

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 1

Tuesday 7 September 1999

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

Premier, Arts and Citizenship

The Committee met at 7.30 p.m.

MEMBERS

Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile (Chair)

The Hon. Jan Burnswoods
The Hon. Patricia Forsythe
The Hon. A. B. Kelly

The Hon. P. T. Primrose
The Hon. J. M. Samios
The Hon. Dr P. Wong

PRESENT

The Hon. R. J. Carr, *Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship*

Dr C. Gellatly, *Director-General, Premier's Department*

Mr R. Wilkins, *Director-General, Cabinet Office*

CHAIR: I now open the meeting to the public and the media. At this meeting the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the portfolio areas of Premier, Arts and Citizenship. It is proposed to deal with the Premier, Citizenship, and Arts in that sequence. Before questions commence some procedural matters need to be dealt with. Members of the media should be aware that Legislative Council Standing Order 252 states that any evidence given before this Committee and any documents presented to it which have not yet been tabled in Parliament "may not, except with the permission of the Committee, be disclosed or published by any member of such Committee or by any other person". Accordingly, the Committee has resolved in this regard to authorise the media to broadcast sound and video excerpts of its public proceedings held today.

The Committee's resolution conforms with the guidelines governing the broadcasting of proceedings adopted by the Legislative Council on 11 October 1994. The attendant on duty has copies of those guidelines. I emphasise that only members of the Committee and witnesses before it may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery may not be considered to be part of the proceedings and, therefore, may not be included in sound and video broadcasts. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee, as with reporting the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament, the media must take responsibility for what it publishes or what interpretation is placed on anything that is said before the Committee.

While there has been provision in previous years' budget estimates resolutions, for members of a Committee and substitute members to refer directly to their own staff at any time, there is no such provision in the current resolution. Members and their staff are, therefore, advised that any messages should be delivered through the attendant on duty, or to Committee clerks. For the benefit of members and Hansard I ask departmental officials to identify themselves by name, position and department or agency before answering each question.

I address the two witnesses at the table, Dr Gellatly and Mr Wilkins. The Committee forwarded some questions to you for written response. Do you have those written answers with you today?

Dr GELLATLY: We have the answers to eight questions for tabling. We were not able to find the answers to the other two questions.

CHAIR: I understand that two questions remain outstanding. The Committee has resolved that answers to those questions be provided by 14 September. Is that satisfactory?

Dr GELLATLY: Yes.

CHAIR: I will now outline the proposed allocation of times agreed to in relation to questioning. I thank the Premier for attending the estimates committee and welcome him. A total of 120 minutes has been allocated for this hearing. One hour has been allocated to the Premier, 30 minutes has been allocated to the Opposition, 15 minutes has been allocated to the Hon. Dr P. Wong, and any remaining time has been allocated to me. In the portfolio of Citizenship, 30 minutes has been allocated: 15 minutes for the Opposition, seven minutes for the Hon. Dr P. Wong and any remaining time to me. In the portfolio of Arts, 30 minutes has been allocated: 15 minutes for the Opposition, seven minutes for the Hon. Dr P. Wong and any remaining time to me. That allocation has been accepted by the Committee. I declare the proposed expenditure for the Premier's Department open for examination. The Opposition has the first call.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Premier, given that your Government knew well in advance that legal funding for the Council on the Cost of Government expired on 1 May, why did you and Treasury fail to put alternative funding measures in place? Was this a gross aberration or was it the result of the ongoing cold war between Professor Walker and Treasurer Egan?

Mr CARR: Could you clarify the reference in the budget papers?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: The reference is in the Treasury allocation. Members do not have to give references to line items but simply to key agencies.

Mr CARR: What part of the budget papers refers to funding?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: I have no obligation to make a reference; that is my point.

Mr CARR: I do not know what you are referring to; that is my difficulty.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: There is the key agency reference to the Council on the Cost of Government in Budget Paper No. 3, Volume 1, program 4.1, Services for Administration of Government.

Mr CARR: I remain puzzled by the question. Page 2-47, which refers to funding of the Premier's Department, records the budget allocation.

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The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Yes. It makes reference to the Council on the Cost of Government. It states the objective of the council, which is to review the public sector management—and staffing has been provided, so obviously that is a resource—and funding.

Mr CARR: But my page records \$2.430 million was spent and \$2.770 million was allocated. It is there on the page. That is the allocation.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Your Government illegally funded the Council on the Cost of Government from 1 May 1999 until the Opposition highlighted the issue. You then moved the staff funding into the Premier's Department.

Dr GELLATLY: The staff of the Council on the Cost of Government has always been employed by the Premier's Department, and the allocation has always been made in the Premier's Department.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: If I could move on. Given the extraordinary waste of taxpayers' funds that resulted from leaving six floors of Bligh House empty, why have you allowed a protracted debate between the Premier's Department and the Council on the Cost of Government over the transfer from its \$600 per square metre harbour views in Governor Macquarie Tower to vacant space in Bligh House?

Mr CARR: I am advised there has been no dispute.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Well, will there be a transfer to Bligh House?

Mr CARR: I have no idea. Dr Gellatly might choose to answer.

Dr GELLATLY: As part of the accommodation strategy that the Department Public Works and Services put in place, it has gone to the market to look at the low-rise tower of Governor Macquarie Tower that is on the market now. It has always been intended that parts of the Premier's Department would move into Bligh House, and that process is proceeding. It is being managed by the Department of Public Works and Services. There has been no dispute between the Council on the Cost of Government and the Premier's Department.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: We are more concerned with the fact that it has not occurred. How long has that dialogue about the transfer been going on? Bear in mind that the Treasurer is most anxious and has stated publicly in the *Financial Review* that he wants tenants out of the expensive area of the central business district in the northern part and down to the southern part. Here you have an empty building in Bligh Street and you have done nothing about moving.

Mr CARR: I did not build that building and sign up to occupy it. I inherited a position whereby the building had been put up by the previous Coalition Government and I inherited a commitment to move government offices into it. The reason I am in that building, and the rest of Government is in that building, is that when I became Premier a commitment had been made to do it.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Premier, you have appointed Professor Walker as chairman of the

Superannuation Administration Corporation from 26 July 1999. Is Professor Walker paid more than \$50,000 for this new appointment?

Mr CARR: I cannot answer that. We are happy to get back to the Committee with that information.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: As to what he is being paid?

Mr CARR: Yes.

CHAIR: Will you take that question on notice?

Mr CARR: Yes.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Given that successive general managers Stephen McDonald and Esther Chesterman departed the Council on the Cost of Government last year after disagreements with Chairman Walker, do you agree with the current arrangement whereby Chairman Walker has three general managers to manage 17 staff?

Mr CARR: Seventeen staff where?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: In the Council on the Cost of Government.

Mr CARR: But he is not there. You referred to his appointment, his new appointment.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Given that successive general managers departed the council last year after disagreements with him, do you agree with the current arrangement whereby Chairman Walker has three general managers to manage 17 staff?

Mr CARR: First of all, there is no disagreement with Professor Walker. So the premise of the question is flawed. I am happy to take the question on notice and to report back to the Committee on the titles applying to the people working under Professor Walker.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Thank you, Premier. Your funding of the Council on the Cost of Government was considered illegal from 1 May 1999 until the Opposition highlighted the issue and then you moved, as I said, the staff funding into Premier's. But you could not legally do the same with Professor Walker's \$50,000 fee. How did you pay Professor Walker his \$50,000 fee, that is the fee for the Council on the Cost of Government, between 1 May and today?

