



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 23 November 2017**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 23 November 2017**

**The SPEAKER (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock)** took the chair at 10:00.

**The SPEAKER** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## *Bills*

### **BUILDING PRODUCTS (SAFETY) BILL 2017**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

## *Documents*

### **AUDITOR-GENERAL**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce the receipt of the report of the Auditor-General entitled "Report on agency compliance with NSW Government travel policies", dated 23 November 2017, received this day and authorised to be printed.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### **BUILDING PRODUCTS (SAFETY) BILL 2017**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 22 November 2017*

No. 1      **CDP No. 1 [c2017-132]**

Page 9, clause 18. Insert after line 31:

(b)            the occupier or occupiers of the building,

No. 2      **CDP No. 2 [c2017-132]**

Page 12, clause 24. Insert after line 8:

(b)            the occupier or occupiers of the building,

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Message forwarded to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.**

### **HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Brad Hazzard, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)**  
**(10:14):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The bill is part of the Government's regular review of legislation and seeks to make amendments to various health Acts, being the: Health

Administration Act 1982, Health Services Act 1997, Human Tissue Act 1983, Mental Health Act 2007, Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990, Government Sector Employment Act 2013 and Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. I turn firstly to schedule 1 to the bill which makes amendments to the Health Administration Act relating to reviews of serious adverse incidents occurring in public health organisations. The Health Administration Act currently requires public health organisations, such as local health districts, to carry out a root cause analysis following what is termed a reportable incident. A reportable incident is a serious adverse incident that is likely to be the result of systems issues. A root cause analysis team investigates and reports on why an adverse incident occurred and can make recommendations for improvements to procedures, practice or systems to reduce the likelihood of a similar incident occurring in the future.

The bill makes a range of improvements to the current processes for serious adverse event reviews. Under the bill organisations will be required to conduct a preliminary risk assessment following a reportable incident. A preliminary risk assessment will allow for earlier identification of risk factors and improve open disclosure processes for patients and their families. In line with the current privileged status of root cause analyses, the preliminary risk assessment will not be able to be used in legal proceedings but will be able to be disclosed for the purpose of providing open disclosure. There will be greater flexibility in relation to the types of serious adverse event reviews carried out. Under the bill, a root cause analysis or another type of review prescribed by the regulations can be carried out following a reportable incident. The findings and recommendations part of the review report will be separated, which will allow the findings report to be delivered earlier. This will help promote earlier open disclosure to patients and families and also allow an organisation to appoint additional persons, with relevant expertise, to the review team to develop the recommendations for improvement.

Serious adverse incident reviews are fundamentally important to ensure that hospitals can understand what went wrong and why and consider how to mitigate the risk of the event happening again. The changes in the bill will help improve the public health system's response to serious adverse events. Changes to the Health Services Act are set out in schedule 2 to the bill. Under the Health Services Act, local health districts and specialty health networks are responsible for providing public health services to the people of New South Wales. The Health Secretary has critical oversight, governance and control functions relating to the New South Wales public health system and is the overall system manager. In order to confirm the role of the Health Secretary as the overall system manager, the bill amends section 28 of the Health Services Act to clarify that the board of a local health district or specialty health network cannot exercise its functions in a way that is inconsistent with the functions of the Health Secretary. Minor changes are also made to the Health Services Act and the Government Sector Employment Act relating to the employment of a health executive. Currently, there are differences in relation to the employment of chief executives and other health executives. The board of a local health district or specialty health network exercises the employment functions over the chief executive, with the chief executive exercising employment functions over other health executives.

While the board can only terminate the employment of a chief executive with the concurrence of the secretary, no similar restriction applies in respect of other health executives. The bill therefore amends section 121H to make clear that a health executive, whether the chief executive or other senior executives, can only be terminated with the concurrence of the Health Secretary. Under the Health Services Act, the Health Secretary may terminate the employer of the health executive for any or no reason, even in the case of health executives working in the local health district or specialty health network in respect of whom the secretary does not exercise employer functions. The bill amends the Government Sector Employment Act to remove any doubt that this power extends to the power to terminate employment of an executive for unsatisfactory performance under section 68 of that Act.

The bill also makes changes to the Health Services Act relating to the Ambulance Service Advisory Council. The council is established to provide advice to the Health Secretary on the provision of ambulance services. Under the changes, the Ambulance Service Advisory Council would be renamed the Ambulance Service Advisory Board and members would be appointed by the secretary rather than by the Minister. This name change will better align the Ambulance Service Advisory Board with other similar health entities. Having the secretary appoint members will also better reflect the function of the board, which is to advise the secretary. The bill also provides for appointment criteria for members that focus on relevant skills and expertise, such as the provision of paramedic services or health management. This change will help ensure that appropriately qualified and experienced people are appointed as members.

I turn next to the amendments to the Human Tissue Act which are set out in schedule 3 of the bill. The bill amends section 27 to allow a non-medical practitioner appointed by the Health Secretary to remove skin for transplantation purposes. The bill also creates a regulation-making power to allow regulations to authorise a non-medical practitioner to remove tissue for transplantation. These changes will help reduce delays in removing skin tissue for transplantation purposes and will align the removal of skin tissue with corneal, cardiovascular and musculoskeletal tissue, all of which can be removed by a non-medical practitioner appointed by the secretary.

The bill includes amendments to the Mental Health Act, which are set out in schedule 4. These amendments will allow the Mental Health Review Tribunal to conduct a review of an involuntary patient or hear the application for electroconvulsive therapy [ECT] in the absence of the patient. Some mental health patients are too unwell to attend a hearing or can refuse to attend a hearing. Currently under the Act the only option available in such cases is for the tribunal to adjourn the hearing, but this is the case even when it is clear that the patient requires ongoing, involuntary care and treatment. Further, in the case of ECT, delaying a hearing because a patient is too unwell to attend the hearing can result in delays to the patient receiving treatment.

The bill therefore amends sections 37, 63 and 96 of the Act to allow, in limited circumstances, a hearing to proceed in the absence of the patient. In order for the tribunal to carry out a review in the absence of the patient, the tribunal firstly must be satisfied that the patient refuses to attend the hearing or is too unwell to attend and is unlikely to be well enough to attend within a reasonable time, and secondly must be satisfied that the representative of the patient has been notified of the hearing, or in the case of an application for ECT, that reasonable steps have been taken to notify the representative. The tribunal must have considered the views, if known, of the patient, their representative and carers, and must be of the opinion that carrying out the review in the absence of the patient is desirable for the safety or welfare of the patient.

Safeguards are also included in the bill. The bill amends section 78 to ensure that a patient's carers are notified of all hearings. In addition, amendments to section 150 clarify that a patient retains the right to legal representation even if a hearing proceeds in their absence. The ability to proceed to a hearing in the absence of the patient will not apply to the mental health inquiry. The mental health inquiry is the first independent review of the patient after their detention, and requires the tribunal to assess whether or not the person should be detained as an involuntary patient. It is appropriate that in all cases a patient is present during a mental health inquiry.

Finally, I turn to the amendments to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act, which are set out in schedule 5 of the bill. Persons in a correctional centre who require mental health care can be placed on a community treatment order [CTO]. Currently, the Act requires such persons to be reviewed by the tribunal every three months. This is different from community treatment orders made under the Mental Health Act, where no review is required and the tribunal can make an order that lasts up to 12 months. A requirement for a three-monthly review was included in the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act when community treatment orders for persons in correctional centres were first introduced in 2008. As community treatment orders represented a considerable change at the time, a review by the tribunal of patients every three months was considered appropriate, however, community treatment orders for persons in a correctional centre have been in place for almost 10 years now and are well established in the correctional system.

A review of patients every three months is no longer considered necessary. However, it is recognised that patients in correctional centres can be subject to additional stressors, and therefore it remains appropriate for such patients to continue to be reviewed by the tribunal even though three-monthly reviews are not considered necessary. As such, the bill amends section 61 to require the tribunal to review a patient three months after the community treatment order is made, and then at least once every six months after that. This change strikes a balance between not requiring unnecessary reviews while ensuring persons on a forensic CTO continue to be assessed by the tribunal.

The bill also includes a new section 68A to allow a forensic patient who fails to return from leave to be apprehended by an authorised medical practitioner. Currently, a forensic patient who fails to return from leave can only be apprehended if the tribunal issues an order of apprehension. Requiring the tribunal to issue an order of apprehension can cause delays in apprehending a forensic patient who fails to return from leave. The new section 68A will also bring the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act into line with the Mental Health Act. Under section 49 of the latter Act, a tribunal order is not required before a civil patient who fails to return from leave can be apprehended. The new section 68A will help mitigate delays in apprehending patients who fail to return from leave or who breach a condition of their leave, and will better help protect the public. This bill makes a number of important and sensible changes to health legislation and will assist in ensuring that legislation remains up to date and relevant. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Motions*

### **GRANVILLE TRAIN DISASTER**

**Debate resumed from 22 June 2017.**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I commend the motion to the House.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.***Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2017-2018****Debate resumed from 16 November 2017.**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (10:29):** I speak on the recent State budget and its benefits to the people of my electorate of Oatley. From the outset I want to acknowledge the Premier, and especially the Treasurer and his team, for their hard work and for what is an excellent State budget not just for my electorate but also across New South Wales. It may not be perfect, but according to the *Daily Telegraph*, "Everything is awesome". When the worst the *Sydney Morning Herald* can do is portray the Treasurer and Premier in gold suits swimming in green money, you know it is fantastic. A Treasurer's job is obviously not to flaunt the State's money but to manage it well and responsibly, and that is what this Treasurer is doing. That is a priority of the Berejiklian Government, and that is what this budget is all about.

The 2017-18 New South Wales budget is one of the most fiscally responsible, disciplined budgets on record. Because of our track record, we are able to invest in the families and communities in this State. This Government does not just talk about surpluses—and it does not promise them with no basis for delivering them—but it delivers them. We on this side can say with confidence that we will continue to deliver them because we know what a good Liberal-Nationals budget looks like. We delivered a \$4.5 billion surplus last financial year and in 2017-18 it will be more than \$2.7 billion. Over the next four years we estimate an average budget surplus of more than \$2 billion. Our budget surpluses are about making life better for the residents of New South Wales—for those who work, for those who run small, medium and large businesses, for families, for parents, for our children, for those yet unborn, for generations to come.

Life under crippling budget deficit is not fun, as all members in this place will recall. Even members opposite acknowledge this through their empty promises of surpluses. But in the present economic climate voters know—and, deep down, Labor members themselves know—that only a Liberal-Nationals Government can make this happen. Seven years ago we on this side embarked on a major infrastructure program in New South Wales. Our aim is to make New South Wales number one again, and we have; unlike those opposite, who wanted to make New South Wales number eight again.

This year's budget again sees near-record capital investment over the next four years, with \$72.7 billion to be spent on infrastructure, \$7.7 billion on health infrastructure and more than \$4.2 billion on school capital projects, and cost-of-living provisions that no other State can manage. For the residents of my electorate of Oatley and of the St George area, all of this is great news—in fact, it is great news for everyone in New South Wales. I inform the House of some of the benefits that this budget and this Government's sound financial management will bring to my local community.

Let us take a tour: The first stop is St George Hospital. I bang on about St George Hospital quite regularly, but I am playing catch-up. Not only did successive Labor governments fail to mention St George Hospital in this place but they did not even mention it in their ministerial suites or budget discussions, because it was neglected for 16 years under Labor. St George Hospital was sucked into Labor's Bermuda Triangle, and for 16 years not one new building was built at St George Hospital. That is not the case under this Liberal-Nationals Government.

We are planning for stage three of the redevelopment of St George Hospital. Stage two of the redevelopment is complete, ahead of schedule and under budget, and it will ensure world-class health care for residents of the Oatley electorate, the wider St George area and the people of southern Sydney. The new Acute Services Building, for example, will include a new intensive care department, eight operating theatres and an additional 120 inpatient beds, two cardiothoracic laboratories, a new sterilising service department and a new helipad, with additional parking.

Moving west, the tour comes to King Georges Road, another part of my electorate completely unknown to members and former Ministers opposite but well known to this Government, which has budgeted half a million dollars for planning for the widening of King Georges Road from two lanes each way to three between Stoney Creek Road and Connells Point Road. Congestion on that stretch of road is a massive problem which costs residents, families and small, medium and large businesses time and money every single day. The Government realises this and knows that one of the best ways to help people is to make it easier and faster for them to get to work, to school, to do the shopping and to get home again. This is a great win for the entire St George community.

At the northern end of the electorate is Beverly Hills, another long-neglected area. I am pleased to inform the House that this Government will not neglect it and will spend more than \$10 million on a commuter car park adjacent to Beverly Hills railway station. Residents of my electorate care deeply about the environment, so they



care about public transport, infrastructure and facilities that make it easier for commuters to get to work safely, efficiently and cheaply. This Government does too. The Beverly Hills commuter car park is an exciting development for residents in Beverly Hills and surrounding suburbs. In conjunction with our transportation system, it will encourage public transport use, unclog our city and facilitate shorter commutes and more time to be productive, whether at work or at home with the family.

Finally, the tour arrives at Penshurst. I will speak about two of the great public schools in that suburb. No government in Australia is more committed to public education than the New South Wales Government. I am pleased to say that the electorate of Oatley has some of the best schools in the country and some of the most capable, distinguished teachers and principals. Not surprisingly, enrolments are growing steadily in the St George area, as they are across the State. Public schools in the St George area will see significant capital investment, and the main beneficiaries will be our children, of course.

This Government's significant school expenditure will be delivered on a number of capital projects. The Government will ensure that we have the schools and the resources to meet present and future challenges, to provide children and teachers with the best learning and professional environments, and to transform public education in this State. Schoolchildren in the Oatley electorate will benefit from what is essentially a brand-new school at Penshurst Public School with a major redevelopment of the school, as well as extensive new facilities at Penshurst West Public School. Penshurst Public School, a school I lobbied the Minister about and was proud to show off to the Premier and the Minister for Education during the recent Education Week, will become a school of the future, with flexible learning spaces, integrated technology and state-of-the-art resources.

A sound budget and sensible, responsible fiscal policy allows for this kind of life-changing expenditure. As this Government spends \$4.2 billion over the next four years, we will see a major redevelopment at Penshurst Public School with a number of new classrooms to cater for 800-plus kids. It really is life changing for the students in my electorate, and in this State, to have access to these kinds of resources and facilities, and the highest quality education in Australia. We have a track record in a number of substantial education projects in and around my electorate, including the major upgrade to Hurstville Public School that occurred more than four years ago; and the significant upgrade at Georges River College, Peakhurst, where more than \$4.5 million was spent on a new school hall to cater for students at both the Peakhurst and surrounding campuses.

The 2017-2018 budget is a good Liberal budget; the sort of budget the people of New South Wales expect under this Government. This Government works very hard on sound, responsible budgets like this because it cares about the families and communities in New South Wales. We on this side do not just make promises; we deliver. We deliver so that everyone in this State can share the benefits of our success. We have a long and proud history of delivering for our local community—for example, Narwee railway station, which is ahead of schedule. Mr Temporary Speaker, I seek an extension of time.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member's speaking time will be restored when the debate is next called on.

**Debate interrupted.**

### *Bills*

## **CIVIL LIABILITY AMENDMENT (INSTITUTIONAL CHILD ABUSE) BILL 2017**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Lynch, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:42):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Labor Opposition to introduce the Civil Liability Amendment (Institutional Child Abuse) Bill 2017. Frankly, it is a disgrace that the Government has not already done this. Victoria is way ahead of this State in this field. The bill's aim is to clarify the law and, in the interests of justice, take reasonable steps to assist victims in actions for damages for child abuse. The proposal implements recommendation No. 91 of the "Redress and civil litigation report" by the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse. Recommendation No. 91 reads:

Irrespective of whether state and territory parliaments legislate to impose a non-delegable duty upon institutions, state and territory governments should introduce legislation to make institutions liable for institutional child sexual abuse by persons associated with the institution unless the institution proves it took reasonable steps to prevent the abuse. The 'reverse onus' should be imposed on all institutions in respect of which we do not recommend a non-delegable duty be imposed.

In accordance with the royal commission recommendation, the provisions of this bill are prospective, not retrospective. Victoria has also moved to implement this recommendation. On 23 November last year Victorian Attorney-General Martin Pakula second-read the Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Bill 2016 in the Victorian Parliament. It passed the Victorian Legislative Assembly on 8 December 2016 and the Victorian Legislative Council on 21 March 2017. That legislation implemented the recommendation and was also prospective in its operation.

The New South Wales Government has failed to take this action. The most it has done is issue a discussion paper. Indeed, its response to the Redress and Civil Litigation Report has been, at best, dilatory. It released one discussion paper in January 2015—in time for the State election—concerning the limitation periods in civil claims for child sexual abuse. That did not stop the Government in November 2015 from voting down my private member's bill to implement the royal commission recommendation, albeit by only 39 to 36 votes in this Chamber—some Government members clearly did have a conscience, just not enough of them.

The then Attorney argued that it was premature to support my bill because the National Redress Scheme as recommended by the royal commission had not been instituted. The National Redress Scheme has still not been instituted but that did not stop the Government in February 2016 from introducing a bill that was the same as mine on limitation periods. On the issues of this bill, it is well behind both the Victorian Government and the Labor Opposition in this State. The most this State Government has done is to issue another consultation paper in July—two years after the royal commission. According to stakeholders, there will be no legislation until the second half of next year at the earliest—and maybe not even then.

The civil liability of institutions for child abuse is important. Whilst the civil liability of the perpetrator is clear, that of the institution under the current law is considerably less clear. In practical terms that may well be of critical importance. If the perpetrator is dead or has no assets, the existence of a right to damages may at best be theoretical. The law has had difficulties in establishing clear and simple rules about when an institution is liable for the intentional criminal conduct of someone else. That other person may be an employee or a volunteer, which makes potential proceedings even more complex. The law presently is not clear. Page 54 of the report states:

The leading Australian case, *New South Wales v Lepore* ... decided by the High Court in 2003, has left the law on vicarious liability and non-delegable duties in a somewhat uncertain state.

The royal commission report points out that Canada and the United Kingdom have had clearer and broader rules about liability in such circumstances. The report makes clear that it thinks the onus of proof in these types of cases should be reversed. Institutions should be liable for child sexual abuse unless the institution took reasonable steps to prevent abuse. This includes institutions "that administer foster care and kinship care, and community-based, not-for-profit or volunteer institutions that offer opportunities for children to engage in cultural, social and sporting activities". The basic principle should be that the same rule should apply to all institutions. The report also makes this point, which is perhaps an obvious one to lawyers but worth emphasising:

The steps that are reasonable for an institution to take will vary depending upon the nature of the institution. For example, more might be expected of a commercial institution than a community-based voluntary institution. Similarly, more might be expected of institutions in relation to their employees than their contractors.

The report also states:

We recognise that introducing a new duty and reversing the onus of proof may lead to increased insurance premiums for institutions. However, legal duties are important for prescribing the standard that the community requires of institutions.

And that goes to the nub of it. While the bill is formally about the recovery of damages, it is actually about what we collectively expect of institutions and organisations. I think it a reasonable proposition to say that the community would expect an organisation to do all it reasonably can to prevent child abuse. If it does not do all it reasonably can, it should be held civilly liable. The law should be made consistent with this view. The royal commission noted in its consultation process many submissions argued for the clarification and expansion of circumstances in which institutions were liable for child sexual abuse. That was also the approach of the Victorian Parliamentary Committee which prepared the Betrayal Of Trust report.

Reversing the onus, rather than simply imposing a strict liability on institutions, which is an alternative approach but not one adopted in this bill, has the added attraction of being able to promote good governance in the institution concerned. They will be more likely to do what they should because the likelihood of successful actions against them is reduced. The royal commission report referred to support from bodies such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and the Truth, Justice and Healing Council for this approach.

I note that while the royal commission's terms of reference mean the report's recommendations are framed by referring to child sexual abuse, the report explicitly acknowledged that statutory change could apply more broadly to criminal physical and psychological abuse—that comment appears at page 492 of the report. The royal commission's reversal of onus recommendation means liability would attach to institutions for child sexual abuse

by members or employees unless it took reasonable steps to prevent abuse. The report enumerates the institution's members and employees to include officers, office holders, employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, and priests and religious organisations associated with the institution. Page 494 of the report states:

We are satisfied that institutions should be in a good position to prove the steps they took to prevent abuse. The institution generally should have better access to records and witnesses capable of giving evidence about the institution's behaviour than plaintiffs are likely to have. Reversing the onus of proof has the potential to encourage higher standards of governance and risk mitigation in institutions, both through their own efforts and through their compliance with the requirements of their insurers. The report also states:

We consider it reasonable to require institutions that administer foster care and kinship care, and community-based not-for-profit or volunteer institutions that offer opportunities for children to engage in cultural, social and sporting activities, to prove that they took reasonable steps to prevent abuse.

The royal commission concludes its consideration with these comments:

We recognise that introducing a new duty and reversing the onus of proof may lead to increased insurance premiums for institutions. However, legal duties are important for prescribing the standard that the community requires of institutions. The significant financial consequences that may flow if the standard is not met create powerful incentives for institutions and their insurers to take steps to ensure that abuse is prevented. Changes to the duties of institutions do more than provide an additional or more certain avenue for victims of abuse to seek compensation after institutional child sexual abuse has occurred. Changes to the duties of institutions are critical measures for preventing institutional child sexual abuse occurring in the first place.

The royal commission recommendations are entirely sensible on this issue and they should be supported on that basis. They should also be supported because Victoria has also proceeded down this path. That is not just an argument to say there is a precedent for this, although that is certainly the case; it goes further than that. There is a powerful case for national consistency on this issue, and that is, frankly, to the benefit of everyone involved. Because there is already the Victorian model, there is a powerful argument that we should follow the move that Victoria has pursued.

In conclusion, I note that this bill makes a comprehensive mockery of the complaint by the erstwhile Attorney General yesterday that we had not lodged a submission to his discussion paper. We have done a great deal more than that—we have introduced a bill, and that is a great deal more than the Government has done and a great deal more than the Government will do for another 12 months, at which stage it will be two years behind Victoria. If people think I am critical of the sloth and indolence of this glacial pace they should talk to the stakeholders about it. The Attorney General should distinguish between discussion papers and legislation and understand that the law changes with legislation, not with discussion papers. If he does not understand that, on a personal level I hope he has still held onto his chambers or at least a lease on them. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Business of the House*

## **POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH:** I postpone General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No. 7, Crimes and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Racial and Other Vilification) Bill 2017.

*Bills*

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (AUDITING OF OUT-OF-HOME CARE PROVIDERS) BILL 2017**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 16 November 2017.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:52):** I make a contribution to the debate on the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Auditing of Out-of-Home Care Providers) Bill 2017. This is a poorly framed, inappropriately focused bill representing a wrong-headed approach to concern about care for children in out-of-home care. Obviously, it is important that a government takes seriously the responsibility of securing permanent and safe homes for vulnerable children and young people, and this Government takes that responsibility very, very seriously.

The environment in which the Department of Family and Community Services and non-government organisations operate is changing; it is complex and challenging, and those partners are constantly striving to find new ways to improve their ability to provide comprehensive and high-quality support. I say that the bill is poorly framed and inappropriately focused for a number of reasons. First, this is a bill about auditing and about trying to direct the Auditor-General to do something. That, in itself, is an error. The Auditor-General is, and should remain, an independent entity. It is not appropriate for a Minister of the day to direct an Auditor-General to undertake

activities in a particular way—that undermines the very independence that makes an Auditor-General so important as a part of the process. The Auditor-General must have the independence to do his or her job as he or she sees fit, without interference, without direction and without constraint. To try to legislate to tell the Auditor-General he or she must do something in a certain manner is a wrong-headed approach to managing the functions of an Auditor-General. That is the first level of inappropriate approach.

The second reason I believe this is an inappropriate approach is that this bill attempts to insert this provision in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act, which is not the appropriate legislation for public finance and audit responsibilities. That Act is focused primarily on the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in our community, as one would expect. This bill is not proposing to amend the Community Welfare Act 1987, where the Family and Community Services portfolio is administered, nor is it proposing to amend the Finance and Audit Act 1983, which relates to the Auditor-General's audit functions. One would have thought that if a bill is going to be brought forward which would direct the Auditor-General to conduct auditing functions in a certain manner—and even that notion is inappropriate—the legislation would be put into a finance or an audit Act which deals specifically with auditing roles rather than with children's care and protection.

Therefore, on two levels the bill is an inappropriate approach to what I believe is the wrong-headed kind of thinking of the member for Bankstown in presenting a bill such as this. But even if we were to allow those features, there is still an issue in that this approach targets only non-government agencies. Children who go into out-of-home care are not more or less worthy of protection, care and focus depending on whether they are with a government body or a non-government body. Children in out-of-home care need our focus, our care, our concern and our oversight no matter what agency or organisation they are placed in. To bring in a bill such as this which focuses on only one sector seems inappropriate to achieve a goal that one would assume is behind this legislation, which is to protect children. That approach should be across the board and sector-blind, not focused on one sector only.

