and its allies it was a major defensive operation with the goal of preventing the Japanese from capturing Port Moresby. After the actions of Britain in Singapore, Australia had come to realise that Britain was not going to provide the assistance that we had previously taken for granted.

The Battle of the Coral Sea helped to cement the Australia-United States alliance. United States Task Force 17 was under the command of Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher of the USS *Yorktown* and Task Force 11 was under the command of Rear Admiral Aubrey B. Fitch, who was in charge of USS *Lexington*. Task Force 44 from Australia was led by Admiral J. G. Crace and comprised HMAS *Australia*, under the command of Captain H. B. Farncomb, and HMAS *Hobart*, led by Captain H. Howden. They were instrumental in contributing to convince the Japanese commander to turn his landing force around. Unfortunately, USS *Lexington* was lost in the battle. Australian servicemen contributed greatly to the early intelligence and detection of the Japanese forces as well as aerial reconnaissance flights from Australia, with flights flown by United States Army Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force aircraft.

Japan's attempt to capture Port Moresby was a failure. After its recent campaigns, particularly in Pearl Harbour, this battle was the morale booster that the Allied forces so badly needed. Contrary to Japan's hopes, Australia's supply lines were not cut off and it was not facing a direct threat to its shores. The hard work and strategy of our service men and women prevented the Japanese from achieving its goals. The threat of invasion to our homeland had been squelched. The Battle of the Coral Sea was Japan's first defeat after the Battle of Pearl Harbour, and Australia played a vital role in delivering this defeat. The Battle of the Coral Sea is an important battle for Australians to remember; it was a significant time in our history and the closest that we came to potential invasion.

It is also important to remember the men and women who lost their lives for Australia's cause during this battle. The actual number of lives lost remains somewhat unknown today. There are reports of how many were killed in attacks on Darwin, Broome and elsewhere, but the actual number has never really been verified. I again offer my congratulations to the Hon. Charlie Lynn for bringing on this motion. It is part of our history that all Australians need to be aware of, and they need to make themselves aware of the contribution that our service men and women made on our shores during World War II to ensure that we remain a free country and enjoy the freedoms that we have today. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary) [12.26 p.m.]: The Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 was pivotal to preventing the invasion of Australia by the forces of Imperial Japan during World War II. It was a major battle of the war in the Pacific, which pitted the expansionist and aggressive forces of Japan against the military forces of Australia and our ally, the United States of America. It is a battle which forever will hold a special place in our history and in the heart and soul of our nation. It is right and proper that this Parliament, on behalf of the citizens of our State, should continue to commemorate this event and the heroism and sacrifice of those Australians and Americans who participated.

Thus, I am honoured to join with other members of this Parliament in supporting this worthy motion proposed by the Hon. Charlie Lynn, himself a returned veteran who saw active service on our nation's behalf in the Vietnam War. The task that the Hon. Charlie Lynn has undertaken in his life, both inside and outside Parliament, to keep alive in the consciousness of our nation the debt that we owe the men and women of Australia's defence forces who have served our nation with valour in times of war is an important, necessary and noble one. I thank him for doing this and I know that he does so with commitment and dedication and with the fullness of his heart and soul.

I do not intend to recount the events of the Battle of the Coral Sea because this has already been admirably covered by other members who have spoken in this debate. I do however wish to reflect on two things that come to my mind when I recall the Battle of the Coral Sea as a defining event in the life of our nation. The first is the heroism and sacrifice of those Australians and Americans who participated in that great battle. One especially recalls those who did not return from that battle and also their families who carry a grief that will be with them for life. This becomes especially poignant when we read the personal inscriptions on wreaths that, for decades, surviving family members have laid at our war memorials.

I also reflect on the great friendship and alliance between our nation and the United States. We often hear the detractors of America heap shrill abuse upon that nation. However, the truth is that to a pivotal extent

the United States carries on its shoulders the protection and preservation of freedom and democracy in the world, and has done so for a long time and at great cost to itself economically, socially and emotionally. The greatness and goodness of the United States will forever withstand its miserable and pitiful detractors. The heart of America is a good heart and a heart of greatness. The values of Australia and America are the same—they always have been and will continue to be. Our two nations are forever joined in support of those good values and their vigilant defence. The anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea gives us yet another occasion to reflect on and to reaffirm that great truth.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN (Parliamentary Secretary) [12.31 p.m.], in reply: I congratulate the members who have contributed to this debate honouring the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, which occurred between 4 and 8 May 1942. Dr John Kaye took the opportunity to reflect on his father's war service, the contribution that he made to the peace and prosperity that we enjoy in Australia today, and on his own commitment to non-violence. He also paid tribute to the Australian Defence Force personnel carrying on that remarkable service in Afghanistan today. I also congratulate Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile on his contribution to the debate.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz spoke about her grandparents, who were children during the First World War, who reached adulthood during the Great Depression and who then went off to the Second World War. Our forefathers overcame the adversity caused by two world wars and the Great Depression to make Australia the great country it is today. The Hon. Amanda Fazio told the House about a near miss that might have resulted in her not being a member of this place. Her grandfather was on the crew of HMAS *Kuttabul* and had gone ashore only an hour before it was destroyed by a torpedo. If he had not left the ship when he did we would not have had the great privilege of the honourable member's presence in this Parliament. We are very lucky.

I commend the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps for his two-pronged contribution to this debate. First, he acknowledged the part that women played in our victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea. As he said, the outcome was tactically a draw, but it made a great strategic contribution to our eventual victory in the war against Japan. The honourable member spoke about the women whose decryption efforts provided intelligence to the Royal Australian Navy. Importantly, he also spoke about the triumph of the West. He said:

What did the Allies have? It is not true to say that they were any braver or any more skilled necessarily than the Japanese, but they had a free thought, a capacity for improvisation that far transcended anything the Japanese had. It is just as much a glory to the Western civilisation that produced those young men and women as it is to the machinery itself.

That was a great contribution. The honourable member also acknowledged the contribution of Rear Admiral John Crace—for whom the Canberra suburb of Crace is named. The Hon. Rick Colless provided details about the bombing of the north of Western Australia. The Hon. David Clarke referred to the friendship and alliance with the United States that we enjoyed then, which we still enjoy today and that hopefully we will continue to enjoy into the future because it ensures our security. The United States of America is the world policeman fighting for freedom and democracy. The sacrifice of our soldiers, sailors and airmen during the Battle of the Coral Sea and in later conflicts continues to reaffirm that alliance.

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

Motion agreed to.

[Deputy-President (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones) left the chair at 12.35 p.m. The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the public gallery a delegation from the Lao National Assembly, including three members of the National Assembly, senior officials from the Ministry of Finance, the State Audit Office and a representative from the Asian Development Bank. The delegation is engaging in a full program at Parliament House today and later on will be attending a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. We hope all delegation members will enjoy their visit to this Parliament and to Australia. Welcome, or should I say, "Sabadi".

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted at 2.30 p.m. for questions.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BUSHFIRE AND EMERGENCY ALERTS

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister advise the House on the methods used to advise deaf and hard-of-hearing people of the evacuation and community safety instructions during this week's bushfires?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I think that question is more appropriate for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. As I recall, that question was asked of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and he undertook to provide an answer to the House. I can indicate the following. The Commonwealth Government has a major role in addressing national issues in regard to access for people who have sensory disability. I am aware that on 28 June 2012 the Commonwealth Government amended the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 to require all broadcasters to transmit emergency warnings in the form of text and speech, and caption where practicable. Currently, there is no mandatory requirement for emergency services warnings to be provided in Auslan, the language of the Australian deaf community.

On 14 August 2012 the Commonwealth Government announced that a mobile text-based emergency service for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impediment has been established and is to be implemented by mid-2013. This initiative provides a vital service to people who are hearing impaired, and helps to ensure that they have access to critical information from emergency services. I can advise the House that people also access the NSW State Emergency Service website for warnings in relation to floods and fires. The Deaf Society of New South Wales also provides updates from the State Emergency Service on its Facebook account.