Mr CARR: What is the basis for the novel contention that the work of the Council on the Cost of Government was illegal? It was not illegal.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: It expired, and that was a matter of public comment. The Opposition took that up. It is quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* of 14 June.

Mr CARR: Well, it does not require a statute to continue its work. There was never any question that it could continue working advising Government even if the statute expired, not the slightest question. There is no legal basis for saying its operations had no validity. The Council on the Cost of Government could continue operating in my administration if I were to establish it afresh. I could establish a council on government efficiency tomorrow as a unit within my administration. There is absolutely no basis for the contention that it was illegally operating because the statute expired. I would argue that there is a continuing need to have a body to advise Government on changes required to ensure that the public sector provides value for money and quality services.

Comparable bodies existed in the administration under the previous Coalition Government and under previous Labor governments, and the council has shown itself to be such a body. They were called

different things under the Coalition and different things under the previous Labor Government. The council has reported to Parliament six times. It has consistently highlighted the need for fundamental reform in areas such as financial management and corporate services. Its recommendations in corporate services reform have been very valuable to government, and are being implemented. It has been a great asset in driving efficiencies. It is not the only device to drive the efficiencies within government, but it is one of them.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Premier, you are aware of the sixth report of the council, which did not express all the enthusiasm about progress—the sixth report dated December 1998. You are aware of that report, are you not?

Mr CARR: Yes. What aspect of it?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: The aspect that concerns us is that the report came out in December and it was not made public until after the election. What was the reason for that political delay?

Mr CARR: I do not know. I have no specific reason. I am told it was tabled in the House. It became public once it was tabled in the House. But can I add to that specific answer that we extended the life of the council for a further two years by administrative means in the Premier's memorandum 99-13. This was in accordance with the Government's election commitment. I went to the people with a policy on public administration revealed in a speech given on my behalf by the Attorney General to the Institute of Public Administration on 24 February 1999. It set out our plan for the public sector. It stated that the Government would:

. . . extend the Council on the Cost of Government for another two years which will enable it to continue monitoring corporate service reform and refine its work on the service efforts and accomplishments project and systematically review group Government programs.

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I quoted from page 18 of the policy on public administration released by my party in the form of that address to the Institute of Public Administration. So there is no secrecy about extending the work of the council. We received a thumping mandate. The vote of the Liberal Party sank to its lowest level in history. A vote has not been recorded by the Liberal Party, any time in its history since it was established by Menzies, in New South Wales lower than the vote it received under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition at the election in March. I take that as an endorsement of our policies on public administration, which involves a continuation of the life of the council, explicitly set out in our policy on public administration and specifically set out in the policy released by the Attorney General on behalf of the Government.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I wish to ask some questions relating to the Commission for Children and Young People. It is proposed that average staffing will reach 28. Is it a fact that the first staff positions advertised by the commission were for two media liaison officers? Why was it necessary for the first staff to be employed to be media liaison officers and why was the proposal for two such officers?

Mr CARR: I do not know the answer to those questions so I will take them on notice.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I take it that that will be your response to the rest of my questions. A number of issues arise relating to the commission about which I have questions. One relates to staffing numbers. Is it a fact that, despite the fact that the program description relates to a person having a role in new employment screening procedures, the commission has no intention of engaging indirect screening procedures and it is employing staff only to set up systems?

Mr CARR: The two objectives of the Commission for Children and Young People are: to promote and enhance the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in the community and encourage their participation in decision-making through policy development, public inquiries, research, training and community education activities; and the screening of child-related employment. The commissioner commenced duties on 7 June. The commission has been granted an exemption from the public sector staff freeze. Ten positions were advertised on 7 August. Applications closed on 20 August. Selection is under way. Recruitment will commence for the remaining positions following the appointment of the managers. All preferred

applicants will be subject to probity checking. That is in line with commitments made by the Government at the time of the announcement.

The positions advertised by the Government are not as the honourable member has suggested. The commission advertised on 7 August for a manager, senior officer and senior risk assessor. Under community support the positions advertised on 7 August are for manager and senior officer, policy research and training. One position in public affairs was advertised on 7 August, not two. The other positions advertised—and again I am contradicting the suggestion made by the honourable member that the two positions that were advertised related only to media relations—were in office administration: manager, personal assistants, office administration and receptionist.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: When does the Government believe that it will have in place the full mechanism for the screening of employees in various government departments?

Mr CARR: I need to obtain advice from the commissioner in order to be able to answer that question. I take that question on notice.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: What is proposed for the screening of employees in non-government areas that are involved in legislation such as non-government schools?

Mr CARR: Again I would have to obtain advice from the commissioner, so I take that question on notice.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: I go back to the December report that was released some months after the election. The report, which was highly critical of the Government's administration, was kept secret until after the State election. Did Professor Walker take exception to the political delay of his important report?

Mr CARR: It was customary to release that report, like others, in the House when Parliament was sitting. I dispute the honourable member's contention that it was especially critical of government. I found it a useful report. My third observation is that there was no objection or argument from Professor Walker whatsoever about the timing of its release—certainly none that he put to me.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: I refer the Premier to a paragraph in the report which states:

Centrally, the resources allocated to the reform program appear overstretched and the reform process places considerable reliance on the capacity of agencies to reform themselves. Amongst agencies a sense of urgency is not apparent. These are not the ingredients for radical change and major cost savings.

Would the Premier not agree that that is critical of the Government?

Mr CARR: I do not accept that it is critical. Every agency of government believes that it ought to have more resources. I challenge the honourable member to nominate one of them that would not say in a report to government or to Parliament that it could not do with more resources. It was ever thus. The most recent advice I have from the council indicates that the reforms it has urged have gathered momentum. The council bases this assessment, in part, on the Premier's Department publication "Reform and Redirection" which sets out a number of areas where reforms are occurring or have occurred.

The council, of course, is there to goad government. Its purpose is to keep up the pressure for public sector reform. It would not be doing its duty if it did not argue that there is no cause for relaxation. Improvements in public sector efficiency in a sector as large as the one in this State are always a huge task and they need continual encouragement. I welcome the fact that the Council on the Cost of Government continues to goad government. The honourable member cannot, on the one hand, argue that it has been ineffective under the leadership of Professor Walker and, on the other hand, invoke its recommendation when it suits his case.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: I ask the Premier whether he would agree with the public perception as expressed in an article by David Humphries dated 3 July:

Meanwhile, the pressing task of reforming administration which could save taxpayers an estimated \$350 million a year on one front alone, is languishing three years after it began.

Mr CARR: I agree with the perception of the people of New South Wales as recorded on Saturday 27 March, which relegated your party, after all its arguments during the election campaign, to the lowest vote recorded by the Liberal Party since it was established by Menzies. At no election in the history of this State since 1944 has the Liberal Party recorded a lower vote; not under any of the esteemed leaders of the forties or fifties; not under Coleman and not under McDonald. Under none of them was the vote lower than it was on 27 March. The honourable member asked me to agree that the people of this State would endorse an opinion of an esteemed writer for a great journal of record. That is speculation. We know the opinion that the people of this State recorded at the solemn moment when they decided who should govern this State for the next four years. It was a whopping mandate for this side of politics and a humiliating rebuttal for the others, especially the Liberal Party.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Would the Premier agree that, had members of the public known about secret documents like that, which were not released until after the election, their opinion might have been different?