I believe this is simply the wrong approach and the wrong solution to a problem that does not really exist. There are certainly challenges in the field, and there will always be a need for oversight—I do not suggest for a moment there will not—but let us look at some of the oversight that does exist before we jump to any conclusions. New South Wales is one of the only two jurisdictions in the country that has an independent statutory regulatory body for out-of-home care providers. To be funded by the Government, all out-of-home care providers first must be accredited by the Office of the Children's Guardian. The accreditation scheme requires agencies to continually strive to improve the care they provide to children and young people across New South Wales. The Children's Guardian also undertakes monitoring of accredited agencies to ensure that they are meeting their responsibilities under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

New South Wales has had standards regarding the care to be provided to children and young people for almost 20 years. The NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care establish minimum requirements for the accreditation of organisations as a designated agency or adoption service provider. The standards provide a more streamlined accreditation system for agencies wishing to provide both out-of-home care and adoption services. The Office of the Children's Guardian audits the quality of accredited agencies through its accreditation and monitoring framework. These are not just static point-in-time assessments but ongoing assessments and responsive monitoring programs. Charities and not-for-profit organisations are also required to be registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. With the indulgence of the House, I will refer to some views expressed by the chief executive officer of the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies, Mr Andrew McCallum.

Before I do that, I underline that the structures I have outlined for monitoring the performance of out-of-home care providers are already in place. No doubt there are opportunities for improvement and review of those structures, but is it sensible to set in place a level of oversight that competes with the existing structures, thereby adding a burdensome compliance cost to agencies that operate remarkably frugally to get great outcomes for kids? The effect of doing so would be to divert scarce dollars from care for kids into compliance costs. I would be reluctant to support a model that added another layer of oversight and diverted resources away from kids without compelling evidence that it was necessary. It would make more sense to work on the structures that are already there. If they need review, tweaking, refining or monitoring, it would make sense to impose a separate layer of accountability. To do so for one sector only, in the wrong Act, using the wrong instrument, makes no sense. Mr Andrew McCallum from the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies says:

The sector is already subject to high levels of oversight and scrutiny by the Office of the Children's Guardian, the NSW Ombudsman's Office and the Australian Charities and Non-Profits Commission.

Equally, the new outcomes based funding model introduced by the Department ensures NGOs continue to be held to high standards in the way they deliver services to children and young people in care.

On top of this, there is a Royal Commission currently running in this space and it would be premature to second guess what their recommendations will be.

This bill implies that NGOs are driven by dollars. To see their work and commitment denigrated in this way is extremely disappointing.

Simplistic headlines are not helpful when it comes to such complex social issues that are driven by a myriad of reasons.

I concur with Mr McCallum. It does not help to chase headlines and to bring in a bill for the sake of saying that we are doing something in this area. If we make noise about what we believe is important we must act in a constructive, focused and appropriate manner that will genuinely contribute to improving outcomes for children in out-of-home care. This bill does not do that; it misses the mark in so many ways. It may be driven by genuinely good motivation. I do not doubt that members on both sides of the House are concerned about the welfare of children in out-of-home care. That is not the issue. The method proposed by the bill misses the mark. It is the wrong way of addressing the issue and it will not achieve good outcomes if it ends up diverting scarce resources from the task at hand. The Government does not support the bill.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:02):** I speak in debate on the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Auditing of Out-of-Home Care Providers) Bill 2017 introduced by the shadow Minister for Family and Community Services. I commend her for doing so. Unlike the member for Riverstone, I believe there is compelling evidence that we need to do more. In our State we have an obligation and a duty to provide a home and appropriate care for children who cannot be cared for by their parents. This is a pressing problem in our State. We have more children in out-of-home care, particularly in the Aboriginal community, than there were at the time of the stolen generation. A generation of children will grow up out of their parents' care and protection. The Government and society as a whole need to take every step to ensure that the care they receive is of the highest quality.

Government members appear to think the system is not broken or in need of strengthening, that the Opposition has raised issues that do not exist and that we need a sector-blind system. They should consider cases such as that of Girl X that prove there are very serious issues to be addressed relating to out-of-home care in this State. Children and young people who are placed in out-of-home care are the most vulnerable people in our State. They have often experienced the sort of abuse and mistreatment that members of this House could not begin to comprehend. Many children in out-of-home care are Indigenous, live with disability or suffer some other lifelong disadvantage. We owe it to those children to ensure that they are safe and cared for. The bill aims to ensure that the non-government organisations [NGOs] entrusted by this Government with the care of our State's children are meeting community expectations and upholding the contracts they signed with the Government.

I have spoken previously about past abuse of children in institutions run by do-gooders and well-intentioned governments. We must ensure that every child in this State is given the best chance in life and that we act on allegations of abuse. We must be proactive advocates for those children and ensure that their care extends beyond getting them dressed and looking pretty when the inspectors come around. We must have proper auditing processes. The number of children and young people placed in out-of-home care has grown at an alarming rate. As was noted by the report of the inquiry into child protection conducted by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, in New South Wales at any one time more than 20,000 children are living somewhere other than with their parents. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has reported that 9.9 per cent of children in New South Wales are in care—a number second only to the Northern Territory.

In 2008 the Hon. James Wood's "Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW" made 111 recommendations to the then Labor Government. In response, Premier Nathan Rees and Minister Linda Burney released the "Keep Them Safe" report, which committed to implementing 106 of those recommendations. One of the recommendations was that out-of-home care should be transferred to the non-government sector. That transition did not happen until 2012 when Minister Goward began the process, which was continued by Minister Hazzard in 2016. Unfortunately, the transition has been a rocky one. The contracts entered into by the Government with NGOs are flawed. At present, those contracts contain no penalty for a breach of duty of care to keep children safe from harm. This is an unconscionable omission. We must ensure that if we entrust NGOs with the care of these children—and there can be no other greater trust placed in an organisation than to look after our most vulnerable and damaged children—then they must uphold their duty of care and be called to account for their actions.

The member for Riverstone said that 20 years ago some protections were implemented. Part of our responsibility as legislators is to ensure that when such protections fail we put in more protections and do everything we can to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable children in our community. The child protection inquiry report released by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 earlier this year identified a number of flaws in our child protection system. One was the lack of effective oversight by the Government of the operations of NGOs that provide residential care for our children. I ask Ministers and their advisors to consider what

happened in the 1950s under the post-war child migration schemes. I have read the reports of inquiries into those schemes and I have spoken to survivors. I have a good appreciation of what happens when government does not have effective oversight. I suggest that members read the 1997 "Bringing Them Home" report—the story of the stolen generation, which contains the testimony of people who grew up in homes without effective oversight. We must be sure that we are doing a better job and not just make announcements that we think we are doing it better. The people who put children into care in former days thought they were doing the right thing—we must be doubly sure.

Recommendation 12 of the report called on the Government to extend the audit duties of the Auditor-General to review the operation of NGOs that deliver child protection services. If we are to be sure that they are upholding their duty of care to the children of this State, we must have adequate oversight of NGO operations. Children in out-of-home care deserve independent review of the organisations that provide their care. In previous reports a number of children reported inspectors flouncing in and out of homes and saying, "Everything looked okay". Those children were starving, were being worked and spent every night being abused sexually and physically. That is an indication we need to do more. Children in out-of-home care deserve proper oversight. The consequences of inadequate oversight are tragic. There has been case after case of mistreatment and abuse in out-of-home care facilities in this State. The evidence is staring the member for Riverstone in the face.

Braxton Slager was 22 months old when he drowned while in temporary foster care. He is another example of a young child failed by the protection system. The police reported that the premises was not safe or secure enough to adequately house children in foster care. If there is enough care and protection oversight in this State, what was he doing there? Girl X is another tragic example of failed protection and oversight. I hate listing these cases. Girl X was 15 years old and had been abused repeatedly while in foster care. She died of a drug overdose. In his report, Deputy State Coroner Derek Lee stated that she was extremely anxious about testifying against her alleged rapist. Kids who are victims of abuse in these homes are not going to volunteer the information—that is the nature of the abuse. They are not going to volunteer evidence to a person who wanders into the home and says, "Is everything okay?" There must be proper oversight.

The court heard that this young woman wanted to stay out of trouble, get a good job and live in a nice place when she turned 18 years old. This child protection system and this Government let her down. The onus is on Parliament to ensure that there is never another case like this. It is unacceptable that sexual assault occurs at all, but it is doubly offensive when the State has committed to provide care and protection to the victim. That is a disgrace. As the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I am wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that every child in New South Wales is safe from abuse, violence and sexual assault. Children should be safe at school, in hospitals and in foster care—it is not negotiable. [*Extension of time*]

Before the end of this year Minister Goward is expected to finally release the sexual assault strategy for New South Wales. I take this opportunity to implore the Minister to support this bill. By increasing oversight in our foster care system we will reduce the rate of sexual assault. Girl X is a case in point. If we save just one girl—girl Y—it will be worth it. The majority of non-government organisations are providing quality out-of-home care in difficult circumstances. The member for Riverstone alluded to the lack of funding for the sector and the fact that NGOs survive on the smell of an oily rag. The bill will increase accountability. Those organisations will no longer be forced to take shortcuts; they will be able to employ the best people to care for the most vulnerable people in our State and they will be backed by legislation that supports proper funding of the sector.

The bill will place an obligation on the Minister for Family and Community Services to ensure that the Auditor-General conducts regular performance audits of those non-government organisations entrusted with providing out-of-home care to vulnerable children in our community. Those appointed by the Auditor-General will be tasked with determining whether the NGOs are undertaking their functions efficiently and effectively in compliance with legislation and their contract with the State. The Auditor-General will be able to make recommendations on how an NGO can improve its facilities and functions, which will empower these organisations to go back to the Government and say, "More please; we need more to deliver on the important task you have given us".

My experience with immigration has taught me how tenuous the thread of responsibility is for the care of children. I urge the Minister to accept this legislation and to ensure its passage because it empowers the Minister. The Minister must take seriously the responsibility of delegating the care of children, through contracts, to the NGO sector. The bill will ensure that, prior to the renewal of a contract between the department and the non-government organisation or within three months of the contract expiring or being terminated, an audit must occur. The Government will remain accountable to the people of this State and Parliament through the tabling of

audit reports one month after they are received. What is wrong with having access to information that confirms the view of the member for Riverstone that nothing is wrong? Let us make evidence-based decisions.

The bill will make it an offence for any individual to obstruct the Auditor-General or any other individual from conducting an audit report. They are sensible provisions that deliver reform to the provision of out-of-home care in this State. This bill will deliver two key outcomes: It will ensure non-government organisations that deliver out-of-home care are accountable to the Government and the public; and it will ensure that vulnerable children in out-of-home care are safe from abuse and harm. It is essential that the Government support this bill introduced by the shadow Minister for Family and Community Services. I applaud her. It is consistent with the recommendations made in the child protection inquiry report, which was a bipartisan report.

It will empower the Auditor-General to undertake regular and independent reviews of the non-government organisations entrusted with the provision of out-of-home care. It is about increasing accountability and safety, and there can be no more important task in the field of child protection than that. We must ensure that children who are ripped out of their parents' arms are safe and that the people who care for them are accountable for their actions. Labor will always act to protect vulnerable people in this State, and there is no group more vulnerable than children in out-of-home care. To ensure the safety of the children of this State, I implore the Government to support the bill.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (11:17):** I speak in opposition to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Auditing of Out-of-Home Care Providers) Bill 2017. The Government does not support the bill. The bill is unnecessary; it is not sensible. I will go through the reasons why. The New South Wales Government remains committed to ensuring that vulnerable children and young people in out-of-home care are protected and have permanency. This includes those children and young people who receive services from non-government agencies that are funded to provide out-of-home care. The Government is committed to ensuring that taxpayer funding for non-government providers is used to deliver the critical services to children and young people as per their contracts. The bill directly targets accredited non-government out-of-home care providers. The Opposition's bill would impose additional regulatory burdens on a sector that is already subject to comprehensive oversight, monitoring and reporting requirements.

It is interesting that the member for Maitland said she had read the 1950s reports and commented on what happened without effective oversight. She then said, "We do better now". On one hand, she referenced the 1950s as an example of poor oversight and, on the other hand, she admitted that we do better now. We certainly do it better now. The Department of Family and Community Services, the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, the NSW Ombudsman and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission all oversee non-government agencies. The member for Maitland said that we should double-check, but every time we conduct an extra, unnecessary audit we are spending money on the process rather than putting it on the front line helping children in need. This is not about wearing braces when you are already wearing a belt. We should not be doubling up on regulatory framework instead of looking after children. It is essential that government services and contracted non-government organisations [NGOs] deliver quality services to our most vulnerable children and young people. The Government has a number of mechanisms in place to regulate and oversee the out-of-home care sector, including contractual agreements that the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] has in place with funded agencies.

In one sense this Labor bill is an attack on the professionalism of the FACS workers who have the oversight role. The Opposition should support them, not attack them. Labor is saying, "You are not doing your job. Therefore we will get the Auditor-General to do it." It is completely unnecessary. Members on this side of the House are proud of the Government's achievements in protecting the most vulnerable. Labor's record in this area is not so good. After 16 shameful years of failed government, Labor left behind a child protection system that was an absolute mess. Under Labor, the number of children in out-of-home care doubled in a decade. Labor mismanaged its budgets, and was forced kicking and screaming to a special commission of inquiry. It left a child protection system that was in serious need of repair. Under Labor, only one in five children at risk of significant harm were being seen by a caseworker. On our watch, the response has improved to one in three. We are proud of the frontline caseworkers who work hard every day to support vulnerable families and children.

This Government has been championing social policy reform that is putting Labor's record to shame. The member for Riverstone said that the bill is completely unnecessary, is not sensible and is a waste of money. Members opposite have a bad track record and are grandstanding. Trying to politicise the position of these vulnerable children is completely unnecessary because of the oversight that is already in place. FACS has a robust system of contract management, performance monitoring and risk assessment that applies to all non-government out-of-home care providers. Through these mechanisms, FACS works with providers to enable quality service provisions and to ensure they comply with their obligations. All funded organisations have contract agreements in place that clearly outline their roles and responsibilities, service provision requirements, milestones or key

performance indicators and reporting requirements. The FACS contract management framework is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to address the increasing complexity of service provision required across a range of services.

FACS has dedicated contract managers across the State to provide prudential oversight, risk and insurance for NGO providers. FACS contract management includes regular performance monitoring, scheduled health checks and mechanisms for issues, response and formal improvement plans. Systems are in place for ongoing risk assessment and an annual accountability process as well as an annual risk and performance assessment. It is mandatory for funded organisations to submit to FACS every year annual accountability documents that include: financial statements; a signed declaration and certification confirming contractual obligations are met and appropriate governance mechanisms are in place; and focus area documents for risk review, covering fraud prevention and detection, and risk management. Through a robust system of checks and balances and continual improvement, FACS ensures that non-government providers are accountable for the funding they receive.

The bill does not have the support of the non-government sector. The Opposition is attacking non-government providers. The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies says the bill is an "unacceptable attack on the integrity of charities that continue to work tirelessly to support the community's youngest and most vulnerable". The bill proposes an unnecessary law that attacks the integrity of charities such as Barnardos, the Australian Red Cross and Anglicare. These charities have been working hard for decades to support vulnerable families. The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies is right when it says that the bill is unnecessary because, "The sector is already subject to high levels of oversight and scrutiny" by the Government. It is disappointing that the Opposition is targeting non-government organisations with this bill. They are some of the State's most respected charities. The Government has demonstrated that, regardless of which critical services funding is provided, those organisations will be and are being held accountable.

Protecting our vulnerable children and young people in out-of-home care remains central to the Government's priorities. We are proud of our achievements since 2011 that have strengthened the child protection system. It is disappointing the Opposition has introduced a bill that is a targeted attack on non-government providers. Those organisations are working hard to support our most vulnerable children and young people. The bill is unnecessary and it is not sensible. There is already more than ample oversight in place. Duplicating the oversight is a waste of money that would be better spent on the front line. I would rather see that money spent on children than wasted. Members opposite are attacking charities that do a fantastic job. They are attacking the workers in FACS, which is a disgrace. The Opposition has a shameful track record on child protection and it should not be dictating to those who have done so much. It is a joke and I oppose the bill.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:26):** I speak in debate on this landmark bill: the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Auditing of Out-of-Home Care Providers) Bill 2017. I acknowledge our shadow Minister for Family and Community Services [FACS], the member for Bankstown, who has put a lot of thought and consideration into the bill. She cares deeply about this area of policy. I am offended by the Government members who have spoken in this debate but who did not take the time to read the bill or the reports. I take offence at their claim that the bill is an attack on charities and the non-government sector. It is not. The bill is about strengthening the oversight and transparency of contracts between non-government agencies and the Department of Family and Community Services to care for vulnerable children and young people. We all care about children and young people and want the very best for them. That is why this bill is vital. Members opposite do not support the bill because they did not introduce it.

Labor has a proud record of protecting the most vulnerable children and young people in our community. In 2009 the New South Wales Government launched Keep Them Safe, a shared approach to child wellbeing, which was its response to the Wood report. The five-year action plan contained numerous reforms to the system, including the establishment of child wellbeing units in NSW Health, NSW Police Force, the Department of Education and Training, and the Department of Human Services to advise mandatory reports on the new statutory reporting threshold of risk of serious harm, authorising certain agencies to exchange information concerning the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people, and to coordinate the services those agencies provide.

Members opposite said that the Government is investing in this area. In 2011 then Treasurer Baird cut hundreds of millions of dollars from Family and Community Services, which still has not recovered. The services in the areas represented by the member for Riverstone and the member for Myall Lakes have been decimated by their Government as a result of those cuts. The Government has done a double take and brought back the Minister who oversaw those cuts. It is catch-up time because the Government knew it had done the wrong thing and was so embarrassed it had to restore some funding. It has let down young children and vulnerable people. We have had nearly seven years of this Government. In 2015-16, 78,000 risk of serious harm [ROSH] reports were received,



and according to the 2016-17 State budget more than 21,000 children are in out-of-home care. More children are remaining in out-of-home care for longer and fewer children are being restored to their families.

New South Wales risks having the highest rate of children in out-of-home care. It is presently 9 per cent of all children in care, second only to the Northern Territory. These are public figures and they are stark. I am sure the members of the Government who have contributed to this debate are not aware of these figures, otherwise they would be embarrassed by their speeches. The figures should serve as a wake-up call. Sometimes governments should listen but because this Government is so stubborn it will not support this bill. It is wake-up for all of us. In short, record numbers of children are in care, they remain there longer and there are fewer restorations, and over half of these children and young people are in care that is managed by a non-government designated agency.

The system is failing those who need it most. That is why the Opposition is calling on the Berejiklian Government to support the bill. The report of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 into the effectiveness and resourcing of the child protection system in New South Wales made 28 recommendations. Recommendation 12 calls on the New South Wales Government to make legislative amendments to "extend the performance audit function of the Auditor-General to include audits of all non-government organisations who have been provided with State funding to deliver child protection related services". This report also agrees with the view of the Auditor-General that there is limited oversight of funding directed to the non-government sector and endorses the suggestion of the Auditor-General that there should be additional powers to enable greater scrutiny of the performance of all non-government organisations that provide out-of-home care functions on behalf of the State. They are funded by the State and are providing services on behalf of the State and they should have such oversight.

In 2012 the gradual transfer of out-of-home care services to the non-government sector began. This was one of the key recommendations of the Wood report and was supported by the then New South Wales Labor Government. The contracts between Family and Community Services and the non-government agencies were implemented by the current Minister for Family and Community Services. The contracts were extended to June this year but have still to be renewed. There has been much prominence given—and justly so—to the horrifying and tragic cases of abuse of children whilst in out-of-home care, especially since the most recent round of out-of-home-care contracts were awarded.

One of the most important roles a government should play is ensuring that our most vulnerable are protected and supported by the State. The Government provides the funding to the non-government agencies who perform that role on behalf of the Government. Undeniably it follows that the Government, through its Auditor-General, should have the powers necessary to ensure that there is rigid scrutiny of the performance of those agencies and the strongest possible mechanisms for transparency. This will only be achieved by enabling the Auditor-General to conduct audits of contracts between the department and the non-government designated agencies. These performance audits will ensure the non-government organisations providers are fulfilling their roles effectively, economically and in compliance with the Act. Audits would be required prior to the renewal of the contract or within three months after the expiry or termination of a contract. Clearly the system is failing the most vulnerable. This bill, which follows a key recommendation in the report, will ensure a better and more secure future for those thousands of children and young people who are unable to remain with their families. I urge all members to support this bill.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (11:35):** I refer to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Auditing of Out-of-Home Care Providers) Bill. The purpose of the Opposition's bill is to amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to require the family and community services [FACS] Minister to ensure the Auditor-General conducts performance audits of non-government out-of-home care providers before New South Wales Government funding contracts are renewed.

The bill proposes that the FACS Minister ensures the Auditor-General undertakes performance audits of FACS- funded non-government organisation [NGO] out-of-home care providers before contracts are renewed or within three months of contracts expiring. Contracts could not be renewed unless the NGO's functions have been audited by the Auditor-General and the FACS secretary must have considered the Auditor-General's report. The NGO would bear the cost of the audit and the Minister for Family and Community Services would be required to table reports in Parliament. The Government does not support this bill as it directly targets accredited non-government out-of-home care providers, it has not been constructed in consultation with the non-government sector, and it does not have its support.

In a media release, Andrew McCallum, the Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies [ACWA], which represents out-of-home care providers, said that this bill is an "unacceptable attack on the integrity of charities that continue to work tirelessly to support the community's youngest and most vulnerable". As this sector is already heavily regulated, the ACWA has argued that this bill is unnecessary. With this bill the Opposition aims to target some of this State's most cherished and hardworking charities and

non-government organisations. It is important to note that for the past 20 years New South Wales has had strong standards in place regarding the care to be provided to children and young people.

Minimum requirements for accreditation as a designated agency or adoption service provider have been provided through the New South Wales Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care. For agencies wanting to provide both out-of-home care and adoption services, these standards provide a more efficient accreditation arrangement. To ensure an oversight of these requirements and standards, the Office of the Children's Guardian audits the quality of accredited agencies through its accreditation and monitoring framework. Ongoing assessments and responsive monitoring programs are conducted and are not looked at as static point-in-time assessments.

Additionally there is another level of oversight for these organisations, as charities and not-for profits are required to be registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission [ACNC]. Under ACNC requirements a charity with annual revenue of more than \$1 million must have its financial report audited and must submit the financial report and the auditor's report to the ACNC every year. Along with the ACNC, the New South Wales Ombudsman also has powers that it is currently able to utilise to consider complaints about a range of human service providers, including non-government out-of-home care providers.

This Government is already putting policies and strategies in place to ensure the future success of outcomes for our children and young people in foster care. One of these initiatives is Their Futures Matter, which sets out this Government's long-term vision for vulnerable children and families in New South Wales. This strategy provides a consistent and responsible system in which targeted services are supplied based on client need, premised on an unprecedented level of collaboration across government and with the non-government sector. An amount of \$190 million has been allocated by the Government to implement Their Futures Matter. Through this program, support will be given to help parents change habits and behaviours so that the safety, wellbeing, health and education of children can be improved. Where parents cannot change, children have the right to a stable and long-term home through open adoption or guardianship.

As a responsible Government, we have implemented important reforms with the Department of Family and Community Services, enabling it to re-contract non-government out-of-home care providers. A strong emphasis on compliance and performance reporting has been included with these new contracts. Additionally, in order to improve the quality of care for children and young people, FACS is also trialling the quality assurance framework to be used by the department and NGOs. New South Wales is the only jurisdiction to have an independent statutory regulatory body for out-of-home care providers in the Office of the Children's Guardian. Importantly, to be eligible to be funded by FACS, all out-of-home care providers must be accredited by the Office of the Children's Guardian and are continually audited to ensure standards are maintained.

Protecting our vulnerable children and young people in out-of-home care remains central to the Government's priorities. We have delivered a strengthened child protection system since 2011 and are proud of our advances in this area. Our non-government providers are doing an integral job in our community and those who are not performing correctly under law should be dealt with under the current auditing and monitoring process. These organisations are doing some of the hardest work to support our most vulnerable children and young people, and I am disappointed with Labor's targeted attack on them through this bill. I oppose this bill.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (11:41):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Terrigal, Blue Mountains, Oatley, Port Stephens, Drummoyne, Charlestown, Maitland, Canterbury, Riverstone, Myall Lakes and Holsworthy for their contributions to what is undoubtedly a landmark bill, the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Auditing of Out-of-Home Care Providers) Bill 2017. I am disappointed but not surprised that the Government has chosen not to support Labor's bill.