CRIME STATISTICS

The Hon. JENNIFER GARDINER: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. What is the latest information about crime rates in New South Wales?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I thank the member for that timely question. Today the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] released the quarterly crime statistics for June 2013. They show that in the 24 months to June 2013, 15 of the 17 major offence categories of crime had fallen or remained stable. Only two of the 17 offences showed upward trends: steal from retail store, up 3.8 per cent; and fraud, up 22 per cent. Three offences showed significant downward trends: break and enter non-dwelling, down 7.6 per cent; motor vehicle theft, down 11 per cent; and malicious damage to property, down 5.3 per cent. The remaining 12 offences were stable. The New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report shows that over the past five years 14 of the 17 major offence categories are either stable or going down.

I am advised that a significant component of the increase in fraud includes the unauthorised use of credit cards and bank cards, and petrol thefts driven by high fuel prices. The increase in credit card fraud is of concern to everyone. All but a few of us have automated teller machine [ATM] and credit cards, and therefore we are all vulnerable to the risks of card fraud and identity theft. It is important that people know what the risks are and how to protect themselves from what is known as card skimming, which is the illegal copying of information from the magnetic strip on the back of a credit card or ATM card. Scammers try to steal a person's details so they can access accounts. Once scammers have skimmed a card they can create a fake card with the person's details on it. The scammer is then able to run up charges on a person's credit card or withdraw money from their bank account.

Be aware that card skimming is also a way for criminals to steal a person's identity and use it to commit identity fraud. By stealing a person's details and account numbers, the scammer may be able to borrow money or take out loans in that person's name. Police have set up Strike Force Bournemouth to investigate a recent increase in card skimming activities. The investigation is being led by detectives from the Fraud and Cybercrime Squad, with assistance from local area commands. Police are aware of sophisticated skimming devices being installed on automated teller machines across the Sydney metropolitan area, which copy the card details while a tiny video camera records the victims entering their personal identification number [PIN]. It is recording immediately above the unsuspecting victims as they enter their personal identification number. As the Hon. Mick Veitch is indicating, using his wonderful version of sign language, people can use their other hand to block anyone pinpointing the PIN numbers on the ATM machine.

I am advised that on 15 September 2013 police arrested a 28-year-old man in Revesby in Sydney's south-west believed to be a Romanian national who is illegally in the country. A search warrant was conducted at a unit in Surry Hills, with police seizing hand tools and other items. The man was charged with five counts of possess equipment to make identification information with intent to commit indictable offence. He was refused bail to appear at Bankstown Local Court. Detectives believe that some of the funds have been remitted to Romania. Police are continuing their investigations and are seeking the public's help to identify a person they believe can assist with their inquiries. Police have released closed-circuit television images of the person and ask anyone who recognises the gentleman to contact them. Anyone with information should call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or use the Crime Stoppers online report page at www.police.nsw.gov.au. People need to remain vigilant. [*Time expired.*]

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES OUTSOURCING

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. What financial impact will the incoming Abbott Government's plan to outsource large parts of the Federal bureaucracy to State governments have on the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the member for his question. The first major impact of having an Abbott Coalition Government is that I now have a Minister for Ageing and Disability Services who will work with me and this Government to ensure the best outcomes for the people of New South Wales. I will ensure that that happens. On a previous occasion when I mentioned that the Hon. Jenny Macklin did not bother to contact me once directly, the Leader of the Opposition correctly pointed out that the Federal Government was in caretaker mode. I accept that. So when the Federal Government was in caretaker mode why did she issue a press release announcing the next 11 launch sites for the National Disability Insurance Scheme? Caretaker mode did not stop her from doing that. No. Did members opposite comment on that? No. Did she bother to speak to members opposite? No. Did she speak to me? No. Did she speak to anyone from her own department? No. Returning to the specifics of the question, I look forward to working with the new Federal Government which will work with me and the O'Farrell Government.

COAL SEAM GAS INDUSTRY

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Resources and Energy. In light of the recommendations of the Chief Scientist which "are aimed at assisting the NSW Government to build trust in the wider community that it has the intention and capacity to oversee the introduction of a new industry" will the Government commit to putting a moratorium on the coal seam gas industry until the recommendations of the Chief Scientist are fully implemented?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I love getting questions from the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham. Did members note the change in the tone of his voice when he talked about the Minister for Resources and Energy? He now wishes us to establish another moratorium. We have already had a moratorium—the first and only one in this State; there was no moratorium when The Greens were in government with the Labor Party. The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham now wants the Government to establish a moratorium based on a finding that we have not as yet got from the Chief Scientist whose credentials and ability he has previously questioned. We cannot trust him.

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: I could not hear the Minister's contribution. Rather than addressing his answer through the President, the Minister addressed his answer to the backbench. I ask that the Minister's behaviour be ruled as disorderly. The Minister should be directed to address his ramblings through the President rather than the goose—

The PRESIDENT: Order! A great deal of noise was coming from government members on the back bench so it is possible that the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham did have difficulty hearing. Nevertheless, the Minister clearly directed his comments through the Chair.

RED-LIGHT SPEED CAMERAS

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Will the Minister update the House on the road safety benefit of red-light speed cameras?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: As the Minister for Roads and Ports I am regularly presented with compelling facts from road safety experts on how red-light speed cameras help save lives. At 108 intersections

where red-light speed cameras have been installed—91 installed by the previous Government, kerching—we have seen a 23 per cent reduction in crashes and a 30 per cent reduction in casualties. Likewise, the 2013 speed camera review revealed a 42 per cent reduction in the number of crashes, a 90 per cent reduction in fatalities and a 41 per cent reduction in injuries at fixed speed camera locations. Those opposite are quiet now.

Based on those facts it would be totally irresponsible of me to adopt the reckless position of the shadow Minister for Roads who, when talking about motorists running red lights and speeding through intersections, said recently on Channel 9 News, "Very quickly an innocent mistake can become a disaster financially for families doing it tough." Running a red light or speeding through an intersection is no innocent mistake; the only innocents are those who may die. The shadow Minister for Roads also implied recently on Channel 10 News that people get infringed when they "get stuck between lights". As members well know, that is not true. Whilst it is an offence to queue across an intersection, drivers are not booked by the camera unless they have actually crossed the stop line after the light has turned red.

I also point out that under this Government, for the first time, people can ask for camera sites to be reviewed via our Safer Roads NSW website. One of the first things I did on becoming the Minister for Roads and Ports was to ask the Auditor-General to conduct an independent investigation of speed cameras in New South Wales. Following the Auditor-General's review, and two subsequent annual reviews in 2012 and 2013, cameras have been switched off at 33 locations, with 12 already removed and a further 21 to be removed when alternative safety works are completed. When it comes to speed cameras you are damned if you do, damned if you don't. If we do remove cameras some will say we will have blood on our hands, if we do not remove them then they will accuse the Government of revenue-raising.

The Hon. Steve Whan: That is exactly what you did when you were in opposition.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I was not the Opposition spokesman in this area. Do your homework, cobber. All I can do is carefully consider the advice of road safety experts and police and balance this with community concerns and expectations. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition needs to remove his road safety spokesman. Anyone who urges people to run red lights should not be in that position.

The Hon. Steve Whan: Point of order: The Minister has made a very negative reflection on a member in the other place, who certainly did not suggest that people should be able to run red lights.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister did not directly accuse the member for Keira of saying those things. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I would have thought that a Labor spokesman would be better off not describing people who run red lights as innocent victims. [*Time expired.*]

DEVELOPMENT CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for the Hunter. On 29 March 2012, in response to question without notice from the Hon. David Clarke about the revitalisation of the Newcastle central business district, the Minister referred to "new construction standards to help overcome" land constraints caused by mine working subsidence. Can the Minister provide the exact name of the so-called "new construction standards", the date they came into force and where they are to be found?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I thank Dr John Kaye for his question, which seeks some detail. As Jeremy said, I have got to address the chair so I am complying with the Hon. Jeremy whatever his name is—

Dr John Kaye: Point of order: The Minister knows that his previous remark was completely out of order and derogatory.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think "derogatory" is overstating it. I ask the Minister to refer to members by their correct titles.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I will seek a response to this question, which obviously requires some detail, as soon as possible.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I ask a supplementary question. Can the Minister elucidate his answer by explaining whether he has forgotten the statement he made in March 2012 or is he saying that he cannot answer the question because he does not wish to?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: That is not a supplementary question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I uphold the point of order. The question is out of order.

ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. On 10 May 2012 the Minister told the House that following a serious contamination incident at a Pacific Highway work upgrade site in Herons Creek he had "asked Roads and Maritime Services to be more proactive in communicating with the community". Given an independent report into the incident released yesterday again highlighted the need for better public communication and given that a Roads and Maritime Services spokesperson has again promised improvements in this area, will the Minister advise the House what changes have occurred since that statement 15 months ago?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: By way of background, as the honourable member indicated, in March 2012 workers uncovered an area of contaminated soil at the Herons Creek to Stills Road Pacific Highway upgrade worksite. The soil was contaminated in 1980 when a truck carrying waste, including volatile fatty acids, pesticides, food products and other materials, crashed. As the honourable member said, a report into the handling of the contamination of the Herons Creek to Stills Road section of the Pacific Highway has now been published on the website of Roads and Maritime Services, as we said we would do. People can access the report there. The report, which was prepared by independent environmental consultant Brian Gilligan, investigated events and relevant environmental processes leading to the discovery of contaminated soil in 2012. As the honourable member stated, Roads and Maritime Services has accepted all of the recommendations contained in the report and is working to progressively implement them.

A key outcome was that when reporting potential environmental issues communication needed to be improved, and we are progressively working on that. The report found that confusion and misunderstanding could have been significantly reduced with more proactive communication and explanation of the issue from the time of discovery. Ensuring that the community is made aware of issues potentially affecting them is of the highest priority to Roads and Maritime Services, and it is taking steps to ensure that environmental and safety issues are communicated quickly to stakeholders. Members will be pleased to know that further testing has found no trace of contaminants, including pesticides, petroleum hydrocarbons and volatile organic hydrocarbons. Some soil that was transferred to other sites in the area has been removed and appropriately disposed of. We will continue to work with and inform the community of the environmental issues as part of the Pacific Highway upgrade. As indicated in my answer, it is progressing and is part of ongoing training.

RESPITE CARE SERVICES

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to improve respite support?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The disability service system in New South Wales continues to deliver a broad range of respite services that help to strengthen family and caring relationships. These services are available in the home, community and centre-based respite centres. Carers make a significant contribution to New South Wales by providing vital support to people with disability and assisting them to build inclusive lives in our community. Flexible respite plays an important role as one of a range of services that assist families by providing short-term breaks for carers.

Flexible respite is a person-centred response to meeting individual respite care needs and provides socially inclusive activities for people with disability, as well as opportunities to expand their social networks and participate in the same activities as their peers, while at the same time providing breaks for carers. Flexible respite is able to sustain and promote the viability of the caring role, bringing significant long-term benefits for people with disability, their families and carers, as well as the wider community. Ageing, Disability and Home Care funds non-government organisations to provide flexible respite in a range of settings, including care in the home of the person with disability or with an alternate family carer and/or in community settings through camps, holidays and social or recreational activities.

Flexibility is a key ingredient in providing a high quality of respite support and represents good practice in disability service provision through person-centred service delivery, equitable access, individualised service provision, choice and control for carers and care recipients. Many people choose to receive a combination of flexible respite options. The New South Wales Government will continue to ensure that these are tailored to meet individual needs and caring situations. I am pleased to announce that the New South Wales Government has made available 750 new flexible respite places for carers of people with disability across the State, at a cost of \$6 million. These additional resources will be targeted to support people with disability and their carers who are in need of immediate respite support.

These respite options, which are targeted to individual need, will be provided at times when they are most needed—late afternoon, evenings and weekends. Not only will this investment give carers a well-earned break and allow them greater time for social and economic participation through work, study or social activities, but it will also provide the person with disability opportunities to have enjoyable and individualised experiences and build vital community connectivity. Further, supporting people with disability, their families and carers, the New South Wales Government, through the expansion of flexible respite options under Stronger Together 2, continues to provide carers with a valuable break from their caring role and is increasing the range of opportunities for people with disability to access mainstream recreational, sport, leisure and cultural options.

Each flexible respite place provides a minimum of 168 hours of respite support for families and carers of a person with disability. This funding was delivered to 37 non-government disability service providers across New South Wales in June 2013 to provide additional flexible respite places, and it builds on the additional 1,058 flexible respite places rolled out in 2012-13. The funding initiative is a one-off project designed to deliver the change the people of New South Wales want and increase opportunities for people to exercise choice, flexibility and control over their disability supports. [*Time expired.*]

NATIVE VEGETATION LEGISLATION

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services, representing the Minister for the Environment. Given that the new native vegetation regulations require ministerial approval to order any ground-cover species as feral native species, can the Minister confirm whether cropped land which is now revegetated by native grass to more than 50 per cent will have a prohibition against further cropping? Can the Minister confirm also whether the changes in regulations reflect the Government's commitment and promise to reduce the Christmas tape—that is the red and green tape?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for his question, which I will direct to the Minister for the Environment for a response.

NSW POLICE FORCE CHILD ABUSE SQUAD

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. In response to a question taken on notice at the recent budget estimates hearings the Minister revealed that only 19 of the 30 new Child Abuse Squad officers he promised in May had commenced duty. Given that it has now been four months since the Minister promised these 30 new officers, when will he finally deliver on his commitment?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I think that is quite a slight on the efforts of the Commissioner of Police. Listen to the gasps of those opposite. The reality is that it was the commissioner and the senior executive of the NSW Police Force who, upon the revelation of the report, immediately commenced to look at the resourcing issues regarding the Child Abuse Squad. The commissioner has set in train—of course, working with Mr Kaldas and Ms Byrne, two deputy commissioners, and of course now Mr Hudson, the third deputy commissioner—measures to ensure that the resourcing challenges that were first identified were being addressed and that there was further ongoing work. They were, I thought, quite responsive to the needs of those officers working in this very important area of policing by recognising that there needed to be an immediate injection of personnel. They have done that. They have sought expressions of interest from police.

They deputy commissioners have also spelt out very clearly—unlike the, perhaps, misinterpretation of those opposite—that child abuse policing is not an ordinary area of policing. One has to get the right person to go into this area; and, to start with, they have to want to go there. I know that the work has been ongoing. In fact I have spoken to police only in the last couple of days in relation to the ongoing work there. But what needs to

be recognised—sadly, the Opposition is not recognising—is the significant work that has been done in the Police Force to address those concerns, not just in relation to numbers or workload but also the need for local area commands to be assisting these police in this child abuse area. As I have indicated, continuation of that work, in relation to workload as well as structure, is continuing.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I thank the Minister for his response. I ask a supplementary question. Can the Minister elucidate by advising how many Child Abuse Squad officers have now been appointed?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: That answer was given, as the member indicated in comments made in his initial question. In it the member referred to an answer I gave to an estimates hearing. As I stand here now, that is the most up-to-date information that I have before me. I refer the member to that answer. If there have been any changes to those numbers, I will seek advice from police in that regard.

NSW POLICE FORCE OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. What is the latest information about the operational capacity of the NSW Police Force?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Another timely question.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Good question. It follows on nicely.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Yes, segue. As members would recall, this Government has made a commitment not only to deliver record police numbers but also, just as importantly, to an open and transparent report on our progress in achieving that commitment, and making sure those officers are on the street, servicing the needs of our community. This transparency was critical in light of the record of those opposite, with a legacy of throwing probationary constables at a command to artificially boost numbers. They boasted of record police strength, when in actual fact a good number of the officers were not actually available for duty; they were instead on workers compensation, sick leave, leave without pay, or even suspended from duty.