Mr CARR: I cannot remember the publicity that that document got when it was released.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: How did the Government pay Professor Walker's \$50,000 Council on the Cost of Government fee between 1 May and today?

Mr CARR: I am not aware of any interruption to his payment. I hope that there would not have been as the council continued operating. But I have answered that question. The council continued operating. We enabled it to continue operating; it was not obliged to do so. The honourable member is operating under a continuing misapprehension that the Government wrapped up the council. It did not, and it did not have to. There was no lapse in the authority of the council. I thought I explained that. It continued as a non-statutory body. We did not pretend otherwise. We did not suggest it was going to wind up. What is the basis for your assumption that the council was trying to wrap up its activities? When was it ever suggested by us that it would?

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The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: Since we are not engaged in interlocutories perhaps I can ask in relation to his new appointment whether Professor Walker is being paid more than \$50,000?

Mr CARR: No, you asked that question earlier.

CHAIR: It is on notice.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: Well, I am asking it now.

Mr CARR: And the answer I gave earlier applies. We are happy to provide you with answers, if you would like that.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I would like the answer.

Mr CARR: The answer to that question is the one I gave to the same question when you shuffled the same bit of paper earlier.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I think the supplementary question to that is: What is his total remuneration from the Government?

Mr CARR: No, that is not a supplementary question. That is a question you asked and your colleague asked before you, and the same answer applies.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I am asking that the written answer we receive set out the total remuneration the Government is paying Professor Walker at this time.

Mr CARR: That was the earlier question: What is the remuneration?

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I am asking for the total remuneration.

Mr CARR: Total remuneration is the same as remuneration. It is exactly the same.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: That is good, then the answer will be the same.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Premier, I return to the detailed comprehensive sixth report of the Council on the Cost of Government, which makes the point in the results:

In mid-1998 the Council surveyed agencies to assess their capacity to analyse activities and to identify the initiatives undertaken including benchmarking and internal improvements. The results indicate knowledge of costs and outputs varies markedly among agencies: financial analysis skills need strengthening, benchmarking occurring but needs encouragement and a wide range of improvement initiatives are under way.

It indicates fairly clearly some considerable dissatisfaction at the progress.

Mr CARR: That is why I find the report useful. The Council on the Cost of Government exists to make criticisms of government. It exists to recommend more efficient ways of achieving the objectives of government. The report, in which the council says there has been good progress but there is a lot to be done, is grist for the mill to me. I can give a longer answer. The reform of corporate services, which has been a focus of the council and its reports, is a dynamic area of improvement for the New South Wales public sector and the Council on the Cost of Government has done a great deal to goad the process. Further strategies to consolidate and build on savings, to date an amount of more than \$161 million, focused on: process improvement initiatives, targeted financial and performance initiatives, improved information resources to support whole-of-sector and agency decision making, and better utilisation of existing and developing technologies. For example, the setting of performance targets in the occupational health and safety sector are being set for 12 major agencies as part of a three-year improvement strategy. The use of employee self-service web-based technologies such as integrated voice response and kiosks, is being examined for potential to create efficiencies and improved customer service. Excuse me, Mr Chairman, but I am required in the House to vote in a division.

CHAIR: We will adjourn the hearing until the Premier returns.

[Short adjournment]

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CHAIR: I understand that you did not expect the House to be sitting tonight, so you were not prepared.

Mr CARR: Apparently, but the House is up now.

CHAIR: We have lost 10 minutes. We were wondering whether, if you are agreeable, we should add that 10 minutes at the end.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: We have already agreed that we will not go after 9.30 p.m. tonight.

Mr CARR: I am not that keen to go after 9.30.

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: The Committee has agreed that we will not go after 9.30.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: The Committee is now disagreeing.

CHAIR: But we did not have the Premier forced to leave the hearing room.

Mr CARR: Can we see how we go? I am resistant to going after 9.30. I was interrupted by

the bells in the middle of a question. I am happy to table material on the work of the public sector in response to the corporate services report.

CHAIR: Do you want to table that document?

Mr CARR: No, we will get back to you with a comprehensive report on the work on corporate services reform. I will provide you with additional details on that. In answering a question, I just want to nail this notion that there was something illegitimate about the tabling of the report of the Council on the Cost of Government. I quote from the relevant section of the Public Sector Management Act, which says in respect of the work of the council:

The Minister is to lay each such report or cause it to be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as practicable after receiving the report.

The report has come to Parliament, and that is what happened in this case: it came to Parliament. It was tabled in Parliament in line with the provisions of the Act.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: But you had received it, as the Minister, in December?

Mr CARR: We are governed by the Act.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Is that the reason it was not laid before the House?

Mr CARR: The Act requires it to be laid before the House, and that was as soon as practicable.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: You are saying that as soon as practicable was after the election?

Mr CARR: When the House was back.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Obviously there is need for an amendment.

Mr CARR: But you oppose the continuation of the Act. You oppose the continued application of the Act, so how can you talk now about an amendment to the Act?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: I was on another issue. I refer to page 2-55 of Budget Paper No. 3, Volume 1, miscellaneous grants approved by the Premier, which were \$2,416,000 in 1998-99, and the revised figure went to \$4,776,000. It was a considerable difference. What accounted for the 97 per cent, \$2.3 million, increase in miscellaneous grants approved by the Premier for the State Administration Services 1998-99 budget? Can you provide the name of the recipients and the amounts received for grants of more than \$29,999?

Mr CARR: Yes, I can. I am advised it reflects the State Government's \$5 million commitment to the St. Mary's Cathedral spires, now fully paid: \$1.5 million in 1996-97 and \$3.5 million in 1998-99, so no provision has been made for that in the 1999-2000 estimates. Special provision to the extent of \$600,000 has been included this year to complete the University of Wollongong science centre, for which \$2 million was allocated in 1997-98 and other one-off funding totalling \$250,000 will provide further ANZAC Memorial security.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: You have announced the replacement of the Ethnic Affairs Commission with the Community Relations Commission with the intention to improve and expand services to ethnic communities. Was there any decrease in allocation in this year's budget for the Ethnic Affairs Commission as compared with the 1998-99 budget? What was this decrease in real percentage terms?

Mr CARR: I will answer those questions on notice.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: I believe it is about \$450,000 in real terms. If that statement is true,

can you explain why?

Mr CARR: I can give that to you on notice.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: What will happen to this funding in the event of the abolition of the Ethnic Affairs Commission? Will this money be directly transferred to the new commission replacing the Ethnic Affairs Commission?

Mr CARR: Yes, of course.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Assuming I am right, having regard to the decrease in funding for the Ethnic Affairs Commission how will the announced expansion and improvement of the role of the new commission take place, while not limiting its monitoring function of public agencies?

Mr CARR: I give you an account of the new undertakings of the Ethnic Affairs Commission. There will be an extension of video conferencing to country court houses; there will be a rapid-response interpreting service for emergency situations; and there will be a multilingual information call centre established. The core functions of the Community Relations Commission will be exactly those of the Ethnic Affairs Commission: to build and promote the value of the community, which is linguistically, ethnically, religiously and racially diverse. For the first time the legislation that governs the body will reflect a commitment to a multicultural society.