I note the absence of the Minister to respond to the bill, but I hope she might consider bringing forward legislation in regard to the unanimous recommendation of the parliamentary inquiry into child protection that we do exactly what is proposed in this bill. I hope she will listen to the Auditor-General, who indicated last year how necessary these types of amendments are for the Auditor-General to better audit and monitor the non-government organisation [NGO] sector. This bill would have delivered increased oversight and accountability for non-government out-of-home care providers, correcting a gap in our child protection provision process and regulation. It would have allowed us to follow the public dollar into non-government care providers that receive billions in funding each year, ensuring that public money is well spent. Most importantly, it would have delivered improvements to the quality of care and protection provided to tens of thousands of children and young people in New South Wales.

I will respond to a number of the comments made by Government members throughout this debate. One is that the Association of Child Welfare Agencies [ACWA] has called the bill unnecessary and an attack on care providers. I categorically refute that claim. The Opposition has a very good relationship with the vast majority of NGO providers and understands the need for the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] to work

hand in hand with the NGO sector in providing quality out-of-home care in New South Wales. ACWA's characterisation of the bill was premature. It made the comments that some Government members have referred to on 2 August, one day before the bill was tabled in Parliament. The press release was issued on the day that I gave notice of the bill.

At that stage I had not taken the bill into Parliament, so they could not possibly have made comments based on a reading of the bill itself. As our record in this area shows, we are not opposed to the provision of care services by non-government providers and do not seek to work against them. The bill sought to drive government and non-government agencies in this sector to work together more closely and more effectively. Since those initial comments, I have also engaged in positive discussions with ACWA on both the substance and the intent of the bill.

I note also that the Government's contention that Labor did not consult with stakeholders on this bill is misinformed. We consulted with a wide range of stakeholders from across the sector. Given that new contracts for non-government providers to provide out-of-home care services have not yet been finalised, it should come as no surprise that many of those consultations were and are in confidence. In his response, the member for Drummoyne referred to out-of-home care contracts or new contracts, stating that these new contracts have a strong emphasis on compliance and performance reporting. I am not sure how he came to that conclusion, given that these contracts have yet to be finalised and are still in confidential stages of determination.

Labor was compelled to move on this issue by the momentous changes in out-of-home care governance and delivery that have occurred in recent years. Those changes have brought about a system that is in many ways unrecognisable from its predecessor. In 2007, the New South Wales Labor Government recognised that the future was likely to bring increased demand for out-of-home care services in this State. A decade ago—almost to the day—it established a special commission of inquiry into child protection. One of the key recommendations arising from this inquiry was a gradual transition in the provision of out-of-home care away from Government and into the hands of non-government organisations.

In 2009, Labor agreed to support the recommendation for the transfer of care delivery to the NGO sector. This reform was then picked up by the current Government and the transfer of out-of-home care provision to non-government carers commenced in 2012. The sharp rise in demand for out-of-home care services foreshadowed in 2007 has now come to pass: The Auditor-General estimates that in 2016, more than 21,000 children were in out-of-home care in New South Wales. Amongst Australian jurisdictions, this State has the second highest proportion of children in out-of-home care—close to 10 per cent of our total number of children in care in New South Wales. It is a stark figure and should be of concern to everybody in this Chamber.

Today, around 57 per cent of children and young people in out-of-home care are now cared for by a non-government organisation. These service providers received \$2.8 billion in public funding in 2015 and 2016, or 34 per cent of the total Family and Community Services expenses budget. Although the vast majority of these non-government services work to the highest standards despite very tough working conditions and diligently provide care, protection, and empathy to highly vulnerable children, there are cracks in the system. Tragically, the children that slip through these cracks are made to pay a terrible price—as we saw in the case of Braxton Slager-Lewin.

In September 2014, 22-month-old Braxton drowned in a swimming pool in his care home in Sydney's north-west, just three weeks after arriving there. The police report on Braxton's death noted that the pool did not have the self-securing gate required by regulations and that the house was in a very poor state. We learned this August of a damning internal FACS report that, for some reason, there was an attempt to suppress. Thankfully, that suppression was lifted. In that report, it became clear that Braxton was not provided with quality care, let alone adequate supervision. Since we introduced this bill, a coronial inquest into Braxton's death has commenced. Though I do not intend to pre-empt the findings of that ongoing investigation, anyone can see that the system failed an extremely young and vulnerable child, and failed miserably. In 2016, we learned of the tragic story of girl X, a 14 year-old girl sexually assaulted by her carer in a residential care facility in Sydney in 2012. Girl X later died by suicide caused by a drug overdose. Though the coroner noted the difficulty in recommending systemic changes in the ensuing investigation, he nonetheless concluded that more could have been done to prevent her death. Tragedies such as these deserve a response in their own right, but the need for reform was affirmed by rigorous policy work both inside and outside Parliament. In 2016 a cross-party parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness and resourcing of the child protection system in New South Wales took place. The inquiry's report, published earlier this year, recommended:

That the NSW Government make legislative amendments to extend the performance audit function of the Auditor-General to include audits of all non-government organisations who have been provided with state funding to deliver child protection related services.

Also in 2016 the NSW Auditor-General's report on Family and Community Services recommended that it be given a mandate to "follow the dollar" into NGOs in receipt of public funds. It noted that this would deliver assurance about service delivery outcomes, as well as financial accountability, and would enhance public confidence. Indeed Auditors-General in other Australian jurisdictions have already been provided with this power.

These are the very changes we sought to bring with this bill: to shine a light on providers, reveal whether they are meeting the standards the public expects and deserves, and bring about improvements where necessary. Our bill required the Auditor-General to conduct performance audits of the placement functions of non-government organisations delivering out-of-home care services. It also empowered the Auditor-General to make recommendations to the Minister for Family and Community Services when the results of such an audit revealed that a provider could be delivering more effective, more economic and more efficient services. Labor's aspiration for the bill was to provide better outcomes for the record number of children in care. I ask the Government to support this bill.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....37  
Noes .....48  
Majority.....11

#### AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Donato, Mr P  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

#### NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L  
Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Humphries, Mr K  
Lee, Dr G  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Roberts, Mr A  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
George, Mr T  
Grant, Mr T  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Petinos, Ms E  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr A  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Kean, Mr M  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Provest, Mr G  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

#### PAIRS

Foley, Mr L

Barilaro, Mr J

**Motion negatived.**

*Motions*

**WHITE RIBBON DAY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (11:57):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that 25 November 2017 is White Ribbon Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
- (2) Recognises that White Ribbon Day aims to prevent violence against women by increasing public awareness.
- (3) Acknowledges the bipartisan commitment on both sides of the House to preventing domestic violence.

The New South Wales Government continues to lead the nation in tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence in our community. We are investing more than \$350 million over four years to tackle domestic violence by supporting victim-survivors and holding perpetrators to account. This investment is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars the Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services. Domestic and family violence is one of the biggest social issues affecting the lives of women, men and children. This Saturday, 25 November 2017, is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and White Ribbon Day. It is important that the New South Wales Parliament supports the aims of this day: to prevent violence against women by increasing public awareness and challenging the attitudes and behaviours that allow violence to continue. In New South Wales, in the 12 months to June 2017, the rate for female victims of domestic violence related assaults was 553.1 per 100,000. That is 2.2 times higher than for male victims: 250.7 per 100,000. That rate has remained stable over five years, but the Aboriginal population is significantly over-represented as victims of domestic violence. The Aboriginal population in New South Wales represents 2.9 per cent of the State's total population yet, in the 12 months to June 2017, 9.3 per cent of victims of domestic violence related assaults in New South Wales were Aboriginal. Every domestic violence death is a tragedy. The New South Wales Government will continue to be tough on perpetrators. It will continue to invest a record amount of money to support victims and help to keep them safe.

Safer Pathway, the integrated multi-agency response to high-risk domestic violence victims, is now operating in 34 sites across New South Wales. The rollout of Safer Pathway will continue next year and it will be operating statewide by September 2018. In the 2017-18 budget the Government also invested \$25 million for Start Safely, to help those escaping violence to move into stable housing in the private rental market; and more than \$10 million for behaviour change interventions for high-risk offenders. We will continue to invest in innovative responses to domestic and family violence through the \$20 million Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund, which was announced in the 2016-17 budget. The seven successful applicants in the first round of funding were announced in June, and expressions of interest are currently being considered for the second round. Some of the successful and innovative projects already underway from the first phase include greater support for rural communities, people with a disability, the Aboriginal community and education in the workforce.

In 2016-17, the Staying Home Leaving Violence Program supported 5,749 clients, comprising 2,125 women and 3,624 children, to stay safely in their home while police removed the perpetrator. That is a fantastic innovation. In 2016-17, the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program provided wraparound services to 2,437 adults and 3,413 children experiencing violence, by working closely with key agencies such as police, health, legal aid, Family and Community Services, Housing NSW and local non-government organisations to develop individual support plans for clients. In 2016-17, some 2,516 households, including 4,378 children, were assisted with Start Safely in New South Wales—up from 1,974 the previous year. In 2015-16, Specialist Homelessness Services provided services and assistance to 23,171 clients experiencing domestic and family violence.

In the 2017-18 budget the Government also invested \$10 million for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service to support victims through the criminal justice system; \$6.2 million for Staying Home Leaving Violence to support women and their children to remain safely at home; \$5.1 million for police domestic violence high-risk offender teams, including the rollout of two new teams in 2017-18; \$4.9 million for non-government organisation led community-based perpetrator interventions; \$4 million to support a trial of a core and cluster accommodation model in at least four locations across New South Wales, which will increase the capacity of women's refuges and allow women and their children greater privacy and independence by residing in a cluster of self-contained units while being linked to a core communal area for onsite support.

The Government also invested \$3.7 million in support for the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program, a coordinated multi-agency initiative to prevent the escalation of domestic and family violence;

\$1.7 million for the New South Wales Domestic Violence Line to provide 24/7 support and assistance for victims of domestic violence; and \$840,000 for new GPS trackers to improve victim safety. This funding will provide more support services and accommodation options for domestic and family violence victims and interventions to hold perpetrators to account. The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform sets out a vision for tackling domestic and family violence.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:04):** White Ribbon, which had its inception in 1991, has made great strides in the past 26 years. Fifty-seven countries are now involved in the campaign to eliminate violence against women. I join with the member for Heathcote in supporting this motion. White Ribbon Day is on 25 November 2017. Communities across Australia are set to hold a range of special White Ribbon events throughout the coming weeks. This year's theme is all about creating awareness and speaking out against violence through the STOP Kit—see, talk, offer support and prevent. It is all too easy in today's society to turn a blind eye and trust that someone else will do the right thing and step in. Simply learning the signs of violence and abuse is not going to be of much help if we fail to take any action.

The sad reality is that each week one woman is killed by a current or former partner. Confronting these issues head-on and taking a stand is the way forward. We have the power to intervene and offer support. Like many members in this House, I have taken an oath to "stand up, speak out and act to prevent men's violence against women". Silence and inaction will only let the violence continue. We live in an incredibly diverse society built on a foundation of inclusion and acceptance. We promote courage, compassion, integrity and respect; however, all too often, cowardly individuals instead turn to violence and abuse. Like all communities in New South Wales, my electorate continues to be affected by domestic violence, with more than 1,000 reported cases across both local government areas in 2016-17.

All year round, local support groups, police and the community continue to collaborate and work hard to stamp out domestic violence in our local community. We need to break the cycle of violence together and encourage everyone to join the cause. Our friends, family, colleagues and communities need to work together, stand up, speak out and report all forms of family and domestic violence. Domestic and family violence is an incredibly complex and serious issue that does not have a simple or straightforward solution. It is imbedded in the attitudes and cultures of people, and a broad shift is required to enact real and lasting change in these communities. However, together we can change the mindsets of times long past. Violence against one another is unacceptable and, in time, we can achieve our goal of eliminating domestic and family violence completely.

Each year my local community plays host to a number of large White Ribbon Day events, including candlelight vigils and the Police and Community White Ribbon Day Walk. I am proud to stand united with the local community in doing everything within our power to put an end to violence against women. For anyone who is interested, our traditional Police and Community White Ribbon Day Walk will be taking place tomorrow morning from 9.30 a.m. The Fairfield and Cabramatta local area commands will be hosting the walk, which starts at Cabra-Vale Park and ends at Freedom Plaza in Cabramatta. Local non-government organisations, police, local schools and representatives from local, State and Federal governments will all come together in support of White Ribbon.

It is not always easy to identify if someone you know is a victim of family or domestic violence or whether they are in an abusive relationship. That is why educating our communities on the importance of looking for signs and reporting the issues is the only way we can get help for the victims and put an end to the vicious cycle. I say to our communities: Do not be afraid to speak up, and certainly do not be afraid to act. As a father and a former teacher, I am a firm believer in teaching our young men and women the virtues of respecting and caring for one another. We must continue to educate each new generation of children on the importance of respectful relationships and on ensuring violence against one another is not tolerated, accepted or condoned. As community leaders, we must ensure that we take charge and lead the way in our regions to ensure the appropriate policies, support and safeguards are in place to protect those who need that support in our communities.

I am incredibly proud of the tremendous efforts of our non-government organisations, particularly, in my area, the Fairfield Local Area Command, the Cabramatta Local Area Command and the Holroyd Local Area Command. Of course, I am also proud of our local community for their unwavering efforts towards stamping out family and domestic violence. New South Wales Labor stands firmly beside the White Ribbon cause, as I know the Government and all members of this Chamber do, and we will continue to speak out against family and domestic violence.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:10):** No member of our society should be the victim of violence, but it is particularly horrifying when women and children suffer violence or fear violence, persecution or intimidation in their own homes. That is why White Ribbon Day is incredibly important in our community. Today I acknowledge that important day and the 16 Days of Activism that will run from 25 November, and I thank the member for Heathcote for moving this motion. I had the great privilege last night of attending an event here

in Parliament House that has been run for many years by Vincent de Luca to acknowledge White Ribbon Day, and of taking the oath to never commit or enable others to commit violence against women. It is important that this Parliament takes that stand and that all of us agree to support it within our own communities. Next week I will join Lower North Shore Domestic Violence Network in a fundraising activism activity to ensure that we are continuing to pursue this message within our local community.

The New South Wales Government is leading the nation in tackling domestic and family violence, not only through its significant financial investment of \$350 million over the next four years, but also through a number of actions to reduce the rate of domestic violence reoffending. It is one of the Premier's priorities. I acknowledge the Premier for her leadership on this, and also the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Last week I met with the Minister to speak about White Ribbon Day and the Government's approach to tackling these issues. I also met with my own local police commander at Harbourside Local Area Command, Allan Sicard, and the domestic violence liaison officer, Rob Nielsen. We spoke about the challenges in my community around domestic violence and how to tackle this scourge.

The Commissioner of Police, Mick Fuller, has undertaken outstanding work in leading the police. We now have four specialist police teams targeting repeat, high-risk offenders, and the Suspect Target Management Plans have been expanded to include recidivist domestic violence perpetrators. These teams complement the significant work that has already been undertaken by New South Wales police to tackle domestic violence by conducting daily operations and investigations to identify and target repeat domestic violence offenders to reduce reoffending.

The Premier's priority is to reduce the proportion of domestic violence perpetrators reoffending within 12 months by 25 per cent by 2019, to take the rate from a baseline of 14.2 per cent—which is taken from 2013 data that was reported in 2015—to 10.7 per cent. This demonstrates the leadership and commitment of the Premier and the Government to tackle re-offending. I also spent some time recently at Manly Court House, which services my community and hears domestic violence cases that occur in my community. I had the great privilege of meeting with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service there. I also recently visited the Manly Women's Shelter, which supports women in my community who are escaping domestic violence.

Everyone knows that we need to provide better help and support for victims of domestic violence, but we also need to put the perpetrator clearly in the centre of the frame. The Government will never apologise for getting tough and, as part of the Premier's priority in the past year, a number of initiatives have been trialled to reduce apprehended domestic violence order breaches. The Government is focused on helping perpetrators to change and to address their violent behaviour. Under the New South Wales Government's Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint, the New South Wales Government is committed to increasing and improving behaviour change interventions for high-risk domestic and family violence offenders; expanding non-government community-based men's behaviour change interventions; and developing the capacity of the community-based men's behaviour change sector. In my community and across the State, we are focusing on reducing domestic violence, and I am very proud to support this motion today.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:14):** I speak in support of the White Ribbon cause. I acknowledge the contributions of other members on this topic. Like the member for North Shore, I also attended the White Ribbon Day event last night in this Parliament. It is important that I speak out and stand up against domestic violence, and today I speak in support of the many refugees in this State that are struggling. We are coming up to the most critical time of the year for people who are living in a violent relationship. Coming up to the Christmas season, many people are dealing with terror on a daily basis in their own homes. The cuts to refugees that have happened under this Government have created many issues for those people.

I have been to more than 45 communities around the State and I have spoken to hundreds of people who work in the domestic violence field, keeping women and children safe in our community. Without exception, they tell me that they are over capacity. The Government speaks of the changes it has made in the area of domestic violence, and I acknowledge the changes the Government has made for the good, but the Government has also made changes to funding. The Minister has admitted that a \$40 million spend on refugees in our State was cut to \$20 million and put into the whole homelessness budget, which was, in total, around \$54 million. But there is no explanation as to what happened to those people affected by that cut of \$20 million. Did they go into general homelessness services? Did they get accommodated with drug addicts or people suffering mental illness? Or were they provided with wraparound specialist domestic violence, trauma-informed counselling?

I believe that on White Ribbon Day, for once, we can be honest with ourselves in this Chamber and we can acknowledge that what has been done to the refuge sector in New South Wales is no less than a form of violence. It has cut the opportunity and the ability of women and children in this State to escape a life of violence. The Government can dress it up all it likes. There is always more to do in this space, but this Government has done harm and I cannot be silent. We have a bipartisan approach to addressing domestic violence but we cannot

be an accessory after the fact when so many people are hurting. Every time I go to a domestic violence committee meeting anywhere in the State I am told that there is no capacity, that there are no spaces for victims of domestic violence. Police complain that they have to collect women and children in the dead of night to try to keep them safe and they have to put them in police stations or motels, and that their ex-partners or perpetrators come and drag them out to abuse them again.

We must do better. This is going to have an intergenerational impact. This is not a bottom line on somebody's departmental accounting; this will be a new generation of perpetrators who only learn violence—they live by violence and they perpetrate it in adulthood in their own families, or they think that that is what their victims deserve. Instead of platitudes and just supporting charities such as Share the Dignity and White Ribbon, I urge the Government to stand up, speak out and act to restore the refuges in this State.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:19):** I speak on the motion on White Ribbon Day moved by the member for Heathcote. Today we acknowledge the vital work that White Ribbon Australia does. One of its most important roles is primary prevention—stopping the domestic violence before it happens—and includes public information campaigns, education programs and workplace programs. White Ribbon Day, on Saturday 25 November, is a great example of preventative measures and working to raise awareness.

Domestic violence is an important issue on the Central Coast. Statistics consistently indicate that the Gosford and Wyong areas—two major cities in our region—have some of the highest rates of domestic violence in New South Wales. In light of this, I am doing all I can to help influence and change community attitudes for the better. This weekend I will be attending a fundraising luncheon in my electorate of Terrigal to raise funds for women's refuges on the Central Coast. This fundraising luncheon, organised by Terrigal local Rachel Buckland, is now in its third year and will be attended by about 130 women. All attendees wear white in symbolism of their support for preventing domestic violence. I will stand out as I believe I will be the only male in attendance. It is a great honour to be able to attend this event again this year. I have also taken the oath.

This weekend, at 10.00 a.m. on Sunday, I will also be participating in the Terrigal White Ribbon Walk from Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club to the Skillion. The Skillion is a large geographic icon in my electorate of Terrigal with which some members present may be familiar. It has been decorated with white flowers that have been arranged to form the number 43. That is a significant number as it is the number of women who so far this year have had their lives taken as victims of domestic violence. That is a sobering number and not to be taken lightly. Violence against women is a scourge upon today's modern society and we must do everything we can to stop it from occurring. As parliamentarians we occupy an important role in our respective communities and, as such, we need to say loud and clear that we have zero tolerance for family and domestic violence. On the Central Coast we have made it clear that we have zero tolerance for domestic violence. As legislators it is our job to put in place the legislation required and to make the resources available to combat this problem.

I bring to the attention of the House the work this Government is doing to combat domestic violence in the Central Coast community. Last month I was joined by Minister Goward, the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, when we visited the Terrigal police station. We announced that from March next year domestic and family violence victims living within the Brisbane Water Local Area Command will have additional support available to them. This will involve a simplified single contact point called Safer Pathway. This will enable victims to access the support they need. Safer Pathway ensures that the response provided to victims and their children is effective and consistent. This involves coordination between local representatives from agencies such as police, health, corrections, Family and Community Services and education as well as specialist non-government agencies.

I am pleased to be part of a New South Wales State Liberal government which has put resources into this program. I look forward to the Safer Pathway site commencing in March next year. I commend the motion of the member for Heathcote. I ask that everybody on the Central Coast observe and take the opportunity to be involved in any White Ribbon Day event occurring across the Central Coast. The main one will be the White Ribbon Walk that I mentioned earlier, starting at 10.00 a.m. from the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club and proceeding up the Skillion.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:23):** I take the opportunity on behalf of my constituents in Bankstown to contribute to this important debate. I acknowledge the member for Heathcote for moving this motion that everybody in this Chamber supports. Unfortunately there is a high incidence of domestic violence in my electorate. As a community we need to be vigilant in ensuring that there are appropriate programs and support services in place for the women and children who are victims. We also need to ensure that we do everything we can to prevent the younger generation from falling into a situation where they could become perpetrators. There is strong evidence that many who are victims of domestic violence as children can become perpetrators as adults. It is critical that there is work in the early stages of a child's development to prevent violent and aggressive behaviour as an adult.



I acknowledge Bankstown Youth Development Services [BYDS], an amazing organisation in its twenty-seventh year. They work with young people from tough backgrounds in trying to coordinate a range of art programs containing strong messages. Tim Carroll, the chief executive officer, and Craig Taunton, the youth music facilitator of BYDS, have come up with an amazing project called RESPECT. They work with year 5 and 6 boys in local primary schools to help the children learn about the importance of respecting women and to understand the need to see women in an equal light. There are some amazing hip-hop projects as a result.

I had the opportunity recently at the Bankstown Arts Centre to see the boys from Bass Hill Public School sing a wonderful song called *We Are Scared for Our Sister*, in which they each took a turn explaining how important it is to respect their sisters, to respect women and to treat girls in their classes as they would their own sisters. I encourage you to search for their video on YouTube. Bankstown Public School has also participated in this wonderful project. I acknowledge BYDS for the work they have undertaken in inspiring young boys from the ages of 10 or 11 years in understanding the need to respect women and to take a strong stand against violence and work towards eliminating violence against all women.

I pay tribute to the Bankstown Women's Health Centre. I had the pleasure of popping into their centre this week. They have an important display there, "Stand By Me", which highlights the need for women and children to be vocal about any violence they are experiencing and to seek help and assistance. For many years that organisation has provided a range of support services for women. In the coming days we have a number of White Ribbon events in Bankstown. We have a tug of war at the John Mackay Sports Centre and a wonderful walk and march in Lakemba. I acknowledge everybody who is involved in ensuring that we eliminate all forms of violence against women in society.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery the parents of the member for Port Stephens, Ms Kate Washington.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:27):** By leave: Every member in this Parliament would join me in speaking out against domestic violence against women. It is something that must not be tolerated within our society. We all need to take a stand. Men, women, sporting groups, business leaders and leaders in our communities all need to stand up and say that violence against women is not acceptable behaviour and not to be tolerated. We must always speak out against domestic violence. If we know that domestic violence is occurring, we must go to the appropriate authorities or pathways to ensure that the victims get the help that they need.

I am proud to be associated with the White Ribbon Day breakfast held each year in Camden. This year it is being held on 6 December, and I will be helping out once again. It is a sellout. Business and sporting groups get behind it and 330 people stand up and renounce domestic violence. Each year the police commissioner attends, and Commissioner Fuller will attend this year. Minister Pru Goward and other Government members will also be present. I acknowledge the extremely hardworking Camden/Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee led by Tanya Whitehouse, Senior Constable Lyndall Blackmoore, Michelle Kromer, Frere Woods and Denise Pritchard. These ladies do an outstanding job, day in and day out, to eliminate domestic violence in the community. They work with victims and each year they organise the breakfast.

Each year there is a guest speaker who is either a domestic violence survivor or the relative of a deceased victim. It is heart wrenching listening to the stories of those who speak. All the victims tell sad and sickening stories. It highlights each person's responsibility to stand up and speak up in order to eliminate domestic violence from the community. This year Lisa McAdams, creator of Lead the Way, will speak to the attendees. That organisation provides support and advice for people and businesses to build domestic violence workplace strategies. Lisa has been a victim, and is now a survivor, of domestic violence during her childhood and marriage. Lisa has the courage to stand before 330 people and tell her heart-wrenching story in order to inspire people to stand up against domestic violence in their community.