What this Government has done instead is to look at the actual capacity of every command to have officers on duty, and it will continue to do so. I can advise the House the fifth report on police operational capacity is now available on the NSW Police Force website. It shows that, as at 23 August 2013, operational capacity within the NSW Police Force was at 95 per cent—the same level as in May 2013 and December 2012, and still at the highest level since reporting began in May last year. With well in excess of 15,300 full-time equivalent sworn officers in the NSW Police Force, this is a great outcome and well over the Government's target of maintaining operational capacity at 90 per cent or more. Seventy-seven of the 80 local area commands, or 96.25 per cent, across the State are at or over 90 per cent operational capacity—local area commands like Mudgee, at 106 per cent, or the far South Coast with an operational capacity of 101 per cent.

Commands in Western Sydney are doing well, with Fairfield and Mount Druitt at 97 per cent operational capacity and Bankstown at 94 per cent. I can inform the House that Hurstville Local Area Command, which was below 90 per cent in the May report, is now at 91 per cent. That is what transparency allows. It shows us where we can improve; and, thanks to the good work of the NSW Police Force, it does improve. For those commands under our 90 per cent target, I have been advised there were a number of officers on maternity leave at the time the report was compiled. There are also some officers who have been on long-term sick leave. We have added 130 positions—including 30 in August at the attestation class—to the Police Transport Command since December 2012, which has led to an operational capacity of 71 per cent for this reporting period.

Increasing a command's authorised strength so rapidly will always lead to recruitment challenges. I have spoken at length about that. Despite the best efforts of the shadow Minister for Transport to talk down this important, innovative approach—long overdue in the community's mind, and one that Labor did not have the courage to do—we are getting on and supporting our Police Transport Command. I am advised that the NSW Police Force is implementing recruitment strategies for the Police Transport Command. It has assured me that these will deliver appropriate resources over time. The New South Wales Government is committed to high visibility policing and will boost the NSW Police Force by a total of 859 police officers. We have already delivered 420 additional authorised strength positions since December 2011. This significant commitment will see the authorised strength of the NSW Police Force reach a record 16,665 officers in August 2015.

WESTCONNEX MOTORWAY

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Given Elizabeth Farrelly's analysis on WestConnex today which concludes that it is indeed Greiner's folly, when will this Government admit its mistake—that the \$15 billion WestConnex, if built, will be an unmitigated disaster—and redirect these funds for building twenty-first century public transport systems?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the member for her question and commend her on her bravery in quoting Elizabeth Farrelly. I stopped reading Elizabeth Farrelly's column when I saw her write an ode to sitting in traffic in Berry. She would miss, when the bypass goes around Berry, actually sitting in holiday traffic and being trapped there for some time. I thought the intellect of a person who rejoices in sitting in traffic was pretty much akin to that of a former Premier of this State.

Dr John Kaye: It was Nick Greiner, wasn't it?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It was one from the Opposition side. I think the best thing I could do, when we talk about policy on WestConnex, is to read from the Tamworth *Northern Daily Leader* of 11 September 2013. This fine periodical carries an article entitled "Reports of receivership". This is Greens policy; and I think the best thing one can ever do with Greens policy is to tell people what it is:

Sydney. The NSW Government is being called on by the Greens—

plural; no particular person—

to withdraw its support for the WestConnex motorway following reports Sydney's Cross City Tunnel is again on the brink of receivership.

There they go, those economic rationalists The Greens, with the silliest comment, obviously spurred by the article written by the journalist concerned.

CROWN ROADS ACCESS AND RECREATIONAL FISHING TRUST FUNDS

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, representing the Minister for Primary Industries.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I cannot hear the member asking the question.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Recreational fishing trust funds are being used to fund assessments of the impact on fishing access of potential land sales as part of the Government's sale of Crown road reserves program. Why is the Government not paying for these assessments using the proceeds of the sales and why is it diverting fishing licence fee revenue to bolster the Government's asset sale profits?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Every day I must carefully analyse what members opposite say. As I said recently, I must take them seriously because sometimes in between the patter—

The Hon. Rick Colless: Not very often.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: No, it is not very often, but sometimes they say something that is true. I will allow the Minister concerned to apply due diligence to the question and I look forward to providing an appropriate response.

KINGS HIGHWAY ROAD SAFETY REVIEW

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: I address my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Will the Minister update the House about what the New South Wales Government is doing to improve road safety on the Kings Highway?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: That is the question the Hon. Steve Whan should have asked.

The Hon. Steve Whan: I asked you a question about it two days ago.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I do not remember that. The 137-kilometre Kings Highway links towns and cities such as Canberra, Queanbeyan, Bungendore, Braidwood and Nelligen to the popular coastline around Batemans Bay. As winter turns to spring and then summer I am sure the thoughts of all members representing those areas will be turning towards the bay. The New South Wales Government's safety experts have carried out a road safety review of the Kings Highway between Batemans Bay and Bungendore. Route safety reviews help to reduce road trauma. The review included site inspections and a detailed examination of crash trends. Following the review and as a result of its findings, the Government has implemented a \$4-million suite of projects to be undertaken this financial year and is progressing planning for targeted safety work between Batemans Bay and Queanbeyan. The New South Wales Government will now implement a package of safety measures along the Kings Highway, but that work will take time.

That is the price of progress—it will not happen overnight. As these upgrades are undertaken there will also be an onus on motorists to slow down and to drive to the conditions. Work commenced this week on Clyde Mountain to reduce the risk of off-road crashes. The aim of the work is to improve safety at two locations on the Kings Highway. The eastbound shoulder is being widened and the roadside east of the intersection with Misty Mountain Road is being cleared. A new guardrail will also be installed to minimise the risk of off-road crashes in the region. Road shoulder widening work will also be carried out on the westbound lane at the intersection of Kings Highway and Lyons Road. The widening work aims to increase the space available for a vehicle to stop safely and to improve sight distance for approaching motorists.

That is not all that the Government is doing to ensure safety along the highway. Another \$300,000 has been allocated for consistent, clear signage and line marking along the section of the highway that was reviewed. Mr President, I am sure you as a resident of the bay area will be interested to learn that \$100,000 has been allocated for the installation of vehicle-activated signage and improvements to school bus stop facilities. In addition, \$400,000 will be spent to develop safe enforcement sites for both mobile speed cameras and the NSW Police Force to stop people speeding along the road because that endangers others. I know that the Hon. Steve Whan supports that because he has spoken to me about the issue.

I can also inform the House that \$1.5 million has been allocated for the planning and delivery of major shoulder widening and kerb realignment work between Braidwood and Batemans Bay. This is just the beginning; there is more to be done. However, these projects will deliver significant road safety improvements to the Kings Highway, which can only be a good thing for motorists who use that important stretch of road. We must do everything we can to ensure the safety of families who will be travelling over summer and the Christmas break on that stretch of road, which sadly has not had a good record over the past decade.

LIQUOR PROMOTION GUIDELINES

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I direct my question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Is the Government aware that the Australian Hotels Association wants the Government to redefine the term "intoxicated" and water it down? Is the Government aware that Police Association of NSW president Scott Weber called the proposal ludicrous and also called for a 1.00 a.m. lockout and a 3.00 a.m. closing time for every hotel in the State? Will the Government retain the current definition of "intoxicated" to help the NSW Police Force to carry out its duty to protect the citizens of New South Wales?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: That is a very sobering question and I thank the member for asking it. As far as I can remember, I have not received a formal submission from anyone about any changes to the definition.

Dr John Kaye: It is part of the review of the Liquor Act.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Yes, but no-one has approached me about it in my capacity as the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. If I have been approached about it then I am sure that my staff will advise me quickly. Be that as it may, I await any submission that may be sent to me.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Apparently there is nothing in the folder.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: She is smiling so it is all good. The police and the community understand the current definition of "intoxicated" and I would be very interested to hear why anyone would want to change it.

NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY UPGRADE

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Given that the incoming Abbott Government has indicated it will cut \$80 million from the funding allocated for the realignment of three kilometres of the New England Highway at Bolivia Hill, will the Minister guarantee that this project will still be completed?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Here we go again. They were talking about caretaker mode earlier. The Minister told the House that the Leader of the Opposition said that the Federal Labor Government was in caretaker mode and therefore could not do anything. If it was not in the budget, it had not happened. Anthony Albanese made many promises while he was travelling around New South Wales, and many of them were good because the State Government has contributed funding. However, his promises were not funded because they were made while the Federal Labor Government was in caretaker mode; there was nothing in the budget. He went merrily across the State promising to deliver good projects, including the Bolivia Hill roadworks, but there was no budget allocation.

The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner: All caretaker and no responsibility.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: That is most appropriate. The Federal Labor Government made promises about these projects but it had not allocated the appropriate funding. That explains the situation we are now facing. However, it does not explain what happened to the Hon. Peter Primrose's staff who were sponsoring the Twitter site promoting Anthony Albanese—

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The question was about funding for road works at Bolivia Hill, not Twitter.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It would be difficult to avoid the conclusion that that point of order has some substance. The Minister may conclude his answer if he has more generally relevant material to provide.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The key point is that Anthony Albanese, who is standing for the position of Federal Leader of the Opposition, promised money that was not allocated. The Bolivia Hill project is very important and I have committed to providing funding. The new Federal Government must see what is left in the kitty—and there probably will not be much because Anthony Albanese was sprinkling it like confetti. I would like to become a Twitter follower and help Anthony Albanese to become Federal Leader of the Opposition so that we can hold him to account for making unfunded promises.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICTS

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing and the Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to improve service delivery and support for vulnerable children, adults and families?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: One of the key challenges for any social services organisation is how to focus its efforts better on people—not on service systems or on programs but on people. Our dedicated hard-working front-line staff best understand their local communities. They are best placed to plan and deliver services that are individualised and relevant to local realities. We want to put control back in their hands—empower them to begin to change how things are done based on their knowledge and experience of their clients and their communities. Over time, we want to establish a more integrated presence and a service system that is easily understood and accessible by clients, communities and partner organisations. With this approach in mind, on Monday 9 September 2013 the Department of Family and Community Services realigned its service delivery networks as the first significant step in integrating operations and coming together as a single service.

The local operations of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Family and Community Services and Housing NSW have come together to form 15 Family and Community Services districts as opposed to 17 overlapping regions under previous arrangements. The Family and Community Services districts mirror the 15 NSW Health districts. Our aim in localising to the same district boundaries as those served by NSW Health is to leverage benefits for clients by aligning the Department of Family and Community Services with one of its most important partner agencies. The new arrangements also will allow for more local planning and decision-making, and closer local working relationships with other government and non-government partners. This will allow for more coordinated and integrated local services. It also means there will be better and stronger linkages with local leaders and front-line staff.

Since February this year the Department of Family and Community Services has been working on localising its service network and has appointed 15 interim district directors who have worked with local staff to align with the 15 NSW Health districts. The Department of Family and Community Services has consulted with the Public Service Association since announcing this project in February. In June and July over 4,000 staff attended one of 188 consultation sessions. District models were developed in line with existing awards, industrial agreements and within existing employee-related costs. All work leading up to the commencement of the new district models from 9 September this year and beyond undertaken to ensure service delivery to Family and Community Services clients and to Ageing, Disability and Home Care clients has not, and will not, be interrupted or compromised and, of course, those services will be improved.

There is still a lot of work to be done to truly integrate the services of Family and Community Services. The work will capture ideas from staff on how things could change based on local strengths; will change the culture in coming together to think and act as one organisation; will empower our front-line staff to make decisions that tailor the support and services to the needs of individuals and families; and will build strong local networks and partnerships. Government services need to evolve. The people of New South Wales expect nothing less. The services of the Department of Family and Community Services need to be responsive, coordinated, integrated and, most of all, local.

NATIVE FORESTS MANAGEMENT

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Disability Services and the Illawarra, representing the Minister for the Environment. What evidence does the Minister have to support the assertion that the draft environment regulation that would permit the use of native forestry biomass "wastes" to be used as fuel for electricity generation will not provide an incentive to increased native forestry logging activity, given the 2004 New South Wales Biomass Handbook concluded that the use of sawmill waste for bioenergy "could increase the financial viability of the sawmill and extraction operations"?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: As I do not have an answer for the member's question off the top of my head I will refer it to the relevant Minister and seek a response.

KENNEDY DRIVE, TWEED HEADS, UPGRADING

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. What discussions has he had with his Federal colleagues to ensure they honour their election promise to provide \$3.3 million to resurface Kennedy Drive in the Tweed shire? When will work begin on this important road?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am looking forward to the swearing-in of the new Ministers in Canberra. As soon as we have a Minister for Infrastructure and Roads I will be meeting with him or her. I suspect that it will be Warren Truss—I hope that it is. I will be looking forward to meeting and working with whoever it is.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister inform the House about the recent graduation of recruit firefighters from the Fire and Rescue NSW State Training College on Thursday 5 September?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I am delighted to advise the House that the Hon. Chris Hartcher—that great member for Terrigal—acting in my capacity as Minister, had the great pleasure of welcoming 24 new firefighters to the ranks of Fire and Rescue NSW. The 2013 permanent firefighter recruitment campaign attracted an astonishing 6,912 applications from a diverse range of backgrounds, 848 of which were from women. This shows how highly firefighters are regarded by the community, and what an attractive occupation it is. I am advised that the overall quality of candidates was of a particularly high standard. The candidates underwent an online entry examination, psychometric testing, physical aptitude testing, medical tests, interviews and police background checks.

The first class of 2013 graduated and of the 24 new firefighter recruits, 10 were women and 14 were men—a great outcome in an occupation that, disappointingly, often is perceived as an occupation only for men. But of course it is not; fit and healthy women are just as good at fire fighting as men. These graduates will now join the Fire and Rescue NSW force of nearly 7,000 hardworking and dedicated firefighters. Our new

firefighters also reflect the diversity of cultures, skills and life experience that Fire and Rescue NSW seeks in its workforce throughout New South Wales. Aged from their twenties through to their forties, some of the recruits already have their own families and many are following a family tradition. Four of the parents who were present at the ceremony are serving or have previously served as firefighters or in other important roles in Fire and Rescue NSW. One was the great grandson of one of Sydney's first fire chiefs.

Many recruits have already enjoyed interesting and varied careers. Among this class are qualified builders, former police officers, teachers, hospitality and retail workers, and a soldier who did a number of tours of duty in Afghanistan. The recruits have undertaken 13 weeks of training to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to protect New South Wales communities from fire and other emergencies. The Fire and Rescue NSW recruit training course covers more than 20 subjects including fire fighting, road crash rescue, advanced first aid and resuscitation, community safety education, fire technology and hazardous materials management. I am particularly proud that the class included 10 women—the largest contingent of females that Fire and Rescue NSW has had in one recruit class. I am advised that Fire and Rescue NSW has a broad range of strategies in place through its Women's Employment and Development Action Plan to promote fire fighting as a career for women and to encourage the progression of women through to senior ranks.

From experience, I know that a career in emergency services is demanding—not only on the serving member but also on the family and loved ones. However, there are rewards for being part of the effort to help the community when the going gets tough. Emergency services across New South Wales do an amazing job under the most trying circumstances, and we saw an example of that recently when Western Sydney was ringed by raging bushfires. One has only to look at the work that is undertaken across the State each day in emergencies such as car crashes, fires and chemical spills to realise how passionate these men and women are about protecting their communities. On average, every four minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week— [*Time expired.*]

CHILE COUP D'ÉTAT FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, in his role of representing the Premier. Will the Government condemn or otherwise disassociate itself from the remarks made last night in this Chamber by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps in respect of the use of violence by the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet against his own civilian population in Chile?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I did not have an opportunity to hear the speech nor have I read it. What the member says requires me to examine the comments closely.