It will be the first time multiculturalism is reflected in legislation in this State. We will give the Community Relations Commission broader roles: for example, setting up closer partnerships between community groups, the community at large and the Government; promoting and encouraging participation in all aspects of community life so that everyone can exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities; and promoting citizenship as an inclusive term that recognises the cultural diversity of the people of New South Wales and their unifying commitment to Australia's civic values and laws. We would expect to introduce this legislation in this session of Parliament.

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The Hon. Dr P. WONG: With all this extra activity would it be right to assume that there will be extra funding available to the new commission?

Mr CARR: We believe that the challenge of government in the 1990s is to achieve more objectives by working more efficiently and I have been persuaded that the great ethnic communities of this State—and I have been to about a dozen ethnic gatherings since I made this announcement—are supportive of what we have proposed. One of the leaders of a large non-English-speaking community said:

I now know that Australia has matured. Until now we were all like tenants in a rented house but we will now be one of the owners of the home we live in.

In other words, reliance on the term "ethnic" has been overtaken by maturity in those non-English-speaking communities and in Australia at large. So many people with migrant backgrounds have said to me, "I don't want to be regarded as an ethnic Australian. I don't want to be regarded as a hyphenated Australian. I want to be regarded as an Australian, with equal rights." My wife is a migrant; most of her family is in Australia. They would not regard themselves as ethnic Australians. They want the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship and they somehow feel that the term "ethnic" relegates them. They would be offended if you or anyone were to suggest that they are a special category of Australian called ethnic. The term is outdated. It has served its usefulness and as Dr Paolo Totaro, the first Chair of the Ethnic Affairs Commission, said:

When the Ethnic Affairs Commission was established its ultimate achievement would have been to do itself out of a job. The changes now proposed for the commission are a way of acknowledging that some of its charter has been achieved and it is time to move to new challenges and to present the ancient themes of diversity and acceptance in a new language.

He said that in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 26 June 1999. That is precisely what we are attempting to do with our proposed changes with the Act.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: You have not answered my question. Will there be extra funding for the Ethnic Affairs Commission?

Mr CARR: I will answer the question about the funding, as I said, when I have had an opportunity to check the reference.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: I will ask the same question again. With extra activity will there be more funding?

Mr CARR: No. The funding is allocated in this budget.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: So there will not be extra funding?

Mr CARR: We are talking about this budget.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: I am asking you—

Mr CARR: I am answering your question.

CHAIR: Let the Premier answer.

Mr CARR: It is not the role of this Committee to ask about the Government's intention in next year's budget. It is not the role of this Committee to ask me questions about next year's budget but to talk about this one.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Since you raised the point about the word "ethnic" I assume you are aware that the only political party supporting you is the One Nation Party. Are you not becoming an instrument of the One Nation Party?

Mr CARR: Mr Chairman, I am happy to answer questions that are in order, not to respond to argument and political attacks.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: You are the one who raised the political intonation first, not me.

CHAIR: Do you have any other questions, Dr Wong?

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Yes. Can you explain why there is a 5.8 per cent decrease in spending on interpreter and translation services projected for the Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1999-2000 at a time when demand for such services continues to grow and access is becoming more difficult?

Mr CARR: The commission advises me that there will be lower use of its interpreting and translating facilities in the 1999-2000 year due to a loss of customers to other service providers. This reduction translates to a corresponding reduction in employee-related costs. The commission is currently negotiating with the Public Service Association to introduce a more comprehensive award covering interpreters and translators, but the essential answer to your question is that people are going to the greater diversity of service providers that exists today.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: My understanding is that the needs are not being met but that is beside the point. Will these services be privatised?

Mr CARR: No, but we cannot stop people going to other service providers and I am advised by the Ethnic Affairs Commission that that has been the pattern, so that as new service providers make their services available to communities, there is a tendency in some communities to go to them. I issued a directive in July 1998 requiring all New South Wales public agencies to provide interpreters when needed and agencies that fund other bodies to allocate funding for the use of language services by those bodies. The Ethnic Affairs Commission, therefore, does not provide free interpreters to community legal centres when the matter falls under

the responsibility of another funding agency.

Your concern should be directed to the Commonwealth. This severe hardship caused in this area by Commonwealth cuts to interpreting services has made itself felt. I am advised by the Ethnic Affairs Commission that it in fact expanded its exemption guidelines in February 1998 to allow free interpreters for community legal centres for preliminary interviews and for matters where State and Commonwealth jurisdictions could overlap but were forced to do that because of the cuts in these services implemented by the Commonwealth. And that is in the face of previous guarantees, I am advised, by the Commonwealth that they would maintain services.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: How much money has been allocated in this year's budget to research and evaluation of the constant changing needs of ethnic communities in New South Wales?

Mr CARR: I cannot answer that question but I would think the major role for the commission is to actually provide services.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: So you think there is no need for research and evaluation?

Mr CARR: I think the primary role of the commission is to provide services. I think there is a wealth of research material on the composition of multicultural New South Wales.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: As provided by whom? Your Government?

Mr CARR: I see the greater priority being the provision of services, on-the-ground services. It is what the communities want.

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The Hon. Dr P. WONG: So you intend to maintain or even decrease activities if possible? You would not mind it if that happened, such as in interpreter and translation services?

Mr CARR: I would refer you to my earlier answer.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: What is the total number of grants programs offered by the Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1998-99 as compared with this year's budget?

Mr CARR: I will take that on notice.

CHAIR: That question will be put on notice.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Mr Premier, please explain your portfolio of Citizenship. What does it mean?

Mr CARR: The legislation I will present to the Parliament in the next couple of weeks will provide a definition of citizenship.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: And will there be any money spent on such a portfolio?

Mr CARR: I am sorry, on what portfolio?

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: On your Citizenship portfolio?

Mr CARR: I am not sure what you mean.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: I suppose your portfolio is Minister for Arts and Minister for Citizenship. Will there be any funding allocated to Citizenship?

Mr CARR: I would need clarification. We have just been talking about funding for the Ethnic

Affairs Commission, which we are proposing to rename the Community Relations Commission.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: So if the EAC is renamed and you are Premier, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Citizenship, is it Citizenship just in name only then, there is no active role in it?

Mr CARR: I am sorry, as I have explained in public statements and in the consultation paper that has been widely distributed, and which I am sure you and other members of the Council have seen, in just about every other jurisdiction in Australia there is a term used other than "ethnic affairs". It is not used by the Commonwealth Government. It is not used in other States. By and large the reference is "citizenship" or something else. That is also true of overseas jurisdictions. Where in the past there was reliance on the term "ethnic affairs" there is now reliance on some other term or expression. There is a broad movement away from invoking of "ethnic affairs". People have moved beyond that. That is what I am trying to capture in the legislative amendments that will be before the Parliament. The legislation will provide a definition of citizenship but it will also, for the first time, recognise multiculturalism, using the term "multiculturalism" not the expression used up until now in New South Wales State legislation, "cultural diversity".

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: By the way, the Commonwealth Government does use the term "multicultural affairs".