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (12:31):** By leave: I thank the member for Heathcote for bringing this motion to the Chamber. As indicated by the member for Fairfield, tomorrow there will be a White Ribbon Police Community Walk. It will start at Cabra-Vale park at 9.30 a.m. and finish in Freedom Plaza, Cabramatta, where speeches will be made by local police, schools, priests and other members of Parliament. Statistics show that one woman per week is killed through domestic violence—that is one too many. We must stop that occurring. This event is vital for all of us as Australians. White Ribbon Day aims to raise public awareness of the effects of domestic and family violence upon the victims, extended families, children and community. Domestic violence is not just physical or sexual assault but extends to psychological, social and financial abuse. It can take the form of intimidation or stalking. They are unacceptable behaviours, and I encourage victims to share and report their stories so that other victims know there is help and support available.

Following the Second World War I had a couple of mates whose fathers had returned from the war traumatised, which led them to drink and violence. We used to excuse their behaviour by saying, "He was in the

war. The poor bugger got bombed and shot at, so he now finds it hard. And the little kids make a lot of noise and the only way to keep them quite is to belt them." If you got belted in those days, you knew about it. My dad used to get angry because of financial problems, not war injuries—although he was a refugee—and we would go to school with welts on our legs. You could see the buckle holes in our legs. The teacher would laugh and say, "You copped it on the weekend, mate. Looks like you deserved it". That is how it was in the fifties and sixties; the teachers accepted it and nobody cared. Today it is different: We care and we make sure those things do not happen not only to the children but also to the mums. If mums got involved they would accidentally or deliberately cop a bit on the side.

Some of the people who come to Australia today have a community culture where it is okay to belt your wife and backhand your mother. Regardless of whether that was how it was done in their country, there is no excuse. They are in Australia now and will abide by our laws—and our laws say that we do not perpetrate violence against women. We cannot allow that to happen to our mothers, sisters, daughters and wives—we love them all. I encourage everyone to take part in White Ribbon Day activities or to wear a white ribbon to raise awareness and as a public pledge never to condone or remain silent about violence against women. I call on Government and institutions controlled by men to seriously address the issue. Let us make a stand together against this disgraceful behaviour and all acts of violence against women.

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (12:36):** By leave: I am proud to stand alongside my parliamentary colleagues to speak on this important motion about White Ribbon Day. It is a constant fight to end violence and to make everyone aware that community attitudes towards violence within families have changed significantly. This is an important motion because domestic and family violence affects all communities across the State. It is devastating for women who are victims, and for the men who make up a small cohort of victims. It is particularly devastating for children who either directly experience, or in many cases witness, this violence. I cannot think of anything more scary than for a young child to witness extreme physical and verbal harassment and violence between people who should care for them.

It is important that we stand together against violence in this place and in our communities. I highlight a group in my community that is raising awareness, particularly among young people, of domestic violence. In St Clair and Erskine Park in the electorate of Mulgoa a number of public schools have joined together. They call themselves the "STEPS"—which is an acronym for St Clare and Erskine Park Schools—community. These public schools work together on a number of academic and educational objectives and activities, but in this case they have joined to work as a STEPS school community to raise the profile, awareness and buy-in of young people to this cause.

Yesterday the STEPS community coordinated a mufti day across the schools to raise money for the White Ribbon Day program and to talk about the issue in a safe place within the school community. It is important to deliver the message at a young age that violence against anyone is reprehensible and it must stop. We all have a responsibility in this area. This Saturday evening, commencing at 5.30 p.m. in Weir Reserve, the city council will host the Penrith White Ribbon Twilight River Walk. My family and I will join the community on the 3½ kilometre walk from Weir Reserve to Tench Reserve.

I know the STEPS school community will be represented at this important awareness walk as well as a number of other community organisations such as police, councils and other schools. It is an important cause. Every day we should remain vigilant so we understand what violence is. As members of Parliament, we can be leaders in our networks and advocates among our contacts to continue to raise awareness of violence so that together we can achieve the goal of having a safe, embracing community that is free from violence and intimidation so everyone is capable of achieving their fullest potential.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:40):** By leave: I speak in support of White Ribbon Day and stand against any form of violence against women in New South Wales, Australia and the world. I thank the member for Heathcote for moving this motion. I know he is a long-time supporter of White Ribbon Day and has held a forum in his electorate to promote the safety of women. The New South Wales Government has a strong commitment to addressing domestic and family violence, which is demonstrated through its commitment to programs and services supporting victims and their families. These include the statewide rollout of Safer Pathways, which provides a coordinated response to victims of domestic and family violence and their children; the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program, which gives victims of domestic and family violence access to information, advocacy and support through the court process; and the Start Safely housing program, which provides private rent subsidies to people leaving domestic violence. Those programs are in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence through mainstream services such as Justice, Police, Health, child protection, Social Housing, and homelessness services.

In August last year the Government launched the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016-2021, which sets out the direction for a domestic and family violence system that will prevent violence, intervene early with vulnerable communities, support victims, hold perpetrators to account, and deliver evidence-based, quality services to make victims safer and to support their recovery. In its first 12 months a great deal has been achieved by the Government, including funding seven projects through the first round of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund; expanding Tackling Violence to nine new locations as a form of early intervention in vulnerable communities; expanding Safer Pathway to 21 new sites to provide increased safety supports for victims of domestic and family violence, supporting more than 33,000 women; and establishing three police Domestic Violence High Risk Offender Teams to target recidivist offenders and investigate domestic and family violence incidents, which exceeds the two-team target for this period.

While it is important for the Government to provide funding and programs to reduce this problem in our community, it is also important for the community to be involved to ensure that the message is heard at a local level. Many events are taking place in my electorate in honour of White Ribbon Day. One event is being run by the Holsworthy Public School, which is holding fundraising activities and collecting donations in support of the cause. On Friday the school students will wear mufti and they are encouraged to wear white clothes as well as provide a gold coin donation. I commend Holsworthy Public School for supporting White Ribbon Day. Education is an essential part of the White Ribbon Day campaign, and I encourage schools across the electorate to become involved in this day to raise awareness about violence against women. New South Wales is leading the nation in tackling domestic violence and the Liberal-Nationals Government will ensure that it continues to provide assistance and support to victims while continuing to target perpetrators like never before.

I thank all members, staff and residents across New South Wales who are taking part in White Ribbon Day. It is a day that shines a light on an issue that is most important to this Government and to many people across the State. I recognise Liverpool police for their work combating domestic violence. They were acknowledged recently by our local Rotary clubs at the Rotary Police Officer of the Year awards. I thank them for working incredibly hard in what must be straining circumstances.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:44):** By leave: It was an horrific scene in December 2013 when Parwinder Kaur, covered in flames, ran screaming from her home in Sydney's north-west. Neighbours watched on in shock as the 32-year-old emerged at the front of her home in Greensborough Avenue, Rouse Hill after being doused in petrol and set alight. "Please cover my body" were the last words of Parwinder Kaur. Who set her on fire? The Coroner warned lawyers and a handful of spectators in her blonde-panelled courtroom that we might find the video distressing, but nothing could prepare us for the confronting scene we were about to witness. A track was selected from the DVD and, as we watched on a screen suspended from the wall, a firefighter poured a can of petrol over the clothes of a female volunteer and set her alight. Within seconds, as she walked down the driveway of a house in a quiet outer suburb of Sydney, she turned into a human torch and flames engulfed her body. She fell to the ground. Two assistants rushed to douse her with a fire extinguisher and throw a heavy fire blanket over her body.

She was of course a professional stuntwoman and survived unharmed. However, in spite of wearing a flame-proof mask, the woman's eyelashes were singed by the ferocity of the flames. Police and firefighters re-enacted the scene 13 times with a stuntwoman before a display window mannequin was used when the amount of petrol was increased and it became too dangerous for a human being. At the end, none of us was in doubt about the horrifying way in which the young woman named Parwinder Kaur died. She was so badly burned that a doctor testified it was easier to describe the body parts the flames had not touched than those that were charred. Parwinder Kaur came to Australia to commence a new life with her husband. It was an arranged marriage. The marriage went downhill and over a period she was subject to significant abuse. On 31 October 2017 Kulwinder Singh, her 37-year-old husband, was arrested at Rouse Hill and taken to Castle Hill police station, where he was charged with murder. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain—Parwinder's long journey to her land of promise ended not with the life she dreamed of but with the nightmare of an agonising death.

Tomorrow I will march with members of the Indian community, including Shuba Kumar and Aksheya Kumar, who work tirelessly to prevent domestic violence in Castle Hill. I acknowledge the tireless work of the local area commander, Superintendent Rob Critchlow, who is at the forefront of community awareness and who will be leading the march.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:49):** In reply: I thank all members who have contributed to debate on this very important motion and for their very considered thoughts on how domestic violence affects every community in New South Wales, and indeed Australia. It is up to legislators, police, Family and Community Services and many other organisations to try to help people and to reduce the incidents of domestic violence that are being perpetrated across our State and across Australia. I acknowledge the great work of our new Commissioner of Police, Mick Fuller, in this space. He is committed to ensuring that we reduce domestic violence

by 25 per cent by 2019. I know that he has come in contact with domestic violence in his police work. It will take a long time before we can eradicate it totally, which is what he wants, but we need to start the change, and this is where it starts—right here, right now, today.

Members of this House need to start working towards stopping domestic violence against women and children within our communities. Financial control of a person can be as bad as domestic violence and is another issue we need to tackle and eradicate. I know all members are interested in this very important issue, and I encourage them to get involved in White Ribbon Day to show their support. Take the pledge and make sure that we in this place are the doyen in stopping this scourge in our communities.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:51):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the contamination red zone surrounding the Williamtown RAAF Base was expanded on the weekend to include a further 250 families.
- (2) Recognises that there are now 750 families living with contaminated water on their properties, with per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances being detected at 300 times above safe drinking water levels.
- (3) Calls on the Premier to stand up for these families by urging the Prime Minister to provide a solution to the serious contamination of these people's homes.

I thank the Government for agreeing to prioritise my motion today so that we can debate this issue—an issue caused by the contamination of my community by the Department of Defence. It is an issue that has cast a pall over my beautiful community for the past two years and two months. It has changed people's lives, possibly—tragically—forever. Before I talk about our current frustrations, I will go back over some of the factors that have led us to this point. Firefighting foam contained chemicals known as per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. This foam was used on the Royal Australian Air Force base at Williamtown until 2010 despite instructions being issued by the Department of Defence to cease its use in 2006. Evidence now suggests that Defence first knew about the potential harm to humans from the firefighting foam in 1987.

We now know that the Environment Protection Authority [EPA], Defence and Port Stephens Council were told about the contamination leaving the base—which means going onto people's properties—in 2013. Residents were the last to know. Shamefully, they learnt via a media release issued on 3 September 2015. Then a map was issued, which had a red line drawn around the properties that were said to be affected by the contamination. It became known as the "red zone". Within four weeks, the lines changed to expand the area significantly north into Salt Ash. Last Sunday my community was told of another change to the map. The map has been expanded by a further 50 per cent to include another 250 properties—rural properties where families live. So the number of properties now within the red zone is 750. That is where we are at now—two years and two months since the community was first made aware and five years since every level of government knew about the contamination affecting their properties.

Amongst the confusion and mismanagement at the start, there was never any doubt that Defence was the polluter and responsible for the harm. At the same time it was made clear to residents that the New South Wales EPA was the lead agency in the response. The EPA falls squarely within the portfolio of the Minister for the Environment. When it was first announced, the Minister for the Environment was Minister Speakman. Since January this year, Minister Upton has been in the role—and I note her presence in the Chamber today. Our community has seen neither of them, and yet this is the biggest environmental disaster facing the State. Nor has the Premier taken the time to visit—although she did drive through the red zone recently to go to a Liberal Party function. But she did not think to stop.

Labor's shadow Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, has visited Williamtown and heard people's stories. Labor leader Luke Foley has also met with affected residents, alongside my colleagues and my Federal colleague, Meryl Swanson. We are doing all we can to try to achieve some meaningful outcomes for these desperate residents. I note that the Minister has now agreed to meet with a select group of residents. But this has come only after I extended an invitation to the Minister on the floor of this place and sent letters inviting her to visit. I have never received a written response to my request or the invitation. I have not received notification of the meeting that she has arranged behind closed doors outside the red zone. Nevertheless, it is a start—albeit two years too late. Two years with absolutely no-one in this Government fighting for the residents affected has led to considerable poor outcomes.

The EPA's tagline is that it "protects the community and our environment". That has not happened. Residents affected by the Williamstown contamination crisis are fed up with the disrespect, condescension and complete disregard being shown to them by the State and Federal governments and their agencies. These families have had their lives turned upside down through no fault of their own—just by virtue of where they chose to live. And from the start, two years ago, the residents said that the red-zone boundaries made no sense. But the EPA—led by this Government—ignored local knowledge and dumped yet another map, supposedly defining areas affected by contamination, at very short notice last weekend. The map now includes a staggering 750 properties.

When asked why it had chosen to expand the boundaries by 50 per cent to include an additional 250 families, we were told by the EPA that it was now relying on topographical advice as well as hydrological advice. What a stunning admission! Who would have thought the physical features of the land would be relevant to assessing the movement of water across it? The residents knew, and they knew right from the start. But the EPA and this Government ignored that advice and now 250 families who were outside the red-zone, blissfully eating produce from their land and eating their chooks' eggs over the past two years, are now being told that they are in fact on contaminated land. They are being told they should not eat anything they produce on their land, drink their water or eat their chickens' eggs. And their property values have plummeted overnight.

Imagine how it feels to know that you may have been poisoning your family, your children or your grandchildren for the past two years because the agencies responsible were too arrogant to listen to residents or even to apply local knowledge or common sense. The attitude of indifference on the part of this Government cannot continue. Of the 750 families who live in the contaminated area, 48 have been told they can no longer use their groundwater, bore water or surface water for any purpose whatsoever because there is no amount of water that is safe for a child to ingest when it contains PFAS levels that are 300 times that of safe drinking water. How does one stop children from incidentally ingesting water that is lying around on a property? They cannot be allowed outside. People cannot be expected to live like this.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (12:59):** I am pleased to speak in debate on this motion. As I indicated to the member for Port Stephens, the Government supports this motion. All members in this Chamber are concerned about the expansion of the area affected by per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances [PFAS] around the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] base at Williamstown. As the member for Port Stephens acknowledged and as I acknowledge, many people in Fullerton Cove, Salt Ash and Williamstown are experiencing and have experienced feelings of distress, anxiety and uncertainty. These families, young and old, have had to deal with their lives being turned upside down by the detection of PFAS. Let us remember, as the member for Port Stephens acknowledged, that the contamination has come from the RAAF base. Let us also remember that in 2015 former Premier Mike Baird fast-tracked the connection of town water to affected residents. The Government did not hesitate to do the right thing. Thankfully, Defence then stepped up and paid for those water connections.

It is important that we talk about the connection of town water because water is the key exposure pathway for PFAS. Town water connections for affected communities take the main exposure off the table. This brings me to last Sunday, when Chief Scientist and Engineer, Mary O'Kane; chair and chief executive officer of the Environment Protection Authority [EPA], Barry Buffier; and health officials visited communities living close to the Williamstown RAAF base to deliver important health information to those communities. The community around the Williamstown RAAF base deserves to know the latest information without delay. The change to the precautionary health advice was significant and most serious for the area closest to the RAAF base in the south. EPA and health professionals doorknocked all homes in the affected area on Sunday from 10.00 a.m. until late in the afternoon.

I am pleased that Hunter Water has also commenced planning work to deliver town drinking water to properties in the expanded contamination area. The New South Wales Government works regularly with the community through the community reference group and the elected representatives groups. The Government is 100 per cent committed to hearing regularly from those community representatives and to sharing detailed information with them. I look forward to meeting members of that community reference group on 4 December and hearing from them directly. We must all remember that as members of Parliament we are here to serve all people in New South Wales to the best of our ability, to hear their concerns, to solve what can be solved and to advocate strongly to the Federal Government on behalf of those communities. That is what I will strive to do every day, as do all members in this Parliament.

The New South Wales Government will continue to support the community in every way possible, including through practical things like counselling services. We will also continue to advocate strongly to the Commonwealth that it should step up to its responsibility as the polluter. That is why I have already written to Federal Minister for Defence, Marise Payne, welcoming the Federal Government's confirmation that it will extend

town water to all affected communities. I have called for this to be done urgently. Once again, this is about the people living in the affected area. They need and will continue to have all of our support, care and attention. I reiterate that the Government supports the motion before the House.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:03):** I support this motion which deals with the ongoing contamination crisis at the Williamstown Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] base. This issue directly affects my constituents living in Fullerton Cove, which is now in the red zone, which was expanded by the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] just this week. I acknowledge the hard work of the community in the face of this ongoing crisis. I thank the Fullerton Cove Residents Action Group, the Williamstown and Surrounds Resident Action Group and Salt Ash Community First.

The first time I heard about this then-unofficial contamination zone was when I was contacted by local residents. These residents believed that although they were not officially in the red zone, they were being directly affected. They told me that they had organised some per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances [PFAS] testing themselves. They told me of elevated PFAS levels in their blood and water. They were fearful of the future for themselves, their children and their extended families. They wanted something to be done. As they were not considered as part of the official red zone, they were not eligible for assistance from the Government or to be connected to Hunter Water's town water supply.

Some time ago, shadow Minister for the Environment, Penny Sharpe, joined the member for Port Stephens and me at a community meeting to discuss what action was needed. Following this meeting, I thought it was imperative for the Minister to talk to local residents. I raised this issue with the Minister's chief of staff, and suggested that the Minister for the Environment, Gabrielle Upton, might want to discuss visiting Fullerton Cove as a matter of urgency. This was quite a long time ago—on 27 September. At around that time we were also told that the elected representatives group, which formed as a result of the Williamstown contamination crisis, would be disbanded and the Williamstown Community Reference Group would be outsourced. This Government wanted to outsource the problem. Both groups were formed in 2015 to keep channels of communication open between residents, Defence, the EPA, the council and government agencies. It was the ultimate insult to all involved that the problem was to be outsourced as the Government would not be able to be held to account, which is a disgrace. I hope that the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary are reconsidering that outsourcing and disbanding of the elected representatives group. Only today the Minister announced that she would visit the area.

**Ms Gabrielle Upton:** That is incorrect.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** It was reported today in the *Newcastle Herald* that the Minister had decided to visit the area. She did not reply to my communication; rather, she let the media know first. The *Newcastle Herald* reported that the Minister would visit the area on 4 December. Curiously, the day after we discussed this issue and my esteemed colleague the member for Port Stephens put it on the agenda, it was reported in the *Newcastle Herald*. It has taken more than two months for the Minister to realise that this issue is worthy of her attention, whereas the shadow Minister took action and decided to visit the region months ago. This issue will not go away. It is about time that the New South Wales Government showed some leadership and respect for the residents affected by this crisis. I ask the Premier to visit the region with the environment Minister in December and talk about this issue with the Prime Minister. It is time for us to find a solution.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:07):** I support the motion moved by the member for Port Stephens. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting the community and residents affected by the per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances [PFAS] contamination coming from the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] base at Williamstown. The New South Wales Government has consistently advocated for the Commonwealth Government to take action on this issue. This issue will not go away until the Federal Government undertakes containment or remediation to stop the flow of PFAS contaminants from the RAAF base. The Department of Defence must act urgently.

I and, I am sure, all other members feel for the residents who are affected. It is not the fault of the New South Wales Government that this has happened; it is the responsibility of the Department of Defence. People in the red zone do not know what is happening and they are concerned about their health, their homes and the community. We have raised this issue with the Federal Government which has resulted in the Department of Defence funding the rollout of reticulated water for residents in the investigation area and that offer will be extended also to residents in the management area.

Our efforts have also resulted in residents in the investigation area being offered blood tests—again, an offer that will now be extended to residents in the management area—and extensive subsequent reports will be undertaken at the request of the EPA. These reports gave the NSW PFAS Expert Panel, chaired by this State's Chief Scientist and Engineer, Mary O'Kane, the data it needed to form accurate advice for residents. I add that Mary O'Kane is an outstanding chief scientist who acts in the interest of the people of New South Wales, and her

advice is unbiased and reliable. The Government has provided precautionary advice to residents based on these extensive, but draft, reports.

This Government was not prepared to wait for the Commonwealth Government to release the final reports in December: We had a duty of care to update and inform the community as soon as possible. This resulted in the Department of Defence announcing on Sunday that it will extend blood testing, reticulated water connections and the epidemiological study to the new management area. We are well aware that the restrictions in place on residents are significant. It is important that the Department of Defence now shifts its focus to undertake containment and remediation and to stop the flow of PFAS contaminants from the RAAF base.

Since September 2015 the NSW EPA has led the Government's response to this issue. This has seen: an expert panel chaired by the chief scientist established to provide advice to this Government; precautionary advice that has adapted over time based on the available data, provided to residents to minimise their exposure; the provision of reticulated water to residents in the investigation area, soon to be expanded to the management area; dedicated technical and community engagement staff employed to support the residents of Williamstown—I am also informed by the EPA that recruitment is underway to boost this number—and a 24/7 phone counselling service available for residents. Defence currently has three water treatment plants operating at RAAF Williamstown which treat both ground and surface water; two water treatment plants have been installed to treat surface water—*[Time expired.]*

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:11:26):** In reply: I thank the Minister and the member for Myall Lakes for their contributions, and I thank my colleague the member for Newcastle, because this issue and the changes that were announced on Sunday affect residents in his community. I heard the list given by the member for Myall Lakes and the comforting words of the Minister, as have the many people living in the red zone and watching the live webcast and as will the members of that community who will watch this later. They will hear those words, but the actions are not being seen or felt. There are no real differences on the ground, and this community needs meaningful outcomes.

On behalf of the residents living in and around the red zone, I ask the following questions of the Minister in relation to the new map. First, why was it dumped on our community without the detail necessary for people to understand whether their property was in or out of the red zone? Such detail is important. Why does it include low-detail mapping of some of the drains, which are inaccurate? Why does it conveniently exclude some controversial new developments, including the proposed Cabbage Tree Road sandmine which is currently awaiting approval by the Department of Planning? Have any of the results of the blood tests undertaken by residents, in which residents volunteered their results for the purposes of the epidemiological study, informed the new boundaries mapped by the EPA? If not, does that mean that the next version of the soon-to-be-released Human Health Risk Assessment does not include any humans—again, which makes no sense to anybody? When were the test results taken that have informed the new boundaries of this area?

Has the Government taken any steps to discuss with banks and other lending institutions the new terminology being used for the red zone and the three new management zones? People have no ability to get loans. Their new question is, "Can we even get insurance on our homes?" That is the problem that people are now facing. How did the EPA manage to stuff up Sunday's doorknocking so badly that many families who are now in the red zone received no information whatsoever and are now very confused and stressed? If the data on which the new map was based was produced by the EPA or provided to it by Defence some months ago, why on earth was there such a delay in telling families living outside the red zone about these risks?

Many of these questions could have been overcome had the EPA done what it should have been doing from the start—that is, genuinely consulting with the people in my community, the residents who know their properties and who know how the water flows. None of this has happened—and no lessons have been learnt in the two years and two months since this was announced. I sat in that meeting on Sunday with Mary O'Kane and Barry Buffier and felt sick to my stomach. I felt sick for the families who have had to drink this water without knowing that it was poisoned. They have done so because this Government did not act earlier, when it should have. I felt sick—and then I looked around at the residents in the room who know the elevated levels of PFAS in their blood, and I could not imagine how they could sit there and hear this news.

I met with some residents yesterday and they gave me a bottle of their water to bring to this place today. They wanted me to ask this question: Would the Minister be happy drinking this water, giving it to children and having families bathe in it for two years without knowing that it was contaminated? This is the question my residents want answered. They want this Government to have their back, and it is time that it started.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

## SHARE THE DIGNITY CAMPAIGN

**Debate resumed from 16 November 2017.**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (13:16):** In reply: I will make some concluding remarks in debate on the Share the Dignity Campaign. Since I moved this motion in Parliament last week, there has been a great response to the It's In The Bag campaign and many members have had handbags with toiletries and sanitary products for women being dropped off at their offices. Our highlighting this in the House has contributed to this wonderful cause.

I acknowledge all members of the House who support this and I thank those who spoke in support of the motion last week—the member for Campbelltown, the member for Miranda, the member for Newtown, the member for Maitland, the Minister for Women and member for Mulgoa, the member for Oatley, the member for Lakemba, the member for North Shore, the new member for Cootamundra, the member for Terrigal who is currently in the chair, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Ku-ring-gai and the member for Coogee.

As we said last week, women's sanitary products are a right, not a privilege, and Share the Dignity is about providing them, along with toiletries such as soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, to victims of domestic violence. Although I have not been in my electorate office this week, I know that bags continue to be dropped off, which is wonderful. Last year we received almost 500 used handbags filled with toiletries and sanitary products. The number of people who put Christmas cards into the bags this year is amazing. The cards were anonymous but said things like, "Thinking of you at Christmas." Many people who dropped them off said, "We put a little card in to let the recipients know that there are people out there who care." A number of gifts were also given. People did not know who would receive the bags but they gave fluffy toys for children and small gifts for women, personal gifts that were not toiletries or sanitary products.