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

Questions without notice concluded.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER (Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Hunter, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.31 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

SAFE AND LEGAL ABORTION

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE [3.31 p.m.]: Next week the New South Wales Parliament will debate the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013. This bill will have far-reaching consequences for women in New South Wales. The bill has brought into sharp focus the fragile legal underpinnings of abortion law in New South Wales. Today I do not seek to debate that bill, except to say that I will not support it. The introduction of Zoe's law occurs in the lead-up to the Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion on 28 September. In 2011 the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights made 28 September a day for global action in response to the issues confronting women, especially issues for women in developing countries.

Across most of Africa abortion is either prohibited altogether or allowed only to save the life of the mother. In most of Asia, abortion is severely restricted and where abortion is legal women have to grapple with

heavy costs and the inaccessibility of appropriate care. In some European countries, and increasingly in the United States of America, access to abortion is being curtailed by groups that wish to restrict women's reproductive freedom by imposing legal and financial restrictions and obstructing access to abortion care. Australia is not immune from some of these forces.

The Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion on 28 September is an opportunity to reflect on what it means for women around the world to have access to safe and legal abortion, and the consequences of not having it. Access to affordable and effective family planning and contraception services are also an important part of the equation to help save women's and girls' lives. The reason I support access to safe, legal abortion is that the ability for women to choose the number and timing of the children they have is a fundamental right that if denied means women are not able to live freely. My support for this principle of women's autonomy and freedom is not a hypothetical notion; it is firmly grounded in the reality that the consequences for women who are denied this right are significant and horrifying.

In Australia and in New South Wales thankfully there is access to safe abortion, but we must remember that abortion remains in the crimes legislation in many of our States and that access to safe abortion remains difficult for poorer women and for those who live in rural and regional areas. For women and girls in developing countries, lack of access to safe and legal abortion is leading to thousands of deaths and literally millions of injuries. The figures, accurately and methodically compiled by the Guttmacher Institute in the United States of America, are confronting. Those who care about women and their families cannot ignore the figures. Every year 47,000 women die from complications following unsafe abortions and millions more are injured. Every day 800 women die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth; one-third of those deaths are due to unsafe abortions and 99 per cent of those deaths occur in developing countries. More than 200 million women in developing countries want to prevent pregnancy, but they lack access to effective contraception.

This results in 80 million unintended pregnancies, 30 million unplanned births and 40 million abortions, half of which are unsafe and life threatening. Eighty-six per cent of abortions take place in the developing world where most abortion laws are highly restrictive. Globally, one in five girls gives birth before she turns 18. Too many of these girls have been forced into child marriage and many suffer injuries from giving birth to children that their bodies are not developed enough physically to deliver. For adolescent girls in many countries, complications related to pregnancy and childbirth is a leading cause of death. The statistics on death and injury are stark, but there are other reasons to support the sexual and reproductive rights of women. The evidence is overwhelming: It shows that the impact of women having control of their sexual and reproductive health is positive not just on them and their families but also on their communities. The International Conference on Population and Development task force has stated:

Sexual and reproductive health problems take a huge toll on lives, families, societies and economies—and public budgets—yet they are preventable, with proven, cost-effective solutions.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights have high pay-offs for poverty eradication, social, economic and sustainable development, and for equality and equity.

With support and focus we can make a difference to the health and wellbeing of women, not just in Australia but across the globe. No matter what one's view is of abortion, the stark reality is that making abortion illegal does not stop it occurring, it just forces women to obtain clandestine and unsafe services, with horrific results. On 28 September 2013 I urge all who support the sexual and reproductive rights of women to take one small action to try to eradicate unsafe abortions across the world.

YOUNG LIBERAL FLYING SQUAD

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES [3.35 p.m.]: I speak today about an amazing young volunteer network that has been in operation in New South Wales for more than 25 years. These volunteers are committed to delivering real change by developing future leaders. These exceptional young Australians volunteer hundreds of hours, providing support and assistance to ensure that New South Wales and Australia is a better place. Some call Australia the lucky country, but I do not believe it is about luck. I believe that people make a country strong and prosperous through hard work and determination. It requires passion and commitment, and those are the qualities shown by these young Australians in the Young Liberal Flying Squad.

I have had the opportunity to work with this impressive group of young people over a number of years and I am proud to be associated with them. They are the people I call the campaign heroes of the Liberal Party. The New South Wales Young Liberal Flying Squad is the campaign arm of the New South Wales Young

Liberal Movement. They are a vital part of the campaign unit and a primary source of volunteers for our key marginal seats. These young people have worked across a number of electorates. There are many members in this House and in the other House who have been directly involved as former Young Liberals or who, more recently, owe their seats to the hard work and assistance of these young people.

During the last State election the Young Liberal Flying Squad delivered teams of 30 to 40 people to assist in marginal electorates across New South Wales, including Smithfield, the Blue Mountains, Strathfield, Rockdale, Campbelltown, Granville, Wyong, Newcastle, Swansea, East Hills, Oatley, Maitland, Kiama, Charlestown, Gosford, Mulgoa, Parramatta, Londonderry, The Entrance, Wollondilly, Penrith, Drummoyne, Riverstone, Menai and Camden. All those electorates have one thing in common: They were won by the Coalition at the last State election. Having been a flying squad coordinator in the mid-2000s, I can attest that one of the hardest jobs is being a Young Liberal coordinator.

Coordinators are not only responsible for managing hundreds of young people and allocating them across the State as directed, but they have to coordinate telephone calls, transport and accommodation and, most importantly, they have to ensure the young people's safety, particularly on election night, because quite often these young people man the booths from two or three o'clock in the afternoon right through until six or seven o'clock in the morning. On average, the campaign coordinator will volunteer close to 400 hours, travelling thousands of kilometres in metropolitan and country areas. Members of the flying squad are under 30 years old and most of them are students, but many of them work full time and take annual leave from their jobs to take part in the campaign.

At the recent Federal election this team of enthusiastic people proved to be not only an effective tool, undertaking critical campaign activities from doorknocking to manning street stalls, but also an integral part of the campaign unit. Many of them are available full time and they take on quite significant roles in these campaigns. As I have said, the Young Liberal Flying Squad is part of the New South Wales Young Liberal Movement, which is ably led by the Young Liberal President Simon Fontana. Simon decided about 18 months ago to establish the Young Liberal Flying Squad early. Normally the flying squads are launched in the last few months of a campaign, but because the recent election was so critical Simon decided that we needed the flying squad earlier. The Young Liberal Flying Squad was led by Dean Carlson with the assistance of Taylor Gramoski, Dean Shachar and Josh Crawford. But those guys could not have done it alone.

I note the outstanding efforts of a number of Young Liberals including Nicole Anderson, Lachlan Auer, Celeste Arenas, Alex Briggs, Jackson Black, Sam Bradshaw, Alex Butterworth, Alexandra Brown, Andrew Clark, Julius Chen, Nicholas Calokerinos, Anthony Caruso, Alex Coffman, Brendan Christie, Alex Dore, Daniel Carney, Scott Cowley, Sam Diamant, Albert Davidow, Hannah Eves, Peter Gangemi, Adam Gwynne, Danny Grkovic, Lyndon Gannon, Matthew Hana, Jason Hickson, Sophie Holman, Tim Jackson, Ben Jackson, Manning Jeffery, Josh Koonin, Todd Kirby, Sam Lee, Tobias, Amy and Oliver Lehmann, Alexander Lucas, Chris Lewandowski, Tom Lacey, Sam Moulder, Sara More, Jack Morrison, Rachael Naomi and Elizabeth O'Dwyer, Nomiky Panayiotakis, Ben Potts, Cameron Phillips, Damien Pace, Dominic Rohde, Jessie Robinson, Trent Richmond, Tanya Raffoul, John Ryan-Thomas, Sam Stone, Harry Singh, Andrew Szmytka, David Taylor, Victor Tan, Natarsha Terreiro and Emma White.