Mr CARR: No, that is not what I said. I said it does not use the term "ethnic affairs" in the title of the Minister.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Yes, I agree with that. On the other hand many ethnic communities have approached you to ask you to consider adding the name "multicultural affairs".

Mr CARR: In the legislation, not in the title. For the first time we are proposing to place it in the legislation.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Again I would suggest your thinking and philosophy are very much a One Nation line.

Mr CARR: I would dispute that. New South Wales Labor in the last election, unlike the Coalition, put One Nation last.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: You may dispute that, however—

Mr CARR: I am sorry, you asked the question.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Yes, I will listen.

Mr CARR: In Queensland 11 One Nation members were elected on Coalition preferences, not Labor preferences. The only One Nation presence in a State Parliament apart from the New South Wales upper House is in Queensland—11 One Nation members elected on Coalition preferences.

The Hon. A. B. KELLY: We are not exchanging preferences in Dubbo this weekend either, as Gerry Peacocke is.

Mr CARR: Gerry Peacocke, a former Coalition Minister in this State, is exchanging preferences with One Nation on Saturday in Dubbo. I spoke 20 times in New South Wales urging the placing of One Nation last. It is on the public record. This Saturday, I regret to say, Sutherland Liberals are giving preferences to One Nation in the council elections. With the Leader of the Opposition there I appeal to her at this meeting to have her colleagues in the Liberal Party in Sutherland put One Nation last. Kerry, I plead with you to put One Nation last in Sutherland. I appeal to the Leader of the Opposition to reverse the decision of the Liberal Party to give preferences to One Nation in the council elections in Sutherland on Saturday. In a multicultural society, Mr Chairman, this trade of preferences between the Liberal Party and One Nation in Sutherland is an absolute disgrace and the Leader of the Opposition is in a position to assert her leadership and

to stamp it out. Unless she does it on Saturday votes will flow from the Liberal Party in Sutherland right into the electoral support, the electoral tally, of One Nation. And that is something that the Leader of the Opposition should stop. I thank Dr Wong for the question.

CHAIR: Mr Premier, as you know, the Leader of the Opposition cannot answer you in this estimates committee but she will probably answer you in another place.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Mr Chair, I am amazed. The Premier a few minutes ago said that he would not make political statements. He is making them. I am not supporting the Liberal Party.

Mr CARR: I never said at any time I would not make a political statement.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: There should be a certain amount of justice. Whether we like it or not, it is your statement being supported by One Nation in the upper House and you cannot say that you are not—

Mr CARR: Mr Chairman, I stand by my previous answer.

CHAIR: Dr Wong, you will have to reframe your comments into a question to be asked in the next round of questioning.

Mr CARR: I thank Dr Wong for giving me the chance to raise the matter of Liberal Party preferences in Sutherland. I appreciate it very much. There might not have been an opening in this hearing had it not been for Dr Wong's intervention.

CHAIR: For which you were unprepared.

Mr CARR: Totally unprepared.

CHAIR: Mr Premier, at pages 2-2 and 2-3 of Budget Paper No. 3, Volume 1 there is reference to a social policy development unit in the Cabinet Office. It was obvious that the Cabinet Office was very much involved with the recent Drug Summit and co-ordinated the Drug Summit. As you know, there were recommendations concerning non-government injecting rooms. In view of your announcement that there will be one injecting room in Kings Cross and the written warning this week by the United Nations narcotics board that this action would contravene the United Nations drug control convention, have you given any instructions or given consideration concerning possible challenges to the legal injecting room and the legal costs involved if it is challenged at the United Nations level or the High Court level, which has also been mentioned? What action do you anticipate your Government taking in this matter? Will you be following it up with any discussions with the United Nations at the government level?

Mr CARR: Mr Chairman, I will be able to answer your question in the Government's second reading speech on the proposed legislation.

CHAIR: And you are aware of the matter relating to the United Nations?

Mr CARR: Yes, but I am awaiting definitive advice on that. As you would expect, that will be addressed in the second reading speech, given on our legislative proposals.

CHAIR: The State Electoral Office has responsibility for the management of elections and so on. During the elections I had discussions with the electoral commissioner and asked him why some of the parties that had been registered obviously were fraudulent. To paraphrase his response, he said, "If the Government gave me an allocation for investigation officers I would investigate it but my budget does not include an allocation for that particular role." Will you consider whether the budget of the Electoral Office should be expanded, if it is not already, to allow it to conduct such investigations? If it cannot do it, who should do it?

Mr CARR: I think there is probably an easier answer to the problem of what might be described as opportunistic political parties without much of a history planting themselves on the ballot paper. I would seek to address that in proposals for amending the Electoral Act in respect of the nomination process or the registration process which were foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech today. I believe the proposals that the Government is working on would address your concerns. Shortly we should be able to put the proposals to you and to other members of Parliament for your consideration.

CHAIR: Concern has been expressed, even if it is said that a new party must have 1,000 members, about who will ascertain that there are 1,000 legitimate members. The problem is that even if the legislation is correct, the State Electoral Office does not seem to have sufficient staff to conduct an investigation.

Mr CARR: Our hope is that the amended legislation will be more transparent and enforceable than is the existing statute. I acknowledge your concerns. I would like to think that we could tackle the problem without having to contemplate employing inspectors for the State Electoral Commission. I would be genuinely interested in having your comments when the draft legislation is prepared.

CHAIR: The allocation for the current year for the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC], which appears in Budget Paper No. 3, Volume 1, at page 2-57, is less than the budget expenditure for last year so there has actually been a reduction. It appears, therefore, that under the current funding ICAC will not have necessary revenue resources for investigation and advice, particularly in the new area of Internet fraud and corruption, unless other planned activities, which are considered to have a high priority, are curtailed. As you know, it is a policy within the Government that the preferred mode of communication is via the Internet and email. What steps are being taken to prevent the misuse of information technology, such as computers, the Internet and email? What funding has been allocated to ICAC to undertake a program of investigation and education in relation to the use by Government departments and agencies of computers, the Internet and email, which constitute a whole new area that has not previously been covered in budget allocations for the ICAC?

Mr CARR: The public sector has issued guidelines in New South Wales seeking to address some of the concerns associated with the Internet and information technology. I would be happy to provide them to the Committee. As a result of consultation with Government agencies and public sector unions, for example, a protocol for acceptable uses of the Internet and electronic mail was issued in March 1999. The protocol describes appropriate use. It reinforces in codes of conduct the expectation of the way in which public sector employees' use and management of agency resources are accountable and incorporate the values of honesty, integrity and fairness.

Chief executives are under an obligation to ensure that access to the Internet within their agencies is properly controlled and monitored. This includes a requirement to provide employees with a clear statement of their responsibilities, including a direction on the inappropriate use of the Internet. As well, agencies may monitor appropriate use on both a random and continuing basis. When it comes to funding of the ICAC, it is relevant that we now have two bodies whereas previously there was one. I refer to the establishment of the Police Integrity Commission [PIC] involving an allocation in excess of \$12 million. Taken together, PIC and ICAC now receive over \$25 million in funding. I do not think you will find that level of funding reflected in the budget of any other State Government.

CHAIR: The Commission for Children and Young People is referred to in the Budget Paper No. 3, Volume 1, at pages 2-14 and 2-90. As you know, the Government established the Commission for Children and Young People to promote and enhance the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. I understand that the new commissioner is Gillian Calvert, a former Cabinet Office member and a ministerial adviser. What guarantees are in place to ensure that the new commissioner is totally independent of government influence—a concern that has been stated by some of the agencies working with children?