One lady put in a lovely Tiffany bracelet with a silver heart on it which had been in her family. She left it with a little card that read, "We are thinking of you." Campaigns such as this really bring the best out in people. As a community we need to always ensure that the most vulnerable in our community are supported and they need our support not only at this festive time of year but also the whole year round. I commend everyone in this place for supporting this campaign; it will make a world of difference to the recipients of these handbags.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

## REFUGEE STUDENT RESETTLEMENT

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:20):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Sydney Catholic schools, Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, and Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Wakeley, for their swift response to the humanitarian intake of Syrian and Iraqi refugees.
- (2) Notes that in the School Principals roundtable of 22 November 2016, additional funding was committed to non-government schools to assist refugee students settle into schools.
- (3) Condemns the Government's failure to honour its commitment of additional funding to assist non-government schools with refugee student settlement.

I commend and congratulate Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, and Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Wakeley, for their forethought and rapid response to assist the influx of refugee students arriving in our local community. The Fairfield region is home to a large number of migrants, with our community opening its doors to thousands of additional migrants and refugees in recent years. At the end of 2016, Fairfield was earmarked to receive up to 6,000 additional Syrian and Iraqi refugees, with every service provider in the region expected to draw upon the existing resources we had available. I am sure members appreciate the diverse needs of refugees who have fled their war-torn homeland and the intensive support they require to rehabilitate and integrate into their new surroundings.

Upon hearing the news of the impending influx of Iraqi and Syrian refugees, local stakeholders, including government and non-government schools, Fairfield Local Area Command, Fairfield City Council and multicultural community centres voiced their concerns and highlighted how stretched existing resources were in the local community. The lack of communication between the Federal and State governments was evident. The thousands of new arrivals set to land on our doorstep had not been catered for. It fills me with great pride to say that Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Wakeley, and Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, took the lead in devising a solution to cater to the influx of young refugee students who would be in dire need of help. These two schools took the initiative where the Government had failed. In the past I have raised concern about the resourcing



of the Fairfield High School Intensive English Centre, which has been run at more than 300 per cent capacity for some time. There is a clear need in our community, which the Government has continually failed to address.

Our resources are overstretched and support is being spread thin in an attempt to help as many people as possible. In fact, we did not have enough resources left for the influx of refugees that were to join us in the near future. In lieu of the tremendous work our local Catholic schools were doing, the New South Wales Government pledged \$93 million in funding for refugees in non-government schools. That \$93 million was given the golden handshake and passed through all stages, except it did not pass into the hands of non-government schools. The Government decided to renege on its commitment. This was a slap in the face for our local community. We then took the fight to those opposite, together with our local schools, residents, community organisations and the Archdiocese of Sydney, and called for that funding to be reinstated. I am pleased to inform the House that following widespread outrage and campaigning against the decision the Government decided to do the honourable thing and reinstate funding to non-government schools to cater for the needs of incoming refugees.

Fairfield City is home to thousands of migrants and refugees, many of whom have had to overcome tremendous adversity to get to where they are today. The Government has a responsibility to help the people of New South Wales and to work to enhance the quality of life for each of us. Our local community is built off the back of waves of migration. That is what makes it such a vibrant place in which to live. I have witnessed the new programs tailored towards intensive English support services to newly arrived refugees in our community. Those programs are phenomenal. I again commend and congratulate Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Wakeley, and Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, for all their hard work and dedication in our local community. During the past year I have spoken to students in those schools undertaking these programs. Those students had smiles on their faces and were very grateful for what the schools had done for them.

There is also a high level of community engagement with the parents—for example, I note that the Parents Café at Fairfield High School, which has won many awards, has had the opportunity to present its programs to the United Nations. I congratulate them on tailoring programs for students and helping to integrate parents into the wider community. I acknowledge the following school principals in my electorate: Mrs Narelle Archer, Mary MacKillop Catholic College; Mr Peter Wade, Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield; Mr Charles Borg, Fairfield High School; Ms Kathleen Seto, Fairvale High School; and Mr Peter Rouse, Canley Vale. They are all champions in ensuring that students from migrant and refugee backgrounds get the best possible start and support in our country. The assistance these schools give will change so many lives for the better and help pave the way for a brighter future for our community.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:27):** I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

"this House:

- (1) Congratulates Fairfield High School, Patrician Brothers' College Fairfield and Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Wakeley, for their swift response to the humanitarian intake of Syrian and Iraqi refugees.
- (2) Notes that in the School Principals' roundtable of 22 November 2016, additional funding was committed to non-government schools to assist refugee students settle into schools.
- (3) Acknowledges the support of Multicultural NSW in providing \$2.4 million over four years on behalf of refugees in Western Sydney.
- (4) Congratulates the success of all migrants and refugees in this country."

It is always a pleasure to acknowledge in this House support in New South Wales for our new refugees. We in New South Wales very graciously opened our doors to accept an initial intake of approximately 12,000 new refugees, the vast majority of whom have settled in Western Sydney. I have met many of them. I am pleased to inform the House that our new refugees are settling very comfortably in Western Sydney and in other parts of New South Wales. I commend Settlement Services International on the role that it has played. On behalf of Professor Peter Shergold, who works for the New South Wales Government, I express sincere appreciation for assistance in settling refugees in this State. It is a pleasure to see young children of refugee families settling in cohesively and embracing the great educational opportunities that exist throughout Western Sydney. Band members have performed in the Speaker's Garden at Parliament House. I especially mention the role of the Fairfield High School in embracing the State's new refugees.

**Debate interrupted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome everybody to the final question time of the year. I wish the member for Port Stephens a very happy birthday. What a way to spend your birthday!

I extend a very warm welcome to student leaders, their parents and teachers from Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, the Italian Bilingual School, Eastwood Heights Public School and Ryde East Public School, guests of the Minister for Finance, Services and Property and member for Ryde. I also welcome to the gallery students from Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer, who are accompanied by their teacher Mrs Kerrie Ramsay, guests of the Attorney General and member for Cronulla, and the member for Oatley. It was lovely to meet you all earlier today.

I also welcome a delegation of students and teachers from Kiama Primary School, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Parliamentary Secretary for Education and member for Kiama. I extend a very warm welcome to the son of the member for Keira, Preston Park, and the member's father, John Park, guests of the member for Keira. I welcome the parents of the member for Port Stephens on her birthday, Bert and Leslie Washington, guests of the member for Port Stephens. I also welcome Peter Walker from Radio Blue Mountains, a former member of the New South Wales Parliament's press gallery, a guest of the member for Blue Mountains.

*Announcements***TRIBUTE TO MS LYNNE VITALE**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with a mixture of fondness and sadness that I have to inform members that today is Lynne Vitale's last day of service. Lynne commenced with the Legislative Assembly Chamber Services team in February 2008. She has brought to the LA desk her own unique brand and style of interaction and communication when dealing with visitors to the Parliament, parliamentary and ministerial staff and, of course, members. Lynne quickly developed a reputation on the LA reception desk for being a master of managing difficult behaviour—and I am not talking about members. Lynne has always shown great patience, empathy and wisdom whenever an agitated visitor has presented at the desk to make sometimes unrealistic demands. It is often an anxious and highly charged emotional situation that Lynne faces but she has always had the ability to defuse such situations through her tireless commitment to providing information, assistance and guidance.

Lynne is well known to members and parliamentary staff for her unwavering professionalism. Lynne, during the more quiet periods on the desk, has also provided some unofficial life coaching to staff and members on various matters such as career, finance and relationship issues. This aspect of Lynne's skill set, I am reliably informed, will be sorely missed. Lynne is planning to spend a lot more time enjoying the company of her four children, their partners and her grandchildren in the most wonderful part of the world, my electorate of South Coast, at Callala Beach. It is a beautiful part of the world. Thank you, Lynne, for your dedication to all the members in this place.

*Question Time***MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23):** My question is directed to the Premier. Has the member for East Hills advised her that he stands to make a multi-million dollar windfall from the Government's decision, announced this week, to develop a new 30,000-home suburb, South Creek West, near the Badgerys Creek airport?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:23):** From day one the Leader of the Opposition has been unable to handle the fact that a Liberal member holds the seat of East Hills. What the Leader of the Opposition needs to do is apologise to the member for East Hills for all the aspersions he has cast on him which have been found to be untrue. Last time I looked, the member for East Hills was not in Cabinet; the member for East Hills was not a Parliamentary Secretary; the member for East Hills had no part whatsoever in the decision-making in relation to any of those matters. I say to the Leader of the Opposition—get out of the gutter and do some work. He has not managed to come up with a single policy all year. All he does is ensure that the residents of Western Sydney know what a failure he is.

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (14:25):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How has the New South Wales Government made a real difference to all people across New South Wales this year, and related matters?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25):** I know those opposite cannot handle the truth and while they try to work out what the Leader of the Opposition spends his time on, we are getting on with the job of delivering for the great people of New South Wales. I thank the member for Heathcote for asking me this question. No matter which side of the House we are on, we know that, notwithstanding the success of New South Wales, households in our electorates continue to do it tough. Our constituents want to know they have a government that understands that. They want a government with a heart as well as competence. That is what this Government has. When we provide free registration to the people who use our road motorway network, those opposite should support that because we know that our constituents support it. Government members have worked our guts out—and I commend the Minister for Finance in particular—in working through the legal issues involved in reducing compulsory third party [CTP] premiums.

That is a huge win for households. Members opposite had 16 years in which to do that and failed. This year people in this State will get hundreds of dollars off their premiums. I am proud of the fact that, along with the Treasurer and the Minister for Planning, we provided further stamp duty exemptions for first home owners. The Government is reducing cost of living pressures for such things as car registration and CTP but we are also assisting first homebuyers to get into the housing market. One of my favourite moments in speaking to members of the community this year was when I visited the house of a new couple who had bought their first home in Campbelltown, a three or four bedder. They would not have been able to do that without our assistance. Those opposite do not like to hear the wrap-up of what the Government has done this year—it is a very long list. In addition to reducing the cost of living pressures, the Government wants to ensure that our kids are active. As part of the budget we announced a rebate scheme for parents who want to enrol their children in various activities. I am pleased that from next year parents will get a rebate of \$100 for every child they enrol in a sporting or related activity. The health Minister and I were inspired by a young boy who has to repeatedly visit hospital. He told us about the hundreds of dollars his parents paid for parking at the hospital and it inspired us to put downward pressure on the cost of parking for people who have to visit hospitals on a regular basis. Those are just some of this Government's achievements for 2017. The Government has been working hard building infrastructure, providing services and announcing services for the residents of New South Wales. Unfortunately, there is stunned silence from those opposite. The community does not know what Labor's policies are or what the Leader of the Opposition does with his time. This week a few things came to light. The Labor candidate for Bennelong, Kristina Keneally—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The clock will be stopped if Opposition members do not cease interjecting. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. It will be restarted when members come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It was revealed this week that three years worth of her tweets had gone missing. The Leader of the Opposition is also missing something. It has been brought to my attention that the Left faction's magazine was first published in the 1970s. There is an article in this magazine with Ian Macdonald on one side—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will direct the Clerk to stop the clock again. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber without further warning.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am telling members the facts. On one side of the Labor Left magazine is Ian Macdonald and the other side is Luke Foley. This magazine has been published since 1974. [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: I remind the Chair that a ruling was made yesterday in relation to props and the Premier is flouting that ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is quoting from a publication. There is no point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am quoting from the article "Commitment from Labor" by Ian Macdonald. The article, "Labor's sell-off must stop" by Luke Foley appears on the opposite page. It has come to my attention that the editions of this magazine between 1996 and 2005 have suddenly gone missing. The State Library and the Parliamentary Library say that those years of this magazine have gone missing. It was during that time that Ian Macdonald was head of the Left faction and Luke Foley was the assistant secretary of the Australian Labor Party.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

**Mr Greg Warren:** My point of order is under Standing Order 129. While I understand the Premier's envy, I ask that she be directed back to the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The question was wide ranging and general in nature. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** For part of those missing eight years the Left organiser at Sussex Street was the Leader of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. The member for Keira will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Rather than working on policies and putting forward political views, the Leader of the Opposition is suppressing his past. The Government challenges the Opposition to stop being lazy and denying the truth. The Government will be spending the summer holidays looking for the missing editions and a reward will be offered.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

#### MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:34):** My question is directed to the Premier. In light of the member for East Hills' substantial landholdings in her imaginatively named new suburb South Creek West, will the Premier investigate what information he had access to during his time as chair of the Committee on Environment and Planning and direct the member to absent himself from any meetings of the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure that deal with this new and exciting suburb?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:35):** I cannot believe the person who thanked Eddie Obeid and Joe Tripodi in his inaugural speech is asking me this question.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I get extremely passionate when I talk about these issues. The Liberals and The Nationals are about people making the best of their lives and working hard. I ask Hansard to highlight this statement in bold: I am incredibly proud of the member for East Hills because he represents those values.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time. If she continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for East Hills makes me proud to be a Liberal and the Deputy Premier proud to be a National. The notion of equality of opportunity means no matter where you live in this State, no matter what your circumstances, where your family is from, or how much your parents do or do not earn, you have the chance to work hard, raise a family and be successful. That is something all of us in this Chamber should defend and be proud of. This is the difference between the Government and the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting or they will be removed from the Chamber without further warning.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Government supports the notion that people from humble beginnings who may have struggled at school or had obstacles and challenges have the opportunity to be the best through hard work and perseverance. The member for East Hills epitomises those values. Those values caused him to enter this place and it is what motivates every single decision of the Liberal-Nationals Government. Those opposite cannot stand that the Government holds the electorate of East Hills. To suggest in any way that the member for East Hills had anything to do with the decision is abhorrent. It is wrong and those opposite need to apologise. It is the last sitting day of the year. Yesterday the Attorney General highlighted the ineptness, incompetence and hypocrisy of those opposite today is the last day of the year. When the Labor Party has nothing to go on, they resort to the gutter. They can continue with their untrue innuendo but we will continue to build and provide services for those most vulnerable in our community. We want everybody to be their best and to reach their full potential.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

#### REGIONAL JOBS AND SERVICES

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:39):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government growing more jobs and delivering better services for regional New South Wales?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:40):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his

question. He is a hardworking local member. I hope he takes some time off over the Christmas break to freshen up for a big year in 2019. The Myall Lakes region is in a great part of the world. It has towns such as Forster, Tuncurry and Taree. My mate's favourite restaurant, the Sicilian, is in Taree and Forster, and Bent on Food is in Wingham. They are two great restaurants in the Myall Lakes electorate.

Christmas came early for the people of regional New South Wales. Our Christmas festivities probably commenced on budget day with the announcement of significant funds for service delivery and infrastructure in regional New South Wales. When we look at what has happened in regional New South Wales there is no question that Santa Claus was definitely coming to town. That could be because of the investment in regional airports, regional roads or regional rail. We have made it easy for Santa to visit and to continue to deliver for the people of regional New South Wales.

Christmas came early for the member for Tweed and the member for Lismore. We have seen significant investment in hospitals. More than \$530 million was allocated in the budget for the member for Tweed to build a new hospital. We have already seen in excess of \$250,000 being spent on the Lismore Base Hospital. Clearly those members have been good this year because they have received their gifts early. I had the pleasure of being in Coffs Harbour last weekend for the World Rally Championship. It is a fantastic tourism opportunity for regional New South Wales. It is driving tourism and visitation to the area and driving jobs in the local economy, which is putting Coffs Harbour, New South Wales and Australia on the global map. It is a great investment by the New South Wales Government.

In Port Macquarie, the local member and the Premier made a recent announcement about the \$2.8 million investment in Fisherman's Wharf. We are investing in infrastructure and local amenities in the area to make it a great city. I mentioned Myall Lakes earlier. We are investing \$10 million plus in the hospital redevelopment and \$1.7 million in the TAFE at Taree. We know it is important to continue to deliver for the people of Myall Lakes. We have seen significant investments in the north-west. The member for Northern Tablelands has a new school in Armidale and the member for Tamworth has a new fire station. The list goes on.

[Interruption]

The problem is the member for Maitland has not been a good girl this year. She is not getting anything at this stage. I know she is hoping for Maitland Hospital

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 73. The Minister for Health has told me they have already started preparatory works on Maitland Hospital; I have been a very good girl.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The question has nothing to do with the Minister for Health. The member for Maitland is making a debating point. There is no point of order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** After your performance in question time over the past two days Santa has taken that back. The member for Maitland is back on the naughty list. She would be getting a big lump of coal but we cannot do that because those opposite have banned coal in this State. We know the member for Orange has been naughty. He is sitting idle but we will keep delivering. I know the Parliamentary Secretary in the other place, the Hon. Rick Colless, will keep delivering for the people of Orange. Bathurst had a fantastic V8 race this year. We committed an additional \$10 million, making it a total of \$15 million, for construction of the second track for Mount Panorama. Christmas came early for the people of Bathurst.

In the Monaro, I have had a record investment in schools funding. I thank the Minister for Education, aka Santa Claus. We have delivered for people in the Monaro and for the member for Goulburn. We have seen an investment in the improvement of Yass High School. In Kiama and the South Coast we have invested in the Berry to Bomaderry bypass. We have given a gift to the people of the Illawarra and the South Coast. The member for Bega must have been a good boy this year. We have invested in bridges. We are replacing the Batemans Bay Bridge and the Nelligen Bridge. We have seen investments in bridges and roads in Bega— [Extension of time]

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 131 (3), which says specifically that the Speaker may use discretion when granting extensions. I have been in this place for seven years and you have been asked times for extensions and you have never said no. Given the quality of the answer, can you please use some discretion now?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the member for Cessnock not want to hear more good news about the regions?

**Mr Clayton Barr:** It is about using discretion and the quality of the answer from pork Barilaro.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier might have good news for the member for Cessnock.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I was going to mention the member for Cessnock but I have just put him on the naughty list; I will do the work for Santa. I do not know how the member for Wagga Wagga got on the good list. He will see significant investment in infrastructure, roads and the hospital. The member for Albury will see an investment in Albury hospital. For the new members for the Cootamundra and Murray electorates we have committed \$35 million for the Griffith hospital stage one, and there is more to come for the hardworking member. We have seen investment in Cootamundra, such as the Junee prison, for those on the naughty list. We are creating local jobs.

Yesterday I threw out a list of the places I have travelled to this year. If I had to pull out a list for all the infrastructure projects that are happening in New South Wales, I would be here all day unfolding that list. The Liberal-Nationals Government is committed. It knows how to run a budget in the black and how to put money aside. We know how to invest in amenities and infrastructure and the services that make a difference. I have touched on a few projects today from all over the State, be it roads, rail, schools, hospitals or local amenities. When it comes to sports infrastructure, we have invested \$100 million in regional sports infrastructure and \$200 million in building stronger country communities, which will see more money going into regional sports infrastructure because we know sport is the fabric of our communities in the regions; it brings families together. Let us not forget the \$100 rebate for the kids in the gallery. Santa came early and his name is Stuart Ayres. He has given all kids a \$100 gift voucher if they play sports. The Liberal-Nationals are delivering for New South Wales.

#### MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:48):** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning. When the Minister announced the massive new development of 30,000 homes, to be known as South Creek West, was he aware that his factional ally, the member for East Hills, owns more than five acres of prime river frontage in the new suburb and stands to make a huge financial windfall?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am concerned about the direction of the questions today. They contain imputations. It is not acceptable to make personal reflections in a question.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (14:49):** Madam Speaker, have you ever listened to someone for a short time and wondered who ties their shoe laces? I mean, seriously. This is the continuation of a personal attack on an individual who has succeeded through his own hard work and determination throughout his life. This is the politics of envy. I suggest the member for Bankstown take this outside and ask the same question. That will be good because then the member can probably buy another 50 acres.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is the end of the matter. These are personal reflections against members. If members wish to take the matter further they may do so by way of substantive motion.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I am quite happy to continue because they hate the fact that we are being successful on driving down house prices and increasing affordability in Sydney.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I wish Opposition members could see themselves. The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order. The member for Kogarah will come to order. At every question time the member for Maitland and the member for Gosford are too noisy.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Those opposite have done incredibly well from the introduction of new rail services and more public transport and have probably seen their homes increase in value. If anyone has to be referred elsewhere it should be them. The South Creek West precinct—it is not a suburb—will ensure more than 1,500 hectares will have 150,000 trees planted on them and will have 30,000 homes for people who move to Sydney, right near the proposed Badgerys Creek airport, giving an opportunity for new, high-paid jobs to be created. That is something we should be very proud of. To answer the question, no, the honourable member has not raised it; no, I was not aware of it. Why would I be aware of it? Again, to keep up this continual attack is lowering—

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** It's grubby, in the gutter. It's Christmas.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** —standards to the gutter, and at Christmas—at any time. It is lowering what this Parliament should stand for. As the Premier said, you people live in the gutter. You're haters. You support the elite, you hate the workers, you hate infrastructure, you hate people doing well and that is going to be reflected at the next election. I take this opportunity to give some good news because that was such a BS question. I announce that the Splendour in the Grass and the Falls festivals are going ahead. The people in New South Wales, particularly in the North Coast want to know about that. The Planning and Assessment Commission granted consent for the next Falls and Splendour in the Grass festivals to go ahead. That means that instead of

living in the gutter, as the member does, she can go to the electorate of the member for Ballina and enjoy a weekend of music by people I have never heard of except, of course, Daryl Braithwaite. Daryl Braithwaite is playing this year at the Falls Festival. It has also got Liam Gallagher, who I personally think has gone down the hill since Oasis broke up—it was all Noel really.

This is a really great example of our planning system working well and independently. We have taken valid community concerns on board and considered them carefully against economic and social benefits. We have a good system of taking community concerns on board. My planning department has worked so well not only in relation to Splendour in the Grass but also across Greater Sydney to ensure that we keep delivering homes to people, and at the same time deliver on that important infrastructure at these new, wonderful, planned precincts because, as I keep saying, it is people that make places.

#### STATE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:54):** I address my question to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If members wish to be elsewhere they may leave the Chamber. I know the member for Rockdale would rather be somewhere else.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** What has the Government done in 2017 to ensure the State's infrastructure is up to scratch and meets the current and future needs of New South Wales?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:55):** I have a note from the planning Minister in relation to questions from Labor about the South Creek West precinct. It was identified as a growth centre by Labor in 2005.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Madam Speaker, will you please stop the clock?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. It is very early in the Minister's answer, but the member for Strathfield is entitled to take a point of order.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is taken under Standing Order 129. I am keen to know what the Minister has done in transport this year.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has not even started to answer the question.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Do you want me to give him a bit more time?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. She will not be sarcastic; it does not become her.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I have been building lots of lifts for the member to ride in, that is one thing I have been doing. I will tell the House what we have been up to this year because it is such a great news story. I will start in Parramatta where we have done a lot. I know the member for Parramatta is very pleased with the progress there. Even this morning I was with the member for North Shore at Milson's Point to open the fifteenth ferry wharf that we have opened since being in office, with another six on the way. We opened the Barangaroo ferry wharf this year, which is already servicing more than 1,600 customers.

We have also addressed the infrastructure deficit of \$30 billion left by those opposite when they were in office for 16 years. I am happy to help the member for Strathfield. We have laid 40 kilometres of track for the North West Metro which is to be opened in the first half of 2019. We have built 11 kilometres of tunnelling for the NorthConnex Motorway that will enable people to travel from Newcastle to Melbourne without stopping at a single traffic light. We have laid 12 kilometres of track for Sydney Light Rail. We have a commitment from the contractors in terms of zones five and six and will start to see the pedestrian zone of George Street open before Christmas.

We are delivering Parramatta Light Rail as a reality and the world's biggest and best are putting up their hands to do that work. It does not matter where one stands in this great State, infrastructure is being built. Even the good member for Newcastle will have light rail in that great city. We have seen \$2 billion in private sector investment and 3,000 new inner-city dwellings. I know that the member for Newcastle will love pulling his Christmas cracker this year with his father-in-law as he has had such a great year.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129 and the relevance of the Minister's answer. He is talking about "pulling the Christmas cracker". I think there are some serious and inappropriate undertones there.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting. I cannot hear the Minister. I cannot rule on the point of order because there are too many interjections. There is no point of order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I called him the member for Newcastle and he was upset by that. Megaprojects are being built everywhere. We are spending \$1 billion on accessibility upgrades so that people can enjoy the benefits of lifts. It seems that those opposite do not understand the great benefit of building infrastructure. I have been trying to work out what they stand for when it comes to transport. The member for Strathfield wanted to know, but she is not listening. In the last fortnight the member for Keira stood in this Chamber with the member for Wollongong and told us that they would take up this great fight for the Gong Shuttle in the last sitting fortnight. For those opposite, I must make a few points: When Labor was last in office, they introduced free public transport shuttles in Blacktown, Newcastle, Campbelltown, Gosford, Wollongong and Liverpool. But guess when they did it? Three months before the 2011 election. [*Extension of time*]

They introduced these freebies three months before the March 2011 election. Maybe it was one last "up yours" to the taxpayer as they left office, but what we have seen from those opposite is that they are only prepared now to restore a free shuttle bus in the shadow Treasurer's patch. I have not heard the members for Campbelltown, Liverpool, Gosford or Blacktown out fighting for their shuttles. They are absent everywhere. But I have to hand it to the member for Keira as the shadow Treasurer. Do members know how he wants to fund the return of the Gong Shuttle? He wants to take money from road safety initiatives that save lives to put into free transport. He is on the record as saying that the free Gong Shuttle encourages people to catch the bus and avoid drink-driving. It does.