With the hard work and effort of these fantastic young people, we have delivered a number of electorates to the Coalition, including Reid, Banks, Eden-Monaro, Lindsay, Robertson and Dobell. They have also worked hard to ensure that we won Gilmore and Hume, as well as returning Louise Markus, Russell Matheson and John Alexander. [*Time expired.*]

JUVENILE OFFENDER PRISON RATE

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE [3.40 p.m.]: In the recent budget estimates hearing I asked both the Attorney General and the Chief Executive Officer of Juvenile Justice, Ms Valda Ruis, several questions about the rate of juvenile imprisonment in New South Wales. The series of facts and figures that came out are greatly troubling. One of the most stark problems is the rate at which New South Wales continues to jail our juveniles. On the day I asked the chief executive officer about the number of juveniles in detention that night in New South Wales jails there were 302. That is roughly four to five times the rate that children are jailed across the border in Victoria. When one digs deeper into the figures they become even more troubling in terms of the make-up of the juvenile justice population and the children in juvenile detention who are being held on remand.

First, I refer to the proportion of Aboriginal juveniles held in detention. As long as records go back, there has been an appalling overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in juvenile detention facilities. The figures

from 2008-09 to this year show that the rate of Aboriginal children in juvenile prisons remains between 49 per cent and 51 per cent of the juvenile prison population. From an overall population base of about 2.5 per cent or 3 per cent of the population, they represent half—sometimes slightly more than half—of the children in jail on any particular night. That is a gross failing by the criminal justice system of this vulnerable part of our community, which fails on so many other grounds including health and life expectancy.

If we look even further into the figures we realise that 49 per cent of the juveniles being held in detention at any given moment are not being held because they have been found guilty of an offence; they are being held on remand. Primarily they are being held on remand because the authorities, the Children's Magistrate or the magistrate they come before, cannot be satisfied that if they are given bail they will be found some safe and secure accommodation from which they will be able to report to court. It is extraordinary that, of the 50 per cent or 49 per cent of the juvenile justice prison population that are being held on remand, a remarkable 82.8 per cent of those juveniles either get a non-custodial sentence or are acquitted when they come to trial. Nine times out of 10 those juveniles should not have spent one night behind bars, let alone often months waiting for their trial.

When we look at the number of Aboriginal children who are being processed through the juvenile justice system, and we look more deeply at the orders and the proportion of Aboriginal children receiving different custodial orders or sentencing outcomes in the Children's Court, the trend is even more worrying. When a child comes before the Children's Court for sentencing, an array of options is open to the magistrate. The three principal orders are: a child can be ordered to attend a youth justice conference, where the child is encouraged to take responsibility for his or her offence and sometimes to meet with the victims of the offence, which is a non-custodial path; sometimes they can attend orders under community supervision; or they can go to jail.

When we look at the proportion of Aboriginal children who are ordered into the lesser youth justice conference stream we see that 27 per cent of the children going down the youth justice conference stream are Aboriginal; 42.4 per cent of children going down the community supervision path are Aboriginal; and 50 per cent of the children going to jail are Aboriginal. Aboriginal youth are grossly overrepresented in jail and disproportionately underrepresented in those other classes of sentencing. There is a systemic failing in the way we deal with juvenile justice, particularly for Aboriginal children. The department has accepted that those figures will continue. We need a new path and a new pattern.

PENSIONER PUBLIC HOUSING RENTS

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [3.45 p.m.]: The first duty of government must be to care for those who are most vulnerable in society. Over the past few months I have been meeting with pensioners living in public housing across Sydney and New South Wales. I have met with pensioners in Riverwood, Doonside, Lalor Park, Mount Druitt, Whalan, Claymore, Newcastle, Sydney, Macquarie Park and several other places. These pensioners are rightly concerned that they have become the targets of the O'Farrell Government's cynical, cold hearts. Pensioners living in public housing have seen the O'Farrell Government count the Commonwealth Clean Energy Supplement as part of its income. This cold-hearted decision has meant that just when the Commonwealth Government reached out to give pensioners a bit of extra cash the O'Farrell Government stuck its grubby hands in their pockets and helped itself to money that was supposed to help pensioners get by.

This cold-hearted cash grab has left single pensioners \$88 a year worse off and couples \$133 a year worse off, on top of the Government's increase in rents by \$618 a year. As if that were not bad enough, the O'Farrell Government has instituted a bedroom tax on public housing tenants, which began this week. The bedroom tax is intended to force people out of the homes they are living in because the O'Farrell Government is failing to build new public housing. The bedroom tax means that some single people living in public housing will be asked to pay an extra \$1,000 a year in rent, while couples will be charged an extra \$1,500 a year in rent. Pru Goward has said that this is not a heartless exercise in cynical revenue raising. That would be believable if the O'Farrell Government was not also cutting \$22 million from the budget to build new public housing stock.

For those who do not believe me, I suggest they check the budget papers and do a comparison between last year's supply of new housing and the forecast for new public housing. The Government has also cut \$37 million from the maintenance budget. The Government must act to ensure that there is affordable, accessible, clean social housing, particularly for pensioners, war widows and elderly women. The Auditor-General has been clear in his report that there has been an absence of policy direction from this

Government. In the past week the O'Farrell Government announced that it will increase the rent for some public housing tenants by as much as \$300 a week. I am concerned that, rather than caring for those who are most vulnerable in society, the O'Farrell Government has decided that pensioners in public housing are an easy target.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: They don't qualify.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: The member should get the details and make them public. Pensioners can be preyed upon and exploited.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner): Order! I remind the Hon. Sophie Cotsis that she should ignore interjections, which are disorderly.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: The day after the Federal election Minister Pru Goward had the audacity to put out the trash and to make an announcement she thought people would ignore. We have been inundated by people who are concerned and confused that the Government has increased their rents. Thousands of people will be left on the street because the Government is not building new public housing; it is selling public housing. Last Friday at Whalan I attended a community meeting with pensioners who live in public housing. They are scared to death that they will be evicted because they cannot afford the additional \$20 a week. They showed me to a couple of three-bedroom townhouses that are side by side that have been vacant for months. This Government should conduct an audit of how many vacant properties there are. I have asked that of this Government again and again. The former Government built 6,000 new public housing properties.

This Government has decided that pensioners in public housing are an easy target who can be preyed upon and exploited as a source for government revenue. Many pensioners who live in public housing are people who have worked hard their whole lives. They have raised a family, paid their taxes and done all that our society could ask of them. Those Australians have earned a right to live in security and comfort. Housing NSW predicts that in the next eight years almost one-third of all demand for social housing will come from older Australians. The needs of older Australians should be met by government with open arms. Older Australians should be accorded the dignity and respect they deserve. They should not be the target of cynical exploitation that seems to have become the O'Farrell Government's practice. [*Time expired.*]

LITHGOW ARMS RIFLE MANUFACTURING

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK [3.50 p.m.]: I am delighted to speak about something we do not see much anymore: manufacturing in Australia. Lithgow Arms has recently developed, and is about to start marketing, Australia's own hunting rifle. Indeed, Australia is back in the firearms manufacturing business, because Lithgow Arms is launching a range of bolt-action hunting rifles in .17, .22, .223 and .308 calibres for hunters and target shooters. I applaud the company's initiative to design and develop these rifles in Australia and to price them competitively, while offering what the company says is "modern tactical styling, high accuracy and reliability". Lithgow Arms, of course, has a long history of firearms manufacture going back to the war years, when it turned out the reliable old warhorse, the .303, used in both World War I and World War II.

For those who are interested in history, May 2013 marked 100 years since the first 40 .303 mark III rifles left the Lithgow factory for Department of Defence headquarters in Melbourne. Most recently, Lithgow Arms has been making the Austeyr for the current Australian military forces. I must say, the Austeyr is much different in shape and size to the traditional .303 rifle that Lithgow made for years because of advances in technology. Its latest offering, the LA101, had its first public showing at the recent Shot Expo in Melbourne. I believe it is the first civilian firearm mass produced in Australia for more than 40 years, and the company says the centrefire models will follow the rimfires onto the market.