Mr CARR: My recollection was that her appointment had been received with a fair degree of approbation from non-government agencies.

CHAIR: Some concerns have been mentioned about the location of the commission's

headquarters and whether its location is now permanent or likely to be changed. Do you have any information on where the office is likely to be permanently located?

Mr CARR: No, I do not. With your permission, I will add to my earlier answer, however, by saying that Miss Calvert was selected by a committee comprising Dr John Yu, who was formerly the Chief Executive Officer of the new Children's Hospital, Ms Irene Moss, who is the New South Wales Ombudsman, Dr Gellatly, and Ms Kate McKenzie, who is the Deputy Director-General of the Cabinet Office.

CHAIR: Do you have any information about where the commission will be operating from?

Mr CARR: No, I do not.

CHAIR: Has a decision been made on its location?

Mr CARR: No.

CHAIR: A decision is still to be made?

Mr CARR: I have no information. I can find out whether any views are held on its location. In answering questions about this, I might seize the opportunity to make an announcement about a New South Wales Government intervention of great assistance to families. I want to announce that families in the Hunter, Orana-far west and Sydney's inner west will benefit for the first time from a New South Wales Government program called Families First which is designed to help parents get support from professional carers and experienced volunteers when raising young children. It is about giving parents in those three regions a helping hand when raising their children. It is an example of the State Government working with the community to give our young people the best possible start in life.

Parents will receive a home visit from a trained nurse after their child's birth. Those parents wanting further help can receive regular visits from a trained volunteer. Studies show that for every dollar spent on supporting young families, the community saves \$7 later in policing, health and welfare. Families First is currently being implemented in south-west Sydney and in the mid- and far north coast areas. The second stage of the roll-out of Families First includes the Hunter, Orana-far west and Sydney's inner west and will start in mid-2000. It will be open to all parents with children under the age of eight years.

It is a four-step program to suit each individual family. The stages are: early childhood health visitors—trained nurses visiting parents in their homes after the birth of a child to help them care for infants; volunteer home visitors—trained, experienced parents will visit families with young children in their homes for a few hours once or twice weekly to help them with everything from nappy-changing and a chat to finding the best doctor or day care centre; early intervention—if parents are experiencing serious difficulties, they can contact professionals for support; and local development programs—bringing parents together in local communities to talk, to swap hints and to share resources. Forty-four per cent of reports received by the Department of Community Services are from the parents asking for help. The Families First program uses not only professional carers but also neighbourhood networks and volunteers who want to give something back to the community.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Is the allocation of \$641,000 for the purchase of property, plant and equipment—which appears at page 2-139 of Budget Paper No. 3, Volume 1 of the 1999-2000 budget papers—to be used wholly for the upgrading of the facility housing the Ethnic Affairs Commission?

Mr CARR: I would need to check with the commission. I will take the question on notice.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: If it is for the Ethnic Affairs Commission, can you explain why the commission needs to be upgraded to the extent of \$641,000?

Mr CARR: I would have to take the question on notice.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: The Ethnic Affairs Commission occupies those premises under a lease, does it not?

Mr CARR: I have no idea.

Dr GELLATLY: Yes, it does.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Dr Gellatly confirms that the premises at Ashfield are occupied by the Ethnic Affairs Commission under a lease. It is fairly clear, I would submit, that the \$641,000 is to be for those premises, and I believe there is further evidence for that in the budget. If that is the case, would you agree that spending that money on a leased facility would be seen as being—

Dr GELLATLY: It would not necessarily be simply on the property itself; it could be plant facilities or computer facilities, particularly with the Y2K issue coming up. That includes plant and equipment, which would include the computer facilities.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: I refer you to page 2-30, which says, in relation to asset acquisitions of the Ethnic Affairs Commission: "The commission will spend \$641,000 on the refurbishment of its Ashfield offices to ensure employee occupational health and safety, and compliance with council fire regulations."

Mr CARR: As Dr Gellatly reminds me, if it is a requirement of occupational health and safety and compliance with council fire regulations, it is not in fact discretionary. It is a legitimate question, and I am happy to report in detail, but I cannot provide much of an insight beyond that.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: We would like to know when the current lease expires, because the question we would want to ask is: Would one not have checked out those aspects of the lease prior to entering the premises?

Mr CARR: It is a fair question, and I am happy to report back if I may take the question on notice.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Do the interpreter services provided by the commission include sign language interpreters?

Mr CARR: I would need to check with the commission.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Will you be able to provide also the names of the agencies that have received a grant worth more than \$29,999 under the community partnership scheme?

Mr CARR: Do you mean a grant from the Ethnic Affairs Commission?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Yes.

Mr CARR: I am sure that we can, yes. I am advised that it would be in the annual report of the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Dr GELLATLY: All grants have to be recorded.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: I presume you are referring to the partnership grants that are referred to. There are no others outside the partnership.

Dr GELLATLY: All grants that are given by the Ethnic Affairs Commission have to be reported in the commission's annual report.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Earlier you made reference to the fact that you would give an

answer in due course as to the cost of the changes to the Ethnic Affairs Commission if that occurred. It is significant that in the budget papers there is a reference to the Community Relations Commission. It speaks as if it was fait accompli. In fact, up until now there is no Community Relations Community; it is the Ethnic Affairs Commission. The Premier has changed the name of his portfolio to Citizenship unilaterally.

Mr CARR: What part of the budget papers are you referring to?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: It is in the preamble to the budget itself.

Mr CARR: On the contrary. I have it in front of me, and it says: "The Government proposes to introduce legislation in the Parliament to restructure the commission into a Community Relations Commission." That is precisely what we are proposing to do.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: At the time that this was published, you were saying that you would canvass community consultation. In fact, you consulted with 65 groups as to whether you should change the name of the commission from the Ethnic Affairs Commission to the Community Relations Commission.

Mr CARR: Yes. But you have not read my press release two weeks after the election making the announcement. I said precisely that it was the intention of the Government to change the name.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: That was the press release, in which you made reference to migrant communities. That offended a lot of old communities, including the Chinese, the Italians, the Greeks, the Germans—

Mr CARR: On the contrary. I have attended at least a dozen ethnic gatherings since that time. There was not one argument lodged at any one of them in opposition to what we are proposing.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Are you aware that the Ethnic Affairs Commission, which is the peak organisation representing 1,000 ethnic-affiliated groups, opposes your move to change the name?

Mr CARR: They are entitled to. But the support from the community is very real. Earlier you raised my commitment to citizenship, and including "citizenship" in my portfolio title. One of my responses to any question about citizenship and about what I will do to encourage citizenship is contained in legislation we are proposing to introduce in this session of Parliament. The Government party room endorsed it today. It will be an opportunity for us to protect some of the monuments to Australian citizenship around this city.

I refer to the legislation that I will be introducing in the Parliament tomorrow that provides significantly increased penalties for attacks on war memorials in this city, and in particular the Anzac memorial building in Hyde Park. You might recall that earlier this year the community was united in its anger and devastation at a graffiti attack on the Anzac war memorial in Hyde Park. It is the State's principal war memorial and it is dedicated to the memory of all those who served this country in war. Sydneysiders were shocked to find the memorial disfigured, angry at this act of mindless graffiti. Calls for action reverberated around this city, and we will respond by legislating, if I have the support of the Parliament, in ways suggested to me by the RSL.