How stupid is this? We have a situation where the Gong Shuttle, in one month of this year, had 275,000 passengers. The rest of the bus region in total had 268,000 passengers. We have empty buses and a bus service that people cannot get on. This Government has said that they can make a contribution to running that shuttle, just like every other community in the State is paying for their public transport. Labor are looking after their mates in Wollongong.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Londonderry will cease screaming. I know that this issue is of concern to the member for Wollongong, but he will come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I am pretty sure that every other member in this place would like free transport, would they not, Ryan? Look after yourself, mate, while you are shadow Treasurer. Have a happy Christmas.

#### MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:03):** My question is directed to the Premier. In question time on 16 November, the Premier said:

I say to people like the member for East Hills ... that the Government supports them.

Is it appropriate for the Government's support of the member to include developing an entire new suburb on land purchased by him for a mere \$480,000?

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Point of order: Standing Order 73 states:

Imputations of improper motives and personal reflections on Members of either House are disorderly other than by substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Correct. That is exactly how I have ruled previously.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** These grubs today have—

[*Interruption*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Coffs Harbour will be heard in silence.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** They have persisted in a personal attack on the member for East Hills. If they have got the guts to do it, do it by way of substantive motion or take it outside the House. I ask that you rule the question out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Coffs Harbour is correct.

**Mr Greg Warren:** To the point of order: The member for Coffs Harbour's notion and labelling us "grubs"—

[*Interruption*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.



[Interruption]

If the member for Campbelltown behaves in that manner again he will be removed from the Chamber. That is threatening behaviour. Members will come to order. As to the point of order, as I alluded to previously, the questions are of a nature that is not acceptable in this Chamber. They contain personal reflections on other members. The questions have continued in that vein and it is my right to rule them out of order. However, the Premier is happy to answer the question. I warn members about asking similar questions in the future.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:06):** I am quite happy to take the question, but in doing so I acknowledge the point of order by the member for Coffs Harbour because I believe it to be a valid point of order. It was revealed in this House by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on advice provided to us that this precinct was identified by Labor in 2005. I note that the Leader of the Opposition has already left the Chamber. He should be embarrassed.

Those opposite have demonstrated in question time today that they do not let the facts get in the way. They do not care whose reputation they impugn. They will lower themselves to the bottom of the barrel, and I say to the people of New South Wales that they are not fit to govern this State. We will ensure that we provide the infrastructure, the services and all those things people need. We will get up every day and work our guts out for the community, because that is what they deserve. Opposition members can stay at the bottom of the barrel as far as I am concerned.

### ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:07):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. How has the New South Wales Government improved the road network over the last 12 months?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (15:08):** I thank the member for North Shore for the question and for her advocacy on behalf of her community as we do the homework for building the West Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. She has been a genuine campaigner and fighter, representing concerns that some people in her electorate have. She and the member for Manly have listened to what their community has to say. It is not an easy job building big projects like this. There are always some difficulties and disruption, but working alongside members like the member for North Shore and the member for Manly on this project shows that we can do good work. We can build things and take the State where it needs to go, unlike the other side: the pressure got too much for them, something happened and they dropped the bundle. They cannot even get a question time strategy together for the last sitting day of the New South Wales Parliament.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The member is suggesting that we cannot get our questions right. That is imputation of an improper motive.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is true about Opposition questions today. They were out of order.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** That is a matter of opinion.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is my opinion—and that is the only one that counts. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** NRMA supports us building this project, Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. The community supports it. Even the Labor candidates for council elections on the northern beaches support what we are doing. But what does the Leader of the Opposition do? Luke Foley rejects it. He is not even here. He is from the northern beaches—that is where he grew up. The Labor Party there wants the project; everybody wants it except Luke Foley. We are delivering WestConnex, which will provide enormous benefits for the people of Western Sydney, slashing travel times and bypassing 28 sets of traffic lights. I acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition is finally supporting us on WestConnex. He revealed that to Andrew Clennell when he was at the *Daily Telegraph*, and we thank him for that. But the member for Strathfield, who sits beside him, opposes it. This is the leadership team of the Labor Party. They cannot get their facts right. They cannot even get organised on their position on WestConnex. You cannot even support it, but the Leader of the Opposition does. You are not fit to govern this State. You cannot even get your policy settings right.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be the target of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, but I ask that you remind her to direct her comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I note the point of order. The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Madam Speaker, I will direct through you the fact that those in the Labor Party are not worthy to be considered to run this State because they cannot even get their policy positions on major

infrastructure projects in this State right, just like they were not able to in government—whether it was Lane Cove Tunnel or the Rozelle metro. Whatever they did, they stuffed up.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I invite the Minister to tell us what the designs are for the Sydney Gateway. Do you have them yet?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We will be happy to do that. There is light at the end of the tunnel: I acknowledge the support for the F6 of someone very special. We have great support for stage one of F6 from the Attorney General and member for Cronulla, the member for Heathcote, the member for Oatley, the member for Kiama and the member for Holsworthy, but we also have great support from the member for Rockdale. I thank him: He is a happy Kamper. I thank him because he knows what his community wants—but you do not support it, Jodi! [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: Madam Speaker, I again request that you ask the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair and to refer to me as the member for Strathfield, not Jodi.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Thank you.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I note that the member for Miranda also supports the F6. The member for Rockdale knows that our Government is doing more to help him and his community in delivering what the community needs than Barney Gumble sitting over there—oh! He is not here. Has he gone for his run? Where has he gone? We are investing \$8.5 billion into our roads this financial year, nearly double what Labor spent in its final year in office. Right now we have thousands of active projects underway right across the State. Most impressive for the people of regional New South Wales is that that \$4.8 billion is going into the regions. Unlike those opposite, we know that New South Wales is more than Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

Earlier this year our Government was very proud to undertake a co-investment with the Federal Government on our Fixing Country Truck Washes program. Simple things can make an enormous difference to people's lives. When we announced that program in the Central West in the community of Molong, people were delighted. One of the ladies, Margot Brown, came up and hugged us. She said that she and her husband no longer had to drive 82 kilometres on a single-leg journey to Carcoar to wash their cattle truck. That is making a difference in people's lives. Slowly we are turning the red dusty road of the Cobb Highway black—making big differences to the lives of people and contributing enormously to the people of this State. It is a very important time for the Pacific Highway project as well. I thank the workers who are doing all that they can at the moment on the Pacific Highway to get the Macksville bypass done. I was with the member for Port Macquarie last Friday at Telegraph Point, the scene of so many terrible accidents. We will get the Macksville bypass open and running in time for Christmas.

#### WESTCONNEX COMPULSORY PROPERTY ACQUISITION

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:15):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that hundreds of property owners living around the WestConnex route have only received token compensation as a result of incorrect information provided by the Government when purchasing their properties, will the Premier intervene to provide people like Jansan from Erskineville with just compensation and certainty as a result of this WestConnex bungle?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:16):** I thank the member for Newtown for her question. I do not agree with the tone in which she asked the question in terms of the WestConnex project.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members are demonstrating a level of unruliness that does not become them. The member for Swansea will resume her seat. The Premier has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** As I said, I do not agree with the tone of the question, but I say to the member for Newtown that our Government takes very seriously the impact that construction has on local residents. In fact, the Russell review, which was undertaken by the Treasurer—then the Minister for Finance, Services and Property—and has been taken up by his successor, has ensured that we have the most generous compensation package in that nation, which stands to reason because we are by far the largest infrastructure delivery agent of all the States.

I appreciate the importance of not only having the best policies in place but also having the best people on the ground who can engage with local residents on a one-on-one basis. I can only imagine how stressful and emotional it would be if somebody approached you to suggest that your home is no longer yours because of a major project. I appreciate the angst associated with that. In fact, our Government has dedicated much time and

energy into making sure we make the process as compassionate and stress free as possible for the very reason that the member for Newtown asked the question.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129 on relevance. I asked the Premier directly about the issue regarding an error of this Government that provided incorrect information as a result of the Central Register of Restrictions.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier remains relevant to the question. There is no point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** At the appropriate time we indicated our regret that that had occurred in any instance, and that has been on the public record for some time. It is always extremely unfortunate and stressful when people feel they are not given the correct information. We will ensure, moving forward, that we and our agencies do everything we can to provide the correct information and also to deal with residents as best we can. I appreciate the reasoning behind that part of the question and the stress that people must be going through if they have experienced that issue. As I understand it, we have dealt with that issue. As the Premier of this State, I appreciate how important it is to ensure that all residents have the correct information. If there is a need for us to follow-up on that, we will.

I again thank the member for Newtown for her question because I appreciate her consistency on this issue. I also appreciate her consistency in her position on WestConnex, but I do not understand the position of those opposite on WestConnex. The member for Newtown dropped off at my office—understandably, because she represents this constituency—some petitions and an open letter to me from the WestConnex Action Group. The first sentence of that letter reads, "We the undersigned oppose WestConnex and call for an immediate review of the whole project." The signatories to the letter appear at the bottom of the following page, as well as a list of the politicians who have signed the correspondence. Amongst that list appears none other than the name of the shadow Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and member for Strathfield. Today is the last parliamentary sitting day for this year and I say with hand on heart that I honestly do not know whether or not the Opposition supports WestConnex.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The Premier is not being relevant in her answer to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier continues to be relevant to the question. There is no point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I would have thought the Opposition's position on a project asked about in the question is relevant. We finish the year where we started. Those opposite have no clues on infrastructure, no clues on how to provide a strong economy, and no clues on services. Lazy, lazy, lazy. Let us hope they actually do something in the New Year.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:21):** My question is addressed to the country's best-performing Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. Can the Treasurer inform the House what the Government has done to improve fairness for all workers during the Christmas and Boxing Day period? Are there any alternative approaches?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (15:21):** I thank the member for Drummoyne, the greatest member for Drummoyne in the country, for his question. What a great year it has been. There is no doubt that 2017 will go down as the greatest year in our State's history. We have recorded the largest budget surplus. We have also achieved the best economic growth. We have launched, under two great Ministers, the biggest health and education building program in our State's history.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This year will also be remembered as the year of the worker in New South Wales. We have created 210,000 jobs—40,000 more jobs than we planned. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country and regional jobs have been created faster than ever before. Never before has New South Wales had a Premier who has delivered so much, for so many, in such a small period of time.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Question time is not over. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Whilst we are delivering for everyone, what are the Opposition's policies? This week, when asked by Chris O'Keefe about Labor's plans, the Leader of the Opposition said, "I'm not ruling anything in; I'm not ruling anything out." That is fair enough. That pretty much sums up their year—a blank space, a policy vacuum, a black hole. When he was elected Leader of the Opposition I called him the "Inaction Man, Policies Not Included" and that has proved to be true. New South Wales Labor is a low-energy party with a low-energy leader. This is the lowest-energy Opposition in the history of this State. They only have

one plan—a plan to have no plan. I joined politics for a contest. I joined politics for a battle of ideas. I joined politics to come into this place and fight the Labor Party. But this year I have had more fights with these guys than I have had with those guys. Because Labor is so hopeless, this year we have done the job of both the Government and the Opposition at the same time.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. You should have fallen on the Treasury officials harder when you cocked up the Fire and Emergency Services Levy, mate.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That was good! There is no point of order. The Treasurer has the call.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** So I say to those opposite, "Do not bother coming back next year. Your services are no longer required. Don't call us; we'll call you." In contrast to those opposite, we have had a great year when it comes to policies. My favourite policy was to expand Boxing Day trade across New South Wales. But in typical Labor style, those opposite opposed the freedom for people to exercise their right to work, to shop or to open their businesses. Who was behind the campaign? The mighty and powerful Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association [SDA]—the union they all fear. They campaigned, doorknocked and threw everything at us. Then in one glorious stunt, to top off their effective campaign, the SDA mobilised a mighty arm of Santa Clauses to march up and down Macquarie Street protesting against the Government.

They even called me the Christmas Grinch. Their campaign was working. I was really worried. Our backbench was getting restless. The Premier was questioning my judgement. David Elliott was leaking against me. The Christian Right and the churches were mobilising against me. Even my own kids turned against me and accused me of cancelling Christmas. I was so worried that this Government was on the verge of doing something it has never done before—a backflip. [*Extension of time*]

At that time I thought I was lost, but then I was secretly approached by the member for Kogarah. He informed me that all of the Santas were actually members of the Santa Claus Union of Australia [SCUA]. Then it all made sense to me. All the lazy Labor Santa Clauses, who never get around to delivering their presents on Christmas Day, are still hanging around on Boxing Day. What Santa Claus has not got his presents delivered on Christmas Day? So what are these union Santa Clauses doing? On Christmas Day they are having stop-work meetings with the elves; they are making journey claims against the reindeers; they are using Santa's sleigh for personal travel; just like the SDA, they are bargaining away the lowest paid Santa Clauses who are working for the big retailers; and, importantly, they are booking strippers on Mrs Claus's union credit card.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. Opposition members will cease chanting.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Just like every other union, the SCUA are focused on themselves and not on the kids they are meant to represent. So I say to all the kids out there who may be watching, this year every present in New South Wales will be delivered by Liberal Party Santa Clauses with Liberal Party principles—twice the presents, half the cost, delivered on time and on budget.

#### *Documents*

### DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

#### Reports

**The SPEAKER:** I table the report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2017. I order that the report be printed.

### DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

#### Reports

**The SPEAKER:** I table the report of the Department of Parliamentary Services for the year ended 30 June 2017. I order that the report be printed.

#### *Committees*

### PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

#### Membership

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That:

- (1) (a) Austin William Evans be appointed to the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission in place of Katrina Ann Hodgkinson, resigned.
- (b) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

- (2) Stephanie Anne Cooke be appointed to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services in place of Katrina Ann Hodgkinson, resigned.
- (3) Michael John Johnsen be appointed to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development in place of Katrina Ann Hodgkinson, resigned.

### *Documents*

## **PRINTING OF PAPERS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That the following papers be printed:

NSW Budget 2016-17 Half-Yearly Review.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Electricity transmission reliability standards, An economic assessment, Energy—Final Report", dated August 2016.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Electricity transmission reliability standards, Unserved energy allowances for Inner Sydney and Broken Hill, Molong, Mudgee, Munyang and Wellington Town, Energy—Supplementary Final Report", dated November 2016.

Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Review of police use of powers under the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012", dated November 2016.

Report of the Public Inquiry by Commissioner Richard Beasley, SC, into Auburn City Council, dated 10 February 2017.

Report of the Public Inquiry by Commissioner Anthony Hudson into Murray Shire Council, dated 10 November 2016.

Report of the Public Inquiry by Commissioner T G Howard, SC, into North Sydney Council, dated 10 October 2016.

Report by the Attorney General pursuant to section 42 of the Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 for 2016.

Report 143 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission entitled "Third party claims on insurance money", dated November 2016.

Report on the Review of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006, dated 9 May 2017.

Report of Multicultural NSW entitled "The state of community relations in NSW 2015-2016".

Report on the Statutory Review of sections 25A and 25B of the Crimes Act 1900, dated May 2017.

Report on the 2017 Review of the Exemption for Private Gaming Rooms under the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008, dated May 2017.

Final Report on the Review of the Three Strikes Disciplinary Scheme.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011, dated June 2017.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Infrastructure NSW Act 2011, dated May 2017.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of prices for rural bulk water services from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2021, Final Report, Water", dated June 2017.

Office of Transport Safety Investigations Report entitled "Rail Safety Investigation Report, Passenger injury—train amalgamation, Central Station, Sydney, 10 August 2016".

Report on the Statutory Review of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, dated June 2017.

Report of the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee for 2015-2016, dated February 2017.

Final Report and Determination of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory tribunal entitled "Review of prices for wholesale water and sewerage services: Sydney Water Corporation and Hunter Water Corporation", dated June 2017.

Final Report and Determination of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory tribunal entitled "Sydney Desalination Plant Pty Ltd: Review of prices from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022", dated June 2017.

Report on the Independent Review of the Retail Trading Amendment Act 2015, dated May 2017.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, dated July 2017.

Report on the review of the Restart NSW Fund Act 2011, dated July 2017.

Office of Transport Safety Investigations entitled "Ferry Safety Investigation Report, Systemic Investigation into Ferry Close Quarter Incidents, Sydney Harbour, 2010—2016".

Written submissions to the Public Inquiry by Commissioner Richard Beasley, SC, into the Auburn City Council.

Report by the NSW Electricity Commissioner on TransGrid's Electricity Price Guarantee Compliance for 2015-16.

Report pursuant to section 35 of the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Act 2010 of the Australian Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2017.

Report on the Review of the Universities Governing Bodies Act 2011, dated 6 September 2017.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Licence compliance under the Water Industry Competition Act 2006 (NSW), Report to the Minister, Water—Annual Compliance Report", dated October 2017.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983, dated November 2017.

Report of the Department of Family and Community Services entitled "Child Deaths 2016 Annual Report".

New South Wales Environment Protection Authority Regulatory Assurance Statement 2016-17.

New South Wales Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy Progress Report 2014-15.

NSW Forest Agreements and Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals Implementation Report for the Upper North East, Lower North East, Eden, Southern, Riverina Red Gum, South Western Cypress and Brigalow-Nandewar regions for the year ended 30 June 2014.

NSW Forest Report on the Implementation of NSW Forest Agreements and Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Report of the Public Service Commission—State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2017.

Report of the Public Service Commission—People Matter 2017—NSW Public Sector Employee Survey, Main Findings Report, dated November 2017.

Report on the statutory review of the Barangaroo Delivery Authority Act 2009, dated June 2017.

Report on the statutory review of the Government Advertising Act 2011, dated August 2017.

Letter from the Premier to the Presiding Officers regarding implementation of the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Political Donations chaired by Dr Kerry Schott, dated 27 June 2017.

Annual Report and Determination of the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal on Additional Entitlements for Members of the Parliament of New South Wales, dated 31 May 2017.

Report and Determination under section 24C of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Chief and Senior Executive Service Annual Determination", dated 29 August 2017.

Report and Determination under section 13 of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Court and Related Officers Group Annual Determination", dated 29 August 2017.

Report and Determination under section 13 of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Judges and Magistrates Group Annual Determination", dated 29 August 2017.

Report and Determination under section 13 of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Governor of New South Wales", dated 29 August 2017.

Report and Determination under section 13 of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Public Office Holders Group Annual Determination", dated 29 August 2017.

Report and Determination under section 24O of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Public Service Senior Executives Annual Determination", dated 29 August 2017.

Consolidated Financial Report of Snowy Hydro Limited for the period ended 1 July 2017.

Reports for the year 30 June 2016 of—Professional Standards Department of the Law Society of New South Wales; Workers Compensation Independent Review Office; Animal Research Review Panel; Murray-Darling Basin Authority; Official Community Visitors; National Environment Protection Council; and Professional Standards Councils.

Reports for 2016 of—Technical Education Trust Funds; NSW Department of Education and Communities (incorporating the financial statement for the year ended 30 June 2016); and the Serious Offenders Review Council.

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2017 of—Jobs for NSW; NSW Skills Board; Art Gallery of New South Wales Trust; Australian Museum Trust; Coal Innovation NSW Fund; Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales; Library Council of New South Wales; Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences; Sydney Opera House Trust; NSW Trains; Roads and Maritime Services (Volumes One and Two); NSW Trains (Volumes One and Two); State Transit Authority (Volumes One and Two); Rail Corporation New South Wales (Volumes One and Two); Sydney Trains (Volumes One and Two); Department of Transport (including the report of Transport for NSW) (Volumes One and Two); Office of Transport Safety Investigations; Ministry of Health (incorporating the Financial Statements of Public Health Organisations under its control) (Volumes One to Four); Combined New South Wales Health Professional Councils (Volumes One to Three); Health Care Complaints Commission; New South Wales Health Foundation; Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency; National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner; Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool (Volume Ones and Two); NSW Education Standards Authority; Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales; Department of Justice (incorporating the report of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority); Judicial Commission of New South Wales; Law Society of New South Wales (including the reports for the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund and the Public Purpose Fund) (Volumes One to Four); Professional Standards Department of the Law Society of New South Wales; Legal Aid New South Wales; Legal Profession Admission Board; Legal Services Council (incorporating the report of the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation); New South Wales Bar Association; NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal; NSW Crown Solicitor's Office; New South Wales Law Reform Commission; NSW Trustee and Guardian (incorporating the report of the Public Guardian); Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Office of the Legal Services Commissioner; New South Wales Crime Commission; Fire and Rescue NSW; NSW Police Force; NSW Rural Fire Service; New South Wales State Emergency Service; Department of Finance, Services and Innovation (including reports for: NSW Procurement Board; Registrar-General, Surveyor-General, Geographical Names Board of New South Wales, Valuer-General; Board of Surveying and Spatial Information; and the Annual Reports for Rental Bond Board, Building Professionals Board, NSW Government Communications (Telco) Authority, Mine Subsidence Board, State Records Authority of New South Wales, Office of the Valuer-General); Property NSW (including reports for Place Management NSW (formerly Sydney Harbour Foreshore

Authority), Luna Park Reserve Trust, NSW Teacher Housing Authority and Waste Assets Management Corporation); Service NSW; State Insurance Regulatory Authority; Greyhound Racing NSW; Harness Racing New South Wales; Racing NSW; Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust; Trustees of the ANZAC Memorial Building; Office of Sport; Venues NSW; Sydney Olympic Park Authority; NSW Institute of Sport; State Sporting Venues Authority; NSW Architects Registration Board; Destination NSW; Mental Health Commission of New South Wales; Mental Health Review Tribunal; Central Coast Regional Development Corporation; Greater Sydney Commission; Hunter Development Corporation; Ministerial Development Corporation; Department of Planning and Environment; Urban Growth NSW; Department of Industry; Cobar Water Board; Dams Safety Committee; Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission; NSW Food Authority; Local Land Services; Rice Marketing Board; New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority; Veterinary Practitioners Board of New South Wales; Water NSW; Multicultural NSW; Department of Family and Community Services (Volumes One to Three); NSW Climate Change Fund; Nature Conservation Trust; Lord How Island Board; Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust; Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales (trading as Taronga Conservation Society Australia); Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust; Parramatta Park Trust; Western Sydney Parklands Trust; New South Wales Environmental Trust; Office of Environment and Heritage (incorporating the report of the Heritage Council); NSW Environment Protection Authority; Office of Local Government; Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust; Radiation Advisory Council; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Barangaroo Delivery Authority; New South Wales Electoral Commission; Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal; Infrastructure NSW; Parliamentary Counsel's Office; Public Service Commission; Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee; UrbanGrowth NSW Development Corporation; New South Wales Treasury (incorporating the State Rail Authority Residual Holding Corporation; Lotteries Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation; Liability Management Ministerial Corporation; Electricity Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation, Ports Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation and Electricity Transmission Ministerial Holding Corporation); Essential Energy; Forestry Corporation of NSW; Hunter Water Corporation; Insurance and Care NSW (including the financial statements for Workers Compensation (Dust Diseases) Authority, Lifetime Care and Support Authority, NSW Self Insurance Corporation, Sporting Injuries Compensation Authority and the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation); Long Service Corporation; Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund; Port Authority of New South Wales; Report of the SAS Trustee Corporation (containing the separate reports for: A-Train Unit Trust; Alfred Unit Trust; Buroba Pty Ltd; EG Core Plus Fund No. 1 (Head Trust); EG Core Plus Fund No. 1 Holding Trust Nos. 1-8; EG Core Plus Fund No. 1 Ownership Trust Nos. 1-8; IPG Unit Trust; LBC Unit Trust; Pisco STC Funds Unit Trust Nos. 1 and 2; Project Cricket State Super Unit Trust; Southern Way Unit Trust; State Infrastructure Holdings 1 Pty Ltd; State Infrastructure Trust; and Valley Commerce Pty Limited); Sydney Water Corporation (trading as Sydney Water); and the New South Wales Treasury Corporation.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House*

**SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That the House at its rising this day do adjourn until Tuesday 6 February 2018 at 12 noon.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions*

**PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons have been lodged for presentation:

**Pet Shops**

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Slaughterhouse Monitoring**

Petition requesting mandatory closed-circuit television for all New South Wales slaughterhouses, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Assumption Primary School**

Petition requesting the upgrade of Assumption Primary School, received from **Mr Paul Toole**.

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following petitions signed by more than 500 persons have been lodged for presentation:

**St John's Anglican Church Precinct**

Petition requesting the St John's Anglican Church Precinct be placed on the State Heritage Register, received from **Mr Chris Patterson**.