Lithgow Arms is owned by the French company, Thales Australia. Its chief executive officer, Mr Chris Jenkins, says it is building on a proud military heritage to offer a new Australian rifle, specifically designed for the Australian market. Mr Jenkins also said that there is definitely a place in the market for the product, and he is hopeful customers will appreciate owning a rifle made at Lithgow—I am sure they will. Interestingly, the new rifles will be distributed by Winchester Australia, which has entered into a strategic partnership with Thales, focusing mainly on ammunition, which has resulted in the release of the new Australian Outback ammunition. The LA101 CrossOver will have a heavy barrel with a semi-match chamber aimed at improving accuracy.

Winchester says each military-grade steel barrel will be cold forged, manufactured on the same machine at Lithgow that makes barrels for the Australian Defence Force's Austeyr rifles, and ensures their

outstanding accuracy. This machine is the only one of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. The stock of the CrossOver will also share Austeyr technology, being made from the same injection moulded nylon as the EF88 that Lithgow is developing. The stock's trigger guard will be part of the mould, which features a design that will suit shooting over a bench or on a bipod. The triple lug bolt will provide a 60-degree throw, and it is claimed to be rapid and smooth in operation. I have not yet seen the new rifle, but be assured, as soon as it hits the market, I will stand in line to try it out. I have no doubt that thousands of other shooters, either hunters or target shooters, will also want a rifle specifically made in Australia for Australian conditions. The Hon. Trevor Khan should also get one.

MURRUMBIDGEE AREA HEALTH SERVICES

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY (Parliamentary Secretary) [3.55 p.m.]: The township of Deniliquin is situated on a tributary of the Murray River, 723 kilometres south-west of Sydney and less than 100 kilometres from the Victorian border. It sits in the centre of Riverina sheep-station country and on the fringe of the world's largest red gum forest, where birds and wildlife abound in the Barmah Wetlands; a beautiful but remote part of New South Wales. With a population 7,494, Deniliquin epitomises the challenges and opportunities many remote communities are experiencing in being able to access health services their city cousins take for granted.

I first travelled to Deniliquin in July 2011, soon after being appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health. The very great local member, John Williams, and I met with doctors, allied health professionals, members of the Local Health Advisory Committee and community members to listen to their concerns about their perceived looming health crisis precipitated by the imminent retirement of several general practitioners, the lack of maternity services and management of chronic disease such as renal failure. Since this visit there has been a substantial shift in the health outlook for this rural community. A community that, two years ago, was frustrated and angry because it felt it had been forgotten to one that has rallied around and embraced a collaborative and inclusive relationship with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, working together to find solutions.

Much of this credit goes to people on the ground, such as the Chief Executive Officer of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Susan Weisser, Director of Operations Jill Ludford, Dr Kathleen Aitkinson, and Pamela Ellerman, who is a very formidable and exciting newly elected Chair of the Local Health Advisory Council. She is very much a local champion. Murrumbidgee Local Health District, like many others, has struggled to recruit and retain permanent medical staff in its rural and base hospitals, necessitating the use of expensive locums to fill longstanding vacancies. Solutions have been found to recruit and support medical practitioners in locations where there have been vacancies for years.

Solutions have included innovative recruitment by the team at Griffith Base Hospital, clustering of single doctor towns for after-hours support, formulation of hubs to Grow a Bigger Base and provide outreach to smaller services, increased use of telehealth, and creation of longitudinal pathways for joined-up training for rural generalist medical and nursing practitioners. Implementation of these innovative solutions is projected to save not only considerable funds but also, most importantly, provide the community with confidence in knowing there is a long-term stable medical workforce plan. The \$720,000 maternity unit that opened in May this year supports the new Deniliquin midwifery led model of maternity care in collaboration with local general practitioner obstetricians.

The new way of providing care will enable each woman to develop a relationship with the same or a small number of Deniliquin midwives throughout her pregnancy, birth and after the birth of her baby. This new approach also prioritises the time of skilled local midwives and maximises the time they spend with each woman, ensuring there is continuity of care for the women and shared care arrangements for antenatal care. Under this model, each woman will have a primary midwife allocated from first booking in through to postnatal visits at home. Staff, community representatives, Goulburn Valley Health Shepparton and Victoria and Echuca Regional Health, Victoria, have participated in the development of the model. The Collaborative Midwifery Group Practice Model will sustain maternity services for the region well into the future, providing mothers and babies with targeted care.

An additional general practitioner obstetrician commenced at Deniliquin Hospital in March this year, bringing the number to three general practitioner obstetricians supporting the community. Deniliquin now has 14 doctors working within the district. I congratulate those general practitioners who rallied at a time of their looming retirement to actively support the bringing in of further medical practitioners. Many of the maternity units within Murrumbidgee Local Health District have long-term vacancies for registered midwives, despite

extensive and ongoing recruitment efforts. In late 2011, the Nursing and Midwifery Office initiated a new recruitment strategy by offering scholarships for student midwife positions within rural maternity units, which is working incredibly well. I congratulate Susan Weisser on her leadership of Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Gayle Murphy, Chair of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District Board and Amanda Shand, board member, on their success in the Murrumbidgee because of their commitment.

It would be remiss of me not to use this time to acknowledge The Nationals fabulous results in the Federal election and for running such a professional and successful campaign, particularly in Page. Congratulations to Kevin Hogan and his wife, Leanne, who is a nurse at Lismore Base Hospital. I also acknowledge the outgoing member, Janelle Saffin, and her considerable years of dedication to the people of the community. Members will recall that Janelle worked in this Chamber. I know that Kevin Hogan, like a good National, will be a strong voice for the people of Page. I particularly acknowledge the electorate council chairing campaign director Andrew Hogan, along with Faye Boyd from Grafton, campaign workers Tony Sarks, Will Coates and Henry Travers for their magnificent effort.

WATER FLUORIDATION

The Hon. WALT SECORD [3.59 p.m.]: In the brief time remaining, as Labor's shadow Minister for Water I draw attention to Labor's Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Amendment Bill 2013, which was introduced in the Legislative Assembly earlier today by shadow Minister for Health, Dr Andrew McDonald. The bill will protect the fluoridation of water supplies in New South Wales and enable the State Government to direct local authorities to fluoridate their public water supplies. The 105 local water authorities in non-metropolitan New South Wales provide 350 water supply systems for 1.8 million people.

Currently 95 per cent of the State has fluoridated water. It is unfortunate that this legislation is necessary as there have been recent moves by Lismore City Council and Byron Shire Council to roll back or prevent fluoridation. This is despite the internationally acknowledged benefits to dental health due to fluoridation. It is similar to the bizarre anti-vaccination campaign we witnessed earlier this year on the far North Coast. Currently under existing laws local councils that often operate local water authorities can choose not to add this vital dental health boost to their water supplies. That is a loophole and it must be fixed.

For the record, I support the legislation. Furthermore, I formally associate myself with Stop the Rot campaign of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*, which calls for fluoridation of water supplies to be a State issue, not one determined by individual local councils. As background, Labor's bill will give the Minister for Health the powers to direct a water supply authority to add fluoride to a public water supply under its control. It will also deny a water supply authority to discontinue fluoridation unless it is approved by the Director General of the Ministry of Health.

On 10 September Lismore City Council overturned last month's vote against allowing the fluoridation of the local drinking water. Fortunately common sense prevailed but this was after a concerted public campaign. However, despite a seven-year battle to allow fluoridation in Lismore, under current arrangements the council can rescind this decision at any time. Labor's bill simply gives the Minister for Health the authority to direct water providers to follow State Government policy that states—

[*Time for debate expired.*]

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.01 p.m. until Tuesday 17 September 2013 at 2.30 p.m.