Earlier in this exchange I was challenged over grants from my miscellaneous grants fund. An amount of \$105,000 from my miscellaneous grants fund was provided to the trustees of that Anzac memorial to fund night-time security. Further funding of \$133,000 was made available for night-time security guards from 1 July this year. They will be in place until new security barriers are operational and Hyde Park comes under camera surveillance. An amount of \$1 million was included in the 1999-2000 budget estimates for program 418 under the State Asset Acquisition program for construction of the barriers. Tenders for this work are being evaluated. This will improve security at the memorial and lessen the risk of damage in the future.

We have a firm commitment to protecting the memory and spirit of the Anzacs. On 19 February this year I announced that the study of World War I would be made compulsory for school students. More and more young Australians are attending Anzac Day marches and ceremonies, and clearly our young people want to learn about this central part of their nation's history. The new HSC modern history syllabus will

cover Gallipoli, the consequences of war, the treaties of the peace settlement, and the experiences of men and women on the home front. As well, all secondary students will study 200 hours of history in years seven to 10, learning about Gallipoli and the Anzacs, World War II and the Vietnam War.

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Through our young people the Anzac spirit will survive, and indeed this is one of the goals of Citizenship and an obligation on me as a Minister for Citizenship. The renaming of the Glebe Island Bridge as Anzac Bridge was a symbolic gesture to help protect and continue the memory of the Anzacs. Earlier this year the New Zealand flag joined the Australian flag flying on the bridge, acknowledging that "Anzac" belongs to New Zealand as much as it does to Australia. All these decisions were taken, I am proud to say, in consultation with the RSL in consultation with its State President, Rusty Priest, the key figure in promoting and protecting the Anzac tradition. He is a special guardian of the Anzac name and tradition.

Following Rusty's representation to me on another matter, earlier this year I wrote to the New South Wales Real Estate Institute about auctions being held on Anzac Day. As a mark of respect the institute agreed to hold off auctions on Anzac Day until 1.00 p.m. and that brings real estate agents into line with retailers. As Australia enters a new century it is conceivable that interest in the Anzacs could wane. But I am pleased to say that the opposite is the case—interest is growing. Protection of our memorials is an important element in the protection of the Anzac tradition. That is why the Government moved quickly to fund the enhanced security of the Hyde Park memorial. Some might criticise it for being done through an allocation from my fund, but, in fact, it is a legitimate undertaking by a Minister for Citizenship.

This evening I announce that tomorrow that legislation will enter the Parliament and I call on all members from both Houses to pledge their support for increasing the maximum penalty for vandalism to the Hyde Park memorial. The current maximum penalty for damaging the memorial is only \$200. The new legislation will bring offences into line with those existing in the Summary Offences Act. That Act also contains a provision enabling a person found guilty of criminal damage to be required to pay or contribute towards the cost of rectifying the damage in addition to any fine that might be imposed. That new law will send an important message to the community so that these memorials, commemorating the sacrifice of thousands, can be protected for the generations to come.

CHAIR: Dr Wong has some questions to ask on citizenship and then the Opposition can ask any remaining questions, including reference to the Arts.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Mr Chair, since your questions about citizenship I still do not know what the Premier means by "citizenship". Is it the same as "ethnic affairs"? He seems to be answering more about ethnic affairs.

Mr CARR: As I have said twice, these questions will be addressed in the legislation that I will introduce into the Parliament. It will contain a definition of "citizenship" which will unite both Houses.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Mr Chair, I am amazed that this highly intelligent Premier could not give me two sentences about citizenship. I give up! What is different with your policy of citizenship and community relations from that of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party?

Mr CARR: I refer to my previous answer.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: I am happy that you do not wish to answer me, thank you. My third question refers to the Ethnic Affairs Commission which received, I suppose, about 80 submissions. How many submissions did it receive in support of your Community Relations Commission?

Mr CARR: I am happy to take the question on notice.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Premier, you said that you are not aware of one person objecting to your renaming the Ethnic Affairs Commission the Community Relations Commission. Is that right?

Mr CARR: I said that in a dozen functions that I have attended no-one has come up to me

and said that they have objected.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Fine! So I assume that at all those functions you have never met Bill Jegorow, Ross Tzannes or Angela Chan?

Mr CARR: They have never come up to me and it said that they object to it.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: I wonder whether you have attended any ethnic community functions?

Mr CARR: I will give you a list of a dozen of them, which I have in my office. The list can be presented to you within five minutes.

CHAIR: That question is on notice. Do you have any more questions, Dr Wong?

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Yes, I do. I have a lot of questions.

Mr CARR: Further, few people would enjoy such unambiguous respect as the first chair of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales, Dr Paolo Totaro. He said, "When the Ethnic Affairs Commission was established its ultimate achievement would have been to do itself out of a job. The changes now proposed for the commission are a way of acknowledging that some of its charter has been achieved and it is time to move to new challenges and to present the ancient themes of diversity and acceptance in a new language." He said that, as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 June 1999. That is the response he put forward. Is it really suggested that the term "ethnic" is so relevant that its use should be continued regardless of changes in our community, as suggested by Dr Totaro?

The Hon. J. M. Samios: It is a matter of services.

Mr CARR: Yes, it is a matter of services, and the services, therefore, will be provided by a body changed in name to reflect a change in the community. The Community Relations Commission will build on the successful record of the Ethnic Affairs Commission against discrimination, intolerance and ignorance. The new commission will make sure that everyone in New South Wales understands and values cultural diversity as an asset for our State.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Just like the One Nation Party?

Mr CARR: This was announced by me on 8 April and, contrary to the suggestion made by the Hon. J. M. Samios, I said at that time that the intention of the Government was to change the name of the Ethnic Affairs Commission to the Community Relations Commission in recognition that the term "ethnic" is outdated. Society has moved on, it has matured. But the commitment to multiculturalism will, for the first time, be written into the legislation that governs the commission.

When I attended Israeli National Day, Armenian Independence Day, Croatian National Day, four Chinese meetings, the Multicultural Marketing Awards, a major Greek function, the Ethnic Communities Council annual dinner at which I specifically repeated this commitment in my speech, the Korean Society of Sydney dinner, the Lao Chinese Association dedication of new premises, a significant meeting of the Jewish community, and the Australian Assyrian Academic Society annual ball—all functions I have attended since I made that announcement on 8 April—no-one has come up to me and registered an objection to the change of name. I dare say not another politician in this State would have been as attentive to a responsibility to meet non-English speaking communities as I was in that period. That has been the response I have received, Mr Chairman.

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The core functions of the proposed Community Relations Commission will be exactly those of the Ethnic Affairs Commission: building and promoting the value of the community which is linguistically, ethnically, religiously and racially diverse. But, for the first time, the legislation will have in it not a vaguely worded reference to cultural diversity but a specific reference to multiculturalism. That change in name allows for a number of broader roles, just as the assumption by me of the title Minister for Citizenship enables me to

take on broader roles, not least the one I took the opportunity a moment ago of elaborating on.