**Wentworth Falls Traffic Lights Upgrade**

Petition requesting the upgrade of traffic lights and installation of a parabolic safety mirror at Wentworth Falls, received from **Ms Trish Doyle**.

## RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Hunter Public Hospitals—lodged 19 October 2017 (Ms Jenny Aitchison)

### *Motions*

## CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:32):** I move:

That the House take note of Christmas felicitations.

It is appropriate that today of all days we acknowledge the people in this place and all of our staff who make what we do possible. I take this opportunity to extend my greetings and best wishes for Christmas and the new year to all members of this place, irrespective of their party or crossbench membership. It is appropriate for all of us to take stock and appreciate what is most important this place, and that is representing the 7.7 million people who entrust in us all their hopes and aspirations.

I take this opportunity to thank, in particular, my National Party leader and Deputy Premier, and his colleagues, who support the Government. The Liberals and Nationals together are a strong coalition. I am very grateful for the Deputy Premier's personal support and for the support of all the Libs and Nats together in making this year the strong year it has been. Madam Speaker, I also acknowledge you in your role. I appreciate how demanding and challenging the role is and I thank you for everything you have done. I also thank the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and all the Temporary Speakers. We know that those who fill the Speaker's role when the Speaker is not in the chair often do so early in the morning and late at night and we appreciate all their efforts.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Leader of the House for all the work he and his staff do. I also thank the shadow Leader of the House and his staff. We need to ensure that they are working well together so that the proceedings of this House are conducted in the most professional manner. I also thank all the members in the other place. As the House of review, the Legislative Council has an important place in our democracy, and I thank and acknowledge all the members in that place for their contributions.

I thank what can arguably be the most difficult job in government—the position of Whip. I thank the member for Camden and his staff and the team for all the work they do. I say that with the deepest appreciation because, when others are off doing other things, the Whip is here managing the business of the place and managing the members. I also acknowledge the National Party Whip, the member for Myall Lakes, and the Deputy Liberal Whip, the member for Holsworthy, and thank them for all the great work they do. I take this opportunity to thank the Whip's team, especially Rebecca Cartwright and all the other staff. Rebecca is a wonderful support to the Whip's team and I acknowledge publicly her contribution and that of all the staff in the Whip's office. I also acknowledge the Opposition Whips and thank them for their contribution.

I acknowledge and thank the Clerk, Helen Minnican, the Deputy Clerk, Les Gönye, the Clerk-Assistant, Jonathan Elliott, and all the Clerk-Assistants. We really do appreciate the work they do and I appreciate the fact that they keep a poker face when at times our behaviour can be a bit different to what it is normally. They do their jobs in a most professional way and we are deeply grateful for that. I thank the Hansard reporters, two of whom are represented in the Hansard gallery at the moment. Often, when the House is going through a particularly busy period or a particularly difficult time in deliberations, I look up and wince and wonder how on earth Hansard is going to be able to record it. But they do an amazing job and we are deeply grateful. We extend our Christmas felicitations, best wishes and deepest gratitude to all the Hansard reporters.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Table Office, all of the committee secretariats, the parliamentary librarians, and not forgetting the Serjeant-at-Arms, Ian Delahunty. Ian, thank you for the job you do, it is much appreciated. I also thank all of the attendants who take exceptional care to meet all the needs of us members. I am deeply grateful to all of them as well. Of course, we cannot forget the administration teams who keep this place going—IT support, facilities, catering, our constables who keep us all safe, and the cleaners and maintenance workers. I hope all of us take the time, when appropriate, to thank you when we see you, but please note that, today of all days, we are deeply grateful for the work you do, because maintaining the democratic process in our State is of the utmost importance and everybody who supports that process is equally as important.

At this time of year it is especially important for us to thank all of our staff. I start by thanking all of the staff in our electorate offices. When we are here doing parliamentary or State business, often they bear the brunt of all the concerns and stresses that our constituents go through on a day-to-day basis. We appreciate that and respect that, and I take the opportunity on this occasion to extend our deepest gratitude to all of our electorate



staff. I also acknowledge all of our ministerial staff, our personal staff, including my own diligent team, who work their guts out, day in and day out, to support us and to support what we do. Today is a day when we acknowledge them.

I thank everybody, especially in the Libs and Nats, who have supported the Government in delivering those things that matter most to the community. I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved this year, and I know that next year will be even bigger and better. I also extend my best wishes to all members opposite and to the members of the crossbench. This is a time when all of us can take stock and appreciate those around us who support us in what we do. I know that all of us will take time to think of those less fortunate at this time of year, because all of us in this place have an important responsibility. We are extremely privileged to hold the positions we do. We should never forget that, because no matter how hard our job is, no matter what comes across our desk or who walks into our electorate office, we have an extremely important role in the community.

We have one of enormous responsibility but also one of enormous privilege, and I am deeply grateful for every day I have the chance to deliver on behalf of the people of this State. I also acknowledge those who are less fortunate whom we have the obligation to represent and to serve.

I wish the members of the House a safe and prosperous Christmas holiday season. I extend the season's best wishes to the Leader of the Opposition, members opposite and members on the crossbench. Everyone works to the best of their ability to do the best job for their communities, and I express my appreciation for that on this occasion.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:39):** I join the Premier in extending best wishes for the coming Christmas season to all members and to all who work in this building in the task of assisting members of Parliament. I start with the workers. I thank all the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Department of the Legislative Assembly, in particular. Thanks to the catering staff, the cleaners, the maintenance staff, the library staff, the special constables, the Hansard staff, the Clerks, the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms and the attendants. Every member in this place is assisted by those workers.

I also thank the members of the State Parliamentary Labor Party—my colleagues—for all their hard work this year and for the support they give me in doing my job. In particular, I thank my Deputy Leader, the member for Maroubra, who doubles up as Manager of Opposition Business and plays an extremely important role for the State Parliamentary Labor Party and the Labor cause, both inside and outside this Parliament. He and all of us are so ably assisted by the work of Dylan Parker in his office. I thank the Labor Whips—the member for Cabramatta and the member for Shellharbour—for everything they do to organise us and I thank their boss, Colleen Symington, for everything she does to organise them and us. Colleen, your work is valued and appreciated by every Labor member of Parliament.

I thank all the staff in my office, the Office of the Leader of the Opposition. They not only assist me and whip me into shape but also assist every member of the shadow Cabinet, and indeed every member of the State Parliamentary Labor Party. I will not name them all, but I deeply appreciate the work they do. To all the Labor electorate staff, we will be able to buy many of you a drink in a few hours time. Your work is valued and appreciated by all Labor Caucus members. To the officials of the Labor Party in New South Wales who are otherwise engaged at the moment in the Federal electorate of Bennelong, thank you for your assistance.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers for everything you do in taking charge and presiding over the debates in this place. I say to everyone who works in this building, everyone who works in ministerial offices, electorate offices, Government members, crossbench members and Labor members, best wishes to you and your families. Please have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:43):** I join the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition at the start of this festive season in thanking all the people in the Department of Parliamentary Services: Hansard, the people who do the maintenance, the Table Office, the library and all the attendants. Thank you for your hard work in making this place function. I also thank the catering staff who have sustained us throughout the year, the cleaners—and especially the cleaners who look after The Nationals ministerial offices and The Nationals party room on level 12. I thank all the special constables who are at the forefront in ensuring the safety of members and all those who visit this place. Without any of those people none of what we do would be possible.

I make special mention of the Clerks, the Speaker and other occupants of the Chair, and the Whip's Office for their support of members of this House. I thank Bec and the Whip's Office for keeping us members in line. Patto, thanks for all your hard work—especially dealing with National Party members. To the press gallery, I wish you all a happy Christmas and hope you can take a well-deserved break. I thank all the people in this Parliament for their ongoing work and efforts, and wish them all the best over the Christmas season. For many of us who are regional members of Parliament, being in this place means spending a lot of time away from home and the people

we love. The sacrifice is great but it is an honour to fight for the people in the regions and communities that we represent in New South Wales. I thank all my National Party colleagues for their commitment in working for the many communities that make up regional and rural New South Wales. I thank their loved ones for their ongoing support. I am deeply grateful for all your hard work and support—and I know your communities are as well.

I acknowledge the members in this place and wish them a happy holiday season and a Merry Christmas. Regardless of our political colours, Christmas is a time of year when we all come together. I urge everyone to take the opportunity to spend time with their family, and to rest, recharge and reconnect with family members because we know that next year will be a busy one. I thank all the people at National Party head office: Nathan Quigley and his staff and team and of course our chairman, Bede Burke, and the executive, central council and all our grassroots members. With two by-elections we have had a hard year and now the by-election in the Federal seat of New England means more time spent away from families. I acknowledge for the first time the member for Cootamundra, Steph Cooke, and the member for Murray, Austin Evans. They are fantastic members, and it is an honour to share this Christmas greeting with two members representing regional New South Wales.

To all the members who supported the National Party, thank you for all the work, support and everything you have done this year. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a time of joy with family and loved ones. Ultimately everything we do in this Parliament is to serve the people whom we have the privilege to represent. I thank the people of the Monaro for their support this year. I thank them for putting their trust in me to serve them in this place, just as other communities do in supporting their members. Often in the bear pit it can be easy to forget the reason why we are here: to serve our communities and to ensure all people have the same opportunities, no matter where they live or what their circumstances.

As we reflect on the year that has passed, for many, it has been a time of grief, hardship and struggle. The holiday season can be difficult for many, particularly those who are doing it tough, and it can often be isolating in regional communities. As we prepare for Christmas, with the festivities, food and presents, we should not forget those around us who are struggling at this time. Christmas could not be a better time to reach out, band together and remind those around us that there is hope at this time. I thank the electorate office staff across regional New South Wales. You are the face of the members and the face of the Government in dealing with the issues that are so important to so many communities, individuals and families. When we are in Sydney or travelling throughout our electorates, it is our electorate office staff who hold the fort and continue helping people and making members look good. Your hard work is often unseen but it is always appreciated. I thank all those electorate office members and staff for the service they offer, not only to members of Parliament but also to the communities we represent.

Two thousand and seventeen has been an enormous year for the Government—a great year. I congratulate the Premier. She is a fantastic, hardworking Premier; a Premier that has a commitment not just to metropolitan Sydney but also to regional and rural New South Wales. She demonstrates that through her own efforts, integrity and strength. I am lucky that I have had the privilege this year to serve by her side as her deputy. It is her leadership that has put this Government in a position where we are able to deliver for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. I thank the Premier for her leadership. For everyone, Christmas is an opportunity to talk about gifts. In closing, my gifts are: to any enemy, forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to a customer, service; to all, charity; to every child, a good example; and to yourself, respect. I wish everybody a Merry Christmas.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:49):** It is a privilege to contribute to the Christmas felicitations. The last couple of weeks in Parliament are always gruelling. On the last day in the House when the cudgels are laid down at the end of question time it is a nice feeling. Being a member of Parliament in New South Wales is a tough job. There is a rough-and-tumble culture and the bear pit is a tough place. Whether you seek them or not, in this job you end up accumulating one or two bruises each year. It is good to end the political combat and go on holidays and spend time with our families. We have to keep reminding each other that it is a privilege to serve in this place as that can sometimes be forgotten amongst the hurly-burly. I wish every member in this place well: the Premier, Ministers and all members.

I extend my best wishes for Christmas and thank the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, for an outstanding year. In 2011 I do not think anyone would have expected that Labor would be in such great shape at this time. In March 2019 there will be a very real contest at the polls, and that is largely due to the leadership of Luke Foley. That is seen in the by-election results for Manly, North Shore, Gosford, Murray, Cootamundra and Blacktown. Labor has had a good year. I thank my shadow Cabinet colleagues. It is a strong and united team. It is the most well-travelled shadow ministerial team in living memory. As soon as Parliament rises we return to our electorates, but the 20-odd members of the shadow ministry are off to every corner of New South Wales. Labor is pursuing victory in 2019 with great passion, and I thank my shadow ministerial colleagues for their support. I thank my caucus colleagues for their help and cooperation with me as deputy leader. We are a tribe, we are a family, and we are pursuing our ideals in this place with great passion.

I thank Nick Lalich, the Opposition Whip. We have a great relationship. He is a terrific man. He gets on with his job with a smile and nothing is too much trouble. His assistant, Colleen Symington, is much loved in the Opposition. I thank the Deputy Opposition Whip, and member for Shellharbour, who similarly approaches her duties with a smile and has been a great support. I thank my counterpart in the upper House, the Hon. Adam Searle, and the Whip, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane. When the two Houses have meshed we have done it well, and I thank them for their friendship and support. I thank my friend, the Leader of the House, and member for Lane Cove, whom I have known since 1995 when we nearly froze to death in Wagga Wagga.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Did you snuggle up?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** We might have. I enjoy the jousting but behind the scenes we acknowledge that there is work to be done in this place. Despite the occasional battle, for the good of the people of New South Wales we cooperate to ensure that business is transacted. He does not mind too much when I attempt to thwart those business transactions. His assistant, John McGowan, is a straight shooter. I have had straight negotiations with him. He is a smart fellow and a good guy to deal with.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** He sends good tweets.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** A good tweeter, is he?

**Mr Luke Foley:** NSW Labor Watch.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Thank you for your contributions to NSW Labor Watch; we enjoy them. I thank Chris Patterson, the member for Camden and Government Whip, and Rebecca Cartwright for their assistance. I thank the Deputy Speaker and the other occupants of the chair who assist in the role. I thank Helen Minnican, Les Gönye, Catherine Watson, Carly Maxwell, and the House attendants, Danny Heldal and Chris Papadopoulos. I thank the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, Ian Delahunty, who has a gentle touch when he is throwing you out of the House. I thank the staff in the Leader's and Deputy Leader's office, room 1011. Chris Willis is enjoying himself more than he is entitled to in his job. He is loving it. He has made a huge difference. I thank Julian Lee, head of media, Maegen Sykes, Bronwen Matherson and Kieran Gill in the media team. They are great to work with and I thank them for their assistance. I thank Todd Pinkerton, Michael Buckland, Justin De La Pena, Jackie Lloyd, Jenny O'Hare, Jenny Williams and Liam O'Callaghan. I have to thank Irma the cleaner and Liam for feeding my fish.

**Mr Chris Minns:** What are their names?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The kids named them. I thank all the staff. It is a well-oiled machine and there is great morale. They will make great ministerial staff in 2019. I thank my electorate office staff. I thank Karen Browne, whom I have known for 45 years. She went to school with my brother. Lisa Williams has also been with me from day one. Dylan Parker has just been elected to Randwick City Council and has the world in front of him. He runs this place for me when I am busy, which is most of the time. I thank James Evans, who has been a gem of a find. He is a smart young man. I thank the Department of Parliamentary Services staff from the front office to the back of house—those who do our claims advice, payroll, cleaners, and members of the catering staff. This is not a normal work place; it is a House of Parliament. It is a special place with great history and tradition.

One of the things I have lamented over the years is that too many permanent staff are disappearing and too many part-timers and contractors are moving in. They are now looking at replacing the cleaning staff. I say leave them as full-time staff members and let them go into Christmas with that comfort. I thank the members of my family. One thing you cannot do without is a great family. I thank my beautiful wife, Christina, my kids, brothers and sister, and mum and dad, who have always supported me in this place. The electorate of Maroubra is a community and a terrific electorate to represent. It has been a privilege to serve for every one of my 12 years in this place. I thank the members of my community for their support and I wish them a restful, peaceful and injury-free Christmas.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:57):** Regretfully, I inform the House that, as the previous speakers have mentioned, we have come to the end of another parliamentary year. I say regret because who amongst us does not love this glorious institution with every fibre of their being? We love every brick, every inch of mortar, the regal shades of our office carpet, and the unusual smells in less well-ventilated corners of this esteemed House of democracy. I love Parliament and I miss it every day I am not here. Most of all, I will miss the people who will be absent for a few months. I thank them all individually. First, I mention our wonderful Speaker. My sincere thanks to her as the captain of our parliamentary ship, a steady hand upon the legislative tiller and an evil eye at anyone who dare cross her. Last year I noted in felicitations that she was one of the finest Speakers this Parliament has ever had. Can I say this year that she is likely one of the best Speakers in the free world?

To Mr Deputy Speaker and the Assistant Speakers, thank you for your hard work and for working long hours. I thank our Clerk, Helen Minnican, for her exemplary work. Without Helen, the Ministers of the Crown would spend more time at the dispatch box looking around awkwardly for the right loq than we would passing laws. I thank Deputy Clerk Les Gönye, whose years of service have continued unabated. Les is a parliamentary institution on his own. I thank him for the advice he gives my office about the complexities of legislative and procedural matters. I thank Clerk-Assistant Catherine Watson for her great work. Let us not forget the fantastic Table Office team, led by Carly Maxwell. They are more than a table; they are indeed the very foundation, the bedrock of everything we do. The table holds the weight of the Parliament on its shoulders—of course, I do not intend to mix metaphors.

Part of that vital team are Ben Foxe, Jenny Lamont, John Hatfield, Natasha Zammit and Tom Isaksen, whose assistance in preparing the business programs and papers, facilitating with written questions and answers, and accepting petitions is greatly appreciated. Their works does not go unnoticed. I thank the other clerks at the table for their contribution—Jonathan Elliott, Elaine Schofield, Simon Johnston, Rohan Tyler and Jason Ardit. I also thank bills officer Tanja Zech. I thank our wonderful Serjeant-at-Arms, Ian Delahunty. I am still getting the hearing back in my left ear after a number of question times. He keeps the House in very good order and keeps down the bruising on Opposition members. I thank the team for procedural research, Jonathan Elliott, Rohan Tyler and Pauline Painter.

I thank the wonderful support team in this Chamber who greet us every morning—Danny Heldal, Peter Tuziak, Stephen Smith, Ian Thackeray, Chris Papadopoulos, and the delightful ladies April Lowndes and Lynne Vitale. I thank the Hansard team for their professionalism while working long and very unpredictable hours. Community recognition notices are read almost at the speed of light. I do not know how they do it, but they get it done. That is what drove my dear friend the Leader of the Opposition to agree to extend the time for community recognition notices—otherwise appreciation of the under-13G teams would be read a little slower in the House. I thank Mike Price for his work as Director of Information Services and Neil Dammerel for running IT. The assistance of the IT team is always needed—even if it is just telling my staff to turn it off and back on again. I express my appreciation to John Gregor, Director of Financial Services. I thank Deborah Bennett, who heads up the Library team. I thank Rob Neilsen and Greg Wright from Facilities. I thank Executive Manager Mark Webb and Julie Langsworth and their teams for a fantastic year.

I thank the catering staff, previously led by director Philip Freeman, who kept us all well fed, and Mr Gary Chan. We cannot have Christmas felicitations without mentioning Gary Chan from the parliamentary bar, who is always smiling and ready for a chat. I thank the team at the switchboard—Gina Pye, Julie Musgrave, Grace Peake and Margaret Barnes. I note and appreciate their huge contribution to this place. I make particular note of the special constables. Each day they look after us and protect this Parliament. I thank them for their wonderful efforts. Like my dear friend the member for Maroubra, I make special mention of a wonderful and dedicated lady, Angeliki Stathopoulos, who treats my office as she would her own home, keeping it clean and tidy. I thank all the cleaning staff who do a special and invaluable job. Angeliki is leaving us for retirement next Easter. I ask the clerks to do their very best to talk her out of that because I do not know how we will manage without her.

I give a big thank you to the Government Whips—Chris Patterson, Stephen Bromhead and Mark Coure—for ensuring this Government pushes through its legislation and for keeping the team together. I also thank Melanie Gibbons who is about to have another child. On behalf of the House, I wish her and the new baby all the best. All Coalition members are well assisted by the Whips' staff. I thank the wonderful Becky Cartwright and Alex Carne. I thank my cluster ministry colleagues Gabrielle Upton and Don Harwin for their support and wise counsel. I thank my Parliamentary Secretaries, who are also colleagues and friends, Scot MacDonald and Chris Gulaptis for their assistance and for taking a mini load off my shoulders.

I thank my shadow and Deputy Opposition Leader Michael Daley and his assistant Dylan Parker. I congratulate Dylan on his election to council this year, and particularly for not complaining to me yet about independent hearing and assessment panels. I wish Michael Daley and his family a wonderful, safe and peaceful Christmas. Michael deserves a good break. He mentioned that while Parliament by its nature is adversarial, it takes a large amount of cooperation to ensure that the business of the House goes through and is well ordered. I pay tribute to my loyal staff, led by my chief of staff, Rob Vellar; my adviser, Simon Babbage; Cam O'Kane; Sahil Prasad; Norm Lipson; Alex Fraser; Callum Fountain; Nat Smith; Graeme Gilbert; and Ben Moylan. I pay special tribute to my personal assistant, Sue Clark, who is absolutely magnificent and works tirelessly. Without her this Government would probably fall apart.

There are others outside my ministerial office as Minister for Planning who deal more in a Special Minister of State category. John McGowan is a huge asset to this place. He is a hard worker and probably the most well-connected and networked individual in this Parliament. If anyone wants to know what is going on in this place, "the McGowan"—as he is known—is likely to know it or within moments he can probably summon

up some form of strange dark art to find out. I also remember the soldiers who fell in service to Her Majesty this year—Andrew Lewis, my director of policy, who has gone on to greater things, and Harry Hughes. The many sacrifices Mr Hughes made for conservative policies will be remembered always. I may not have mentioned some people because, as Special Minister of State, some of those staff are covert and, for security reasons, they are not to be mentioned in public. I thank my electorate office staff—Andrew and Chris, headed by Zorica Kaye-Smith—for their dedication. The three of them do so much to ensure that my electorate continues to be well served.

I thank the Premier, who is the hardest working individual I have come across in my life. She is an incredible lady and a great leader. I thank her for the opportunities that she has given not only to the people in this Government but also to the people of New South Wales through her hard work, dedication and diligence and the fantastic policies that are produced by this Government. I wish all members in this place and their families nothing but the best of health, happiness and prosperity. I wish my family, Alicia, John, Tom and Sam—or "search, seek and destroy"—a very Merry Christmas. I am looking forward to spending some time with them. Let us all take a well-earned break and come back in the new year refreshed and ready to serve the people of New South Wales. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy and holy 2017.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:08):** I too will say nice things.

**Mr Nick Lalich:** For the first time?

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** No. I acknowledge the Premier who, as my boss, does an outstanding job. I have the utmost respect for her and I consider her to be a great friend. I acknowledge the Deputy Premier—Baras is a great mate. He does a great job and I have the utmost respect for him. I thank the Treasurer and Ministers for their work for the Government and the people of New South Wales. I thank my Deputy Whip, Gibbo, for all her efforts. She is a great friend and does a great job. Her staffer and professional babysitter, Dan, also does a great job.

Last year I made a joke about Brommy, The Nationals Whip, that I carried him. I am now deadly serious: I have carried him this year. He is a great mate who does a good job. Georgie Williams in his office is outstanding, and she carries him as well. To Nick Lalich across the Chamber, I say you have my utmost respect. Great job. I loved working with you last year and I thoroughly enjoyed this year. To Anna Watson I say the same. I have great respect for you and you do a great job. Colleen and Dillon both do a great job. I thank Becky in my office who does an outstanding job. I am sure I do not thank her enough. The standing joke is that I do not do emotion well, but she does an outstanding job and I publicly thank her for her efforts in everything she does for the Government and this House. In a similar vein I thank Alex as well. Robbo and John McGowan both do a good job.

I thank Madam Speaker for her efforts. She does a wonderful job and is a great friend. It is the same with the Deputy Speaker, and I acknowledge all of his efforts. I thank Sarah Cruikshank, Tom Paten, Zach Bently, Brad Burden and all in the Premier's office for their wonderful work and the support they give the Government and the Premier. I thank the Clerks, the Table Office, the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms for their wonderful efforts. Helen, Les and Carly, who has just left the Chamber, do a great job. I thank the Legislative Assembly Chamber attendants, Ian, April, Danny and Lynne for their wonderful efforts. I could spend my five minutes talking about Lynne, who is leaving us today; she will be sorely missed. I include Steve, Chris and Peter who all do a great job. We quite often take the special constables for granted when we walk into the building but they also do a great job and we thank them for providing safety. I thank Deb, Ally, Joe and Alex who are my electorate office staff. I could not do my job without them. I acknowledge the wonderful work they do.

I will mention some people who are not members and will not be voting on my pre-selection—as it is not needed. They are the backbone of the job we do, that is, the parliamentary liaison officers. They are the conduit between the Ministers, the backbenchers and my office. I thank all of them, specifically, Michael Evangelidis, Alicia McCumstie, Cameron Dunger, Alexandra Tooth, or Toothie, Thomas Ryan, Anetha Savage, Sam Tedeschi, Callum Fountain, Vincent Memey, Andrew Dixon, Daniel Hill, Kim Withers, Tom Loomes, Alexandra Byrne, James Camilleri, Dean Schachar, Angeli Lee, Vincent So, David Tricca—Macarthur's favourite son—Amanda Choularton, Jock Sowter, Richard Hodge, Georgie Humphries, Asher Miners, Nick Chapman and Taylor Gramoski. I also thank Neil Harley and his staff for what they do. I also thank the parliamentary contacts, Tom Paylen, Mark Jones, Rebecca Cartwright, Georgie Williams, Amy Firstone and Scott Percival. Have a wonderful Christmas.