But, for the proposed commission, they include: one, the setting up of closer partnerships between community groups, the community at large and the Government; two, the promoting and encouraging of participation in all aspects of community life, so that everyone can exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities; and, three, the promotion of citizenship as an inclusive term that recognises the cultural diversity of the people of New South Wales and their unifying commitment to Australia's civic values and laws.

While this will require legislative change, there will be no changes to the framework of law and policy that has given New South Wales a leading position in access and equity implementation in Australia. The four principles of cultural diversity will remain, albeit strengthened, in the legislation. It ill behoves any of us to talk about these values if one of the major political parties in our State in a local government election this Saturday in Sutherland, namely, the Liberal Party, gives preferences to One Nation. I would have thought the Liberal Party would have learned its lesson after flirting with One Nation in elections in Queensland and in New South Wales. Only one person can countermand the decision of Remo Nogarotto to approve the allocation of Liberal Party preferences to One Nation in Sutherland, and that is the Leader of the Liberal Party herself. And I issue her that challenge.

CHAIR: Mr Premier, you have made that point already on the record. We will move to the Opposition for remaining questions, either on ethnic affairs, citizenship or arts.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Premier, I refer to Budget Paper No. 1, Volume 2, page 2-102, the budget of the State Library of New South Wales. Can you explain the 100 per cent reduction in equity reserves of the State Library of New South Wales? It has gone from \$2 million in 1998-99 to zero. The State Library has no reserves, Premier. What is your explanation?

Mr CARR: Well, it has got a lot of books. If you give me a moment, I will be able to address the accounting question.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Bearing in mind that you are keen on book reading.

Mr CARR: Yes. I am always on the defensive in this place about being keen on books when I face the Opposition and my own people who are, across the factions, very pro books.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: That is not shown in your attitude to the budget though, Premier.

Mr CARR: It is a valid question. Indeed there will be people from the management of the State Library explaining themselves in my office as the sun breaks over the Domain in the morning! You have embarrassed the State by raising this matter at this time! We have a ratings agency in town which will be looking at what has been squirrelled away in the State Library. You have got me on the defensive!

CHAIR: Should we move to another question?

Mr CARR: There is an explanation. I might have to rely on Dr Gellatly to give it, with the permission of the Committee.

Dr GELLATLY: I am sure it must be just an issue of where the reserves are put, because if you look at the total equity in the budget, it is \$127 million revised to \$130 million, then the next year it goes to \$133 million. So the total equities increased by \$3 million.

Mr CARR: And our Triple-A rating is saved!

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: But not for the State Library.

Dr GELLATLY: That is for the State Library. The total equity has gone up by \$3 million. It must be an accounting issue, which we can take on notice.

CHAIR: Will you take that question on notice for further clarification?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Yes, because the answer is not satisfactory.

Dr GELLATLY: Yes.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: Premier, I ask you a question on citizenship and the Community Relations Commission. Will it promote and endorse migration?

Mr CARR: Migration, under the Australian system of government—and I know this will be a revelation—is in fact a Federal responsibility.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I am aware of that. I am asking you whether you see any role for the commission in promotion and endorsement of migration.

Mr CARR: The colony of New South Wales actually sustained the forgoing of the right to run a migration program around about the time of Federation in 1901. It has been broadly accepted since then that migration is appropriately a Commonwealth function.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: So is citizenship, Premier. It is not a State function.

Mr CARR: It has been broadly accepted that it is a Commonwealth function. I do not think, in any review of roles and responsibilities of Federal and State governments, that anyone is seriously proposing that we would run our own migration program.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: That is not the question, Premier.

Mr CARR: I thought it was very much the question—the promotion of migration to become a State function.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: But you wanted to keep migrants out of Sydney and in rural areas. If that was not running migration, what was it?

Mr CARR: Very silly!

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: Will the commission have any role at all in migration?

Mr CARR: Its role will be defined by statute. Its role takes into account, builds on and reinforces the roles of the Ethnic Affairs Commission which applied when you were in government. There was no amendment to those functions in the seven years of Coalition Government, even when the mighty Photios was the Minister for Ethnic Affairs—

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: We certainly did not pork-barrel—

Mr CARR: Don't interrupt me—boasting about being the only stand-alone Minister for Ethnic Affairs. I saw the new member for Gladesville arrive a moment ago. He is doing very well in his role. But not even Michael Photios proposed that the conduct of migration become a State responsibility through the Ethnic Affairs Commission. And if it escaped Photios, it has escaped all of us.

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Premier, what accounted for the 113 per cent increase in retained revenue from grants and contributions for the Art Gallery of New South Wales, from \$1,847,000 to \$3,939,000?

Mr CARR: The Triple-A rating shakes in the breeze for another moment! Is that on page 2-122?

The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS: Page 2-121, the line item "Retained Revenue-Grants and

contributions", which went from \$1,847,000 proposed for 1998-99, to a revised figure of \$3,939,000.

Mr CARR: This item, grants and contributions, reflects income received by the Art Gallery, together with the value of cash and in-kind donations for works of art. So it reflects the fact that the gallery staff pursue sponsorships and donations to fund their activities. Donations in cash and in kind are difficult to predict each year, which I suppose explains the fluctuation you highlighted. Budgets are usually set at conservative levels.

The corresponding capital budget for the acquisition of works of art was increased during 1998-99 to reflect both gifts and purchases from donated funds of works of art during this period. That probably falls short of giving you the interesting information that lies behind that admittedly bland and bureaucratic answer. We will ask the Art Gallery to supply us with a list of the gifts and sponsorships it got. I would be as interested as you are.

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CHAIR: We will make a note of that as a question on notice.

Mr CARR: Perhaps the committee could inspect them in the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I would be interested to know how much the Powerhouse Museum spent on the recent acquisition of a fifth century Greek cup.

Mr CARR: Fifth century AD or BC?

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: I think it is BC. That is one of the issues under discussion, actually.

Mr CARR: Is it?

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: Yes. There may be some further questions on notice about that.

Mr CARR: May I ask my advisers why they did not have a briefing note on the fifth century cup?

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: They might need to before you are finished because, in fact, it could turn out to be more in that. You might ask questions about the antiquity of it. That is one issue under discussion.

Mr CARR: Is it?

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: Yes.

CHAIR: Will you take that question on notice?

Mr CARR: If the acquisition policy of the Powerhouse Museum stands accused of a major impropriety or blunder, I am as interested as you. I might say through you, Mr Chairman, my door is open to the honourable member to receive any material that would challenge the antiquity.

The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE: The museum may have received some advice about that.

Mr CARR: Has it? I am happy to receive that.

The Hon. Dr P. WONG: Mr Premier, you agreed to consult the ethnic communities through the Ethnic Affairs Council, and you could not tell us what the results are. Then you go ahead and introduce your Community Relations Commission Bill. What kind of consultation is that? Furthermore, in regard to your support of cultural diversity and citizenship of this State, I believe your representative received a very hostile reception

during the annual general meeting of the Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales. I would like to ask you is there any funding that will be provided to re-educate these people so they will know your views on citizenship and multiculturalism?

Mr CARR: I rest easy with the overwhelming support my party received from the ethnic communities of New South Wales on March 27. Support from those communities was never higher, not least in the electorate of Ryde, secured so thumpingly by my colleague the Hon. John Watkins. There and elsewhere a groundswell of support for my party among ethnic communities was very, very apparent.

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.