**The SPEAKER (16:13):** I want to reflect on the year that has been because we have some interesting statistics about it. This year has certainly been a busy year for the Parliament of New South Wales, the Legislative Assembly and all its members and staff. As of yesterday the Legislative Assembly had sat for more than 446 hours over 18 weeks, or 54 days, of which 137 hours and 46 minutes was the conduct of Government Business.

Sixty-eight bills were passed by the Assembly, 53 Government bills were introduced, and 14 10,000-or-more signature petitions were discussed. More than 2,500 written and 540 oral questions have been asked—the Opposition would say none were answered—and 1,030 general notices were given. The Chamber has divided more than 130 times and delivered 68 hours and 32 minutes of private members' statements and 17 hours and 58 minutes of community recognition statements, or over 1,078 statements.

As we look back on the year that was 2017 we see there have been many changes both inside and outside this Chamber. We have sadly farewelled six members, but have also had the joy of welcoming six new faces. John Robertson, the Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson, the Hon. Adrian Piccoli, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, the Hon. Mike Baird and the late Kathy Smith each left the life of the "bearpit" behind, while Stephen Bali, Steph Cooke, Austin Evans, Felicity Wilson, James Griffin and Liesl Tesch have entered the arena, at their own peril. We have seen the appointment of the Legislative Assembly's second female Clerk, and a new Deputy Clerk—Helen Minnican and Leslie Gönye—both of whom have become essential to the running of this Chamber and who at all times have been dedicated, reliable, professional and impartial.

The parliamentary precinct has undergone some changes with the commencement of an extensive program of capital works. In order to better meet the needs of a modern Parliament the projects undertaken this year have sought to remedy the building's access issues—we thank the member for Gosford for her input into those issues—improve security and restore the spaces of heritage significance. They include the installation of accessible bathroom facilities throughout the precinct, the installation of a new fire and smoke detection system, the introduction of a parents' room, the reconfiguration and upgrade of the level 7 public spaces and the addition of a new public seminar space that was opened today.

Ongoing heritage restoration works throughout the old Rum Hospital building are replacing and maintaining fittings, carpet, paintwork and wallpaper that are now more than 30 years old, preserving the cultural and historical significance of the oldest continuously used public building in Australia. Construction will also soon begin on level 6 to upgrade and improve the Theatre, refurbish the Parliamentary Press Gallery offices and build the Parliament's first dedicated education centre, which I am very excited about. Once complete, the education centre will allow the Parliament to extend its civics education program and increase the participation of primary school students from 10,000 to per year to 30,000.

The centre will also provide opportunities to develop and deliver new programs for high school, TAFE and university students as well as for teachers and educators. With the construction of this new facility, we are looking forward to being able to provide even more creative, engaging, informative and, most of all, fun opportunities for New South Wales students to learn about Parliament, civic responsibility, their local members and the history of democracy and politics in our State. My sincere thanks go to the entire team of the Department of Parliamentary Services who have helped manage and make these projects possible.

This year was also the year for celebrating a number of important parliamentary milestones. It marked the first exhibition to highlight more than a century of achievements by women in New South Wales politics as campaigners, protesters, voters, parliamentary officers, members, Ministers, Presiding Officers and Premiers, and at its centre the first female member of Parliament, Millicent Preston Stanley, and included the launch this morning of a beautiful publication, "A Fit Place for Women: NSW Parliament". The exhibition was the Parliament's most successful to date in terms of visitor numbers, media coverage and audience feedback. Overall, the exhibition received almost 70,000 visitors.

Additionally, 2017 marked the first year in almost 20 that the New South Wales Parliament hosted the forty-eighth Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference. More than 60 delegates from across the Pacific, New Zealand and Australian Federal and State jurisdictions attended from 2 July to 7 July. The conference was an incredible success, commencing on the first night with a reception at Government House, followed by an opening ceremony at Parliament the next day combining Aboriginal and Pacific culture and an address by Professor Marie Bashir. It was a fantastic opportunity to develop professional connections, renew and make new friendships and strengthen the ties and reaffirm the shared values that bind us.

The Parliament again hosted the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA] Australia and Pacific Joint Regional Conference in October, our first since 1993. Fifty-five delegates from Pakistan to the Cook Islands attended the conference, which aims to further the CPA's goal of fostering understanding and deepening networks across the Westminster parliaments, and promoting professional development for members. The 2017 theme was "engagement" and included workshops on engaging with remote and isolated communities, engaging with young people, engaging with constituents, engaging with colleagues across the Chamber and engagement across the Commonwealth. I thank most sincerely the staff of the departments of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council for successfully executing these massive undertakings. Feedback from all delegates was that the conferences were enjoyable and fruitful experiences.

A further milestone celebrated this year was the tenth anniversary of the Parliament's twinning relationship with the Bougainville House of Representatives and the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. The twinning program, initiated by the CPA in 2007, is designed to promote collaboration and understanding between parliaments. It is a relationship that has fostered cooperation, democratic values in our region and long-lasting friendships. The Legislative Assembly's popular Public Sector Seminar marked its fifth anniversary this year. Are we getting tired yet, class, thinking about everything we have done? It has been an unbelievable year. In five years there have been 16 sessions of the seminar hosted by the Parliament, receiving 844 participants from 71 different public sector agencies. The seminar has also enjoyed the participation of many members over the years, keeping it fresh and interesting. I thank members on both sides for their participation.

As members would be aware, there are a number of charities that are close to my heart and each year I appeal to everyone's generosity to help support these wonderful causes. I am proud to say that this year we raised a record \$48,808 for charities, including South Coast Lifeline—the member for Shellharbour would be very aware of that charity—Cancer Council, Red Nose Day, Royal Far West, Doctors Assisting in Solomon Islands and Shine for Kids. I thank everyone who donated. Finally, I take this opportunity to thank so many staff who ensure that members are able to undertake their functions every day with ease. This includes staff from the Department of Parliamentary Services [DPS], led by Mark Webb and his deputy, Julie Langsworth, and their department heads including Robert Neilsen, Mike Price, Lee Kwiez and John Gregor. I acknowledge Philip Freeman, who recently left his role in Parliamentary Catering to take up a position in the Central West. He was often the life of the party and went above and beyond for anyone and everyone. He is dearly missed.

I thank the staff of the Department of the Legislative Assembly, including our hardworking committee staff led by Simon Johnston and Jason Ardit, the Table Office led by Carly Maxwell, Procedural Research and Protocol led by Elaine Schofield and our hardworking corporate team under the leadership of Clara Hawker who work each and every day with our 98 electorate offices and enable members to undertake their duties with world-class resources. I also thank the Clerks at the table, including Catherine Watson, Jonathan Elliott and Les Gönye for their always wise and timely advice. I again thank Helen Minnican for her exceptional level of dedication to her new role. Helen has proved in her short time to provide wise and impartial counsel to members on both sides of the House and has done outstandingly in administering the department. I thank Helen. I thank Deputy Speaker Thomas George and Assistant Speaker Andrew Fraser and each member of my speaker's panel. Thomas George has always been there when he thought I might be low and in need of some support, even though I might only appear low but never really am.

**Mr Thomas George:** We are in this together.

**The SPEAKER:** We are in this together. I thank him for his unfailing support all the time and I will miss him. I thank my personal staff in my electorate office: Lynne Arnold, Adam Carney and Matthew Allen and in the Speaker's Office: Brigid O'Bryan, Michelle Lane, Jane Boag and Bryce O'Connor. I hail the return of Luke Sikora. He has been a fantastic kid, to come back to the office and do what he does. During his absence, I felt that I was missing something. Sean O'Connor was fulfilling that role, but it is great to have Luke Sikora back home. Finally, I welcome my counterpart in the upper House to his new role. The President of the Legislative Council, the Hon. John Ajaka, has shown he is dedicated to the Parliament and has served in his new role with honour and distinction. He has been an absolute joy to work with.

I will not go on for another half an hour or people will start to become irritated with me. I thank everyone in the Parliament, including Hansard, camera operators, press gallery, parliamentary attendants, electorate officers, cleaners, and everybody that everyone else has thanked and that I thank every year, for continuing to serve. As members of Parliament, we need support from time to time and we get it in spades from our professional staff in Parliament. I thank them all and wish them a merry Christmas.

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:23):** At this point in the parliamentary year it is important that we place on record our appreciation and gratitude to the people who work and participate in this Chamber and for this Parliament. I acknowledge all members of the Government. Although we are from different political parties and ideologies and we may not always agree we share a common goal—to serve our communities—and we desire to deliver a better outcome for the people of New South Wales. I acknowledge the contributions from our crossbench members. I acknowledge my Labor colleagues here and in the other place who work tirelessly to represent their constituencies.

I thank my leader, Luke Foley, and his staff, led by chief of staff Chris Willis and policy directors Michael Samaras and Chloe Bennett, for their tireless work in holding the Government to account. I thank my colleague Michael Daley, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Manager of Opposition Business. I acknowledge his staff, Dylan Parker and James Evans, for the significant role they play in the Opposition business of this House. I also thank my assistant and great supporter, Ms Anna Watson, for the great work she does as my Deputy Whip. Without her, I probably would not be able to count up to 34. I thank her for her assistance.

I express my gratitude to my secretary, Colleen Symington, who supports me as Opposition Whip. She is well respected by all members of this House. Colleen is a tremendously hard worker and does it with great patience and understanding. Without our secretaries—and Colleen in particular—the Whips on both sides of the House would not be able to make it work. She runs the place, tells me when certain things have to happen and where I have to be. I thank Colleen for the great work she does. She would want to join me in thanking our counterparts on the other side. I thank the Leader of the House, Anthony Roberts, and his staff. I thank the Government Whip, Chris Patterson, who has been a mate of mine ever since he came into this Parliament, and his excellent staff, Rebecca Cartwright and Alexandria Carne, for their cooperation. I thank Deputy Whips Steve Bromhead and Melanie Gibbons for their support.

I extend gratitude to the Clerk, Helen Minnican, the Deputy Clerks, and Table and Chamber services for their advice and continual assistance to all members. I also acknowledge the work of committee secretariats and staff. I value their contribution. I thank the dedicated parliamentary attendants who are here on each sitting day, regardless of how late we sit, to ensure that the House ticks over. I thank the Hansard staff, who do a wonderful job in capturing each word uttered in here and presenting them for the historical record. I always find it intriguing that they can make us sound a lot more intelligent than we are. I find that when I read my speeches many of them turn out to be far more eloquent than I felt them to be when I made them. I am sure they change some of the words and make me sound a lot better, so I thank the men and women in Hansard. They do a wonderful job.

I thank the special constables, who make sure that everyone who works here can do so safely. I thank building services, all the cleaners, maintenance staff and gardeners for the outstanding work they do in presenting the oldest Parliament in Australia in such an impressive manner. I thank the catering service team and dining and cafe staff for keeping us all fed and watered. I acknowledge Parliamentary Services for their efforts to support the Parliament, including member services, financial services, human resources, library services, education services and information technology. There are too many to name, but all are worthy of thanks and acknowledgement. It is impossible to name everybody. I sincerely thank all parliamentary staff for their service to the public and to this Parliament.

I speak for all members in acknowledging the vital and often difficult role played by our electorate staff. I thank my staff, Kenrick Cheah and Anne McNamara, supported by Alexander Chapkin, Kelvin Tran and Rose Dandolo for continuing to support me in my role as the member for Cabramatta and for the work that they do for the people of Cabramatta. Their tireless efforts ensure the constituents and communities of Cabramatta are well served. I could not do it without them. To the people of Cabramatta I say that it is your needs and hopes that drive me every day. I am proud to serve this community, I will continue to work hard for them. I acknowledge the support of my family and the support that I receive from MPs, our partners, our families and our friends. I wish my colleagues on both sides of the House, everyone who works in this Parliament and their families, as well as my constituents in the electorate of Cabramatta the compliments of the season and a happy New Year. May the good Lord smile down upon every one of them. I hope to see all members refreshed and revitalised for the huge year that I believe 2018 will be.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:28):** I have a short time in which to make my remarks, as I understand a debate on a petition is pending. I take the opportunity to say Merry Christmas to all in this House and all who keep the House running. I begin with the Government Whip's Office: Chris Patterson, Rebecca Cartwright and Alex Carne are a phenomenal team. I am proud to work with them as Deputy Whip. I also thank Stephen Bromhead, who keeps this House operating. It is a team effort. I acknowledge and thank Opposition Whip Nick Lalich as well.

Our Speaker's panel are phenomenal. They are led capably by Shelley Hancock who is a phenomenal Speaker. I thank the whole Speaker's panel. Our new President in the upper House, the Hon. John Ajaka, is always a source of advice and guidance, and I thank him as well. I thank the Speaker's Office, including Luke Sikora, Brigid O'Bryan, Bryce O'Conner and Jane Boag—another great team that keeps this place running. To our Clerk, Helen Minnican, and all her team, thank you for the advice you give us. You are brilliant.

I thank my office: Jeff Page, Faith Perryman, Annelie Thatcher and Sophie Charlton. I also thank Daniel Nicholls, who has been on my team for a long time. He goes above and beyond to make sure that everything works seamlessly in my office, particularly since we have added a baby to the team. He makes sure I am where I should be. Thanks to our Library and Research section and Cafe and Catering. To Chris Ross who looks after our video: Thanks, Chris—we all rely on you to help us spread our message on Facebook and social media. I give particular thanks to our Premier, Gladys Berejiklian. She is a phenomenal Premier, and we thank her for the year we have had.

**Debate interrupted.**



*Petitions***INTERCITY TRAIN FLEET****Discussion**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:31):** It gives me enormous pleasure to lead in debate for the Labor Opposition today on the petition of more than 12,000 signatures against this Government's ham-fisted New Intercity Fleet project on which billions of dollars of taxpayers' money has been spent buying new trains from South Korea which are not fit for purpose and, absurdly, do not fit the tracks. Blue Mountains, Newcastle and Illawarra commuters desperately need new trains to replace the ageing V sets, but we should not be forced to settle for whatever cut-price carriages this cheapskate Government seeks to foist upon us.

When I tabled this petition in September, I challenged the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to debate me on this issue. So far he has ducked and weaved and chickened out at every opportunity. So I am looking forward to him finally being in the Chamber and accounting for his incompetence, his wasteful spending, his indifference to the needs of commuters and his neglect of local manufacturing workers. In truth, I have perhaps been a little unkind over the past 12 months to the Minister for Transport. Poor old Minister Constance has been unwilling and unable to address the concerns I have been raising because they are decisions which were made over his head and without his input. We know this because 12 months ago when Ray Hadley interviewed Minister Constance on 2GB and asked whether the Government knew the trains would not fit the tracks the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure threw his predecessor under the bus. He blamed Gladys. He blamed his boss and told the world it was all her fault.

The farce that has unfolded since that interview 12 months ago has done nothing to give the Blue Mountains community any confidence that either the Minister for Transport or the Premier herself know what they are doing. What other explanation exists for a government that buys new trains from South Korea which do not fit the tracks? What other explanation exists for a government that orders a New Intercity Fleet that has rigid, uncomfortable seating when the customer expectation of comfortable, soft and reversible seating is well established? What other explanation exists for a government that orders trains from overseas at a 25 per cent discount when it should have known—and should have made some effort to find out—that the cost of making those fat trains fit the tracks would blow out beyond any short-term discount from buying trains on the cheap from South Korea?

This Government is so ideologically opposed to local manufacturing workers that it will waste billions of taxpayers' dollars on trains that do not fit and which passengers do not want. This Government is so hell-bent on abolishing crucial railway workers' jobs that it will try to run these new trains in driver-only mode, putting the safety of passengers and train drivers at risk. The Minister for Transport will have a chance to respond in a moment, but for the sake of expediency I will tell the House what he is about to say. Minister Constance will tell us that I want to keep running 40-year-old trains in the Blue Mountains. This is not true. Minister Constance will tell us that the Hyundai Rotem trains represent value for money for the New South Wales taxpayer. This is not true. Minister Constance will tell us that his department consulted with passengers and incorporated their feedback into the design of the new trains. This is not true. Minister Constance will tell us that these trains are reliable and safe. This is not true. Minister Constance will tell us that he will not sack train guards on the new intercity lines. This is not true. Finally, Minister Constance will tell us that this is an "investment" in the Blue Mountains line that is long overdue. This is not true.

What is true is that the Department of Transport is being forced by this Government to scramble about making modifications to our tracks in order to accommodate these new trains, which the Liberals decided to buy on a whim without doing the proper research or any analysis to ensure they would fit. The Minister forgot the tape measure. I have asked questions on notice, lodged freedom of information requests, written to the Minister, moved motions in this House, debated the Minister day in and day out, and talked to my local paper, local radio, ABC radio and the *Sydney Morning Herald* about fat trains that do not fit the tracks—and the Minister still cannot answer one simple question: Minister, what will it cost to widen the tracks, tunnels, platforms and sandstone cuttings and move trackside signalling equipment so that these fat trains can fit all the way to Lithgow? What will it cost when the Minister could have bought new trains that were designed and built with local expertise, that fit the tracks, that are fit for purpose as long-distance trains and that would have kept local manufacturing workers from regional New South Wales in good quality jobs for many years to come? What will the cost to the taxpayer be? Now is your chance, Andrew Constance, just answer the question.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provost):** Order! I realise there is a lot of passion in this debate, but members with the call will be heard in silence.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Come on, Pinocchio!

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (16:37):** Swansea, come on, nice try. But let us get some facts on the table. When Labor procured the New Intercity Fleet, the train was called the OSCAR. Was it built to specifications that could travel beyond Springwood? No. Labor procured trains that could not fit the tracks beyond Springwood. Labor did not do the hard yards and recycle capital and invest in new infrastructure that would suit people all the way to Lithgow. That is what we have done. Frankly, I am surprised by this petition, because Labor could not even get the details right on it. What type of train is pictured on the petition? It is the Millennium train—not an OSCAR but a Millennium train. The Auditor-General said in relation to Millennium trains:

The 409 days delay in millennium trains—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! Opposition members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I sat quietly and listened to those opposite. The Auditor-General said:

The 409 days delay in the millennium trains progressive delivery and entry into service caused discomfort and lack of service quality to passengers, particularly during peak periods ... The same report recommended that the then State Rail explore the various purchasing options available for obtaining new trains and identify which option gave the best value for money. That was when Labor was in power. What did this Government do? We went to a world-quality manufacturer that has delivered around 40,000 carriages off the shelf and procured the trains at a significant saving to taxpayers so we can invest in more fleet. Because of these investments we are able to run more train services and transport services in places like the Blue Mountains hose opposite do not like hearing that. These savings can also be invested into infrastructure projects such as the easy access lift upgrades at Glenbrook and Leura stations. Those opposite carry on about South Korea, but where did Labor procure the Waratah trains from? They got them from China.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** They were fitted out down here.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** They were better down here without problems, were they? Trains built in China. Ironically, it was only last month that the shadow transport Minister stood up in this very place, in a hanbok, telling us about the importance of our relationship with South Korea. The xenophobic rubbish I have heard from those opposite and their union mates about this is nothing short of outrageous.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Those opposite are now upset about savings in the hundreds of millions of dollars to enable us to procure more trains. For the benefit of those opposite, we do not have any train manufacturing. I repeat, why did Labor go to China for trains when it was in government? Interestingly, the Central Coast member seated on the backbench is going to enjoy full-time jobs in his region as a result of this procurement—full-time, long, lengthy jobs of 15 years. Do you know what? Those opposite are about short-termism to appease their union mates and ripping off the taxpayer. How much longer do those opposite think it would take to manufacture these trains against trains manufactured in Australia? A month? Two months? Six months? The answer is years. That is the problem with what those opposite are saying. The member for Blue Mountains and the member for Swansea took a trip down to Victoria. What did they find out about the trains in Victoria? Were they pulled back off the tracks with all the problems? They did not discover that down there. They did not tell them about the \$300,000 cost a day because of the loss.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Are you stalking me?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I can assure the member that I have better things to do with my time. I am not stalking the member for Swansea. Finally, better trains will be delivered more quickly. We can absolutely deliver services to Lithgow, which that lot could not do. Guess what? The hypocrisy of those opposite about manufacturing trains overseas knows no bounds. Have a happy Christmas.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:42):** I support the esteemed member for Blue Mountains in this most important of petitions calling for the new intercity train fleet to be built in New South Wales. I firstly want to acknowledge the thousands of Hunter residents, workers and unions who have signed this petition. They know that it is a disgraceful decision to send this \$2.3billion train contract offshore to South Korea. This petition is extremely important for the Hunter because in Newcastle and the Hunter we build things. We have a proud history of train manufacturing in our city. In Broadmeadow we have UGL. They have manufactured hundreds and hundreds of OSCAR and Tangara carriages. For the information of the Minister, they still manufacture locomotives. In Cardiff we have Downer EDI. They have also produced hundreds of train carriages. The very skilled manufacturing sector in the Hunter would be in a position to provide thousands of components for such trains if they were manufactured in the Hunter.

Two weeks ago I was at the Thales marine ship repair and maintenance facility at the port of Newcastle. During my visit they kept telling me about the flow-on effects from building the minehunter boats in Newcastle for the Department of Defence in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Even now, flow-on manufacturing companies

exist as a result of that project—and the same would be the case if these trains were built in New South Wales. Thousands of jobs will be offshored to South Korea. It is not only our local manufacturers who are worried about their jobs, the employment Minister in South Korea is also worried because the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure wants his job. I worry about the young people, because in Newcastle we have a youth unemployment rate of 10.8 per cent—which is higher than it was on Labor's watch. It is our children today that will not have these jobs in the future. Yesterday I was talking to local manufacturing worker Phil about what a \$2.3 billion contract would mean to his workplace in Newcastle. He said:

It would provide meaningful jobs to young people, plenty of apprenticeships and a start in life with a well-paid job with lots of job satisfaction.

I could not agree more. This contract is worth \$2.3 billion and is expected to generate up to 1,200 direct jobs, and just as many in surrounding industries. If Victoria can manufacture 65 train sets for \$2 billion, why can't we? What has happened to supporting Australian workers and Australian jobs? The Minister has taken the cheap option and ignored the Hunter once again. The intercity train fleet should be built in New South Wales. It is time we built them here.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:45):** Mr Temporary Speaker—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! Members who contribute to the debate will be treated with respect.

**Mr MARK COURE:** It is also good to have the support of Government members in the Chamber this afternoon. I acknowledge the Blue Mountains State Electoral Council [SEC] of the New South Wales Labor Party and the Blue Mountains Labor branch who are here supporting this petition this afternoon. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for this petition because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the great work the Government is doing in transport. I am advised that this new, modern fleet of intercity trains will provide a new level of comfort and convenience for the thousands of customers who commute daily to Sydney from the South Coast, the Blue Mountains, the Central Coast and Newcastle. It has always been the Government's intention to carry out modifications to the rail infrastructure to allow the Blue Mountains Line to be consistent with the existing electrified rail network.

A number of existing trains cannot fit on the Blue Mountains Line. Modernisation is needed, regardless of the new intercity fleet. Transport for NSW has worked with Australian and overseas train manufacturers to identify the most suitable train design. The tender evaluation process selected an international consortium as the preferred supplier. As with any tender evaluation process, we conducted a thorough assessment of all candidates against a range of criteria. This included consulting with all of the referees provided by the different consortia, as well as independent referees sourced by our project team. These referees were used to determine the ability of the consortium to deliver projects that would meet our technical, quality and service standards. In August 2016 a \$2.3 billion contract was awarded to RailConnect to build 512 new double decker carriages and to provide for a 15-year maintenance arrangement. This is a big win for the people living in the electorates of those opposite. It is expected that between 200 to jobs will be created, particularly in the Central Coast region.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:49):** By leave: First, I acknowledge the wonderful people of the Blue Mountains and apologise for the insult that they have received. I am here today to talk about how important it is to have manufacturing in this great State of New South Wales. I begin by commending the member for Blue Mountains. She comes into this place every parliamentary sitting week and she stands up for the people of the Blue Mountains, she stands up for train workers and she stands up for the rest of those who use that line all the way into this city. So we thank the member for Blue Mountains. The member for Newcastle did a good job too.

This State is enormously proud of its history in manufacturing and particularly proud of its manufacturing workers. I am from the Hunter, so I know where they build the trains. We had to listen to all the rubbish from the other side of the House. I know they build trains at Cardiff and Broadmeadow and I know the people who build them. They are good, working-class people who have awesome skills, and this Government does not care about them. This petition says:

This Government, led by Gladys Berejiklian and Dominic Perrottet—

Let us not forget, it is the duo—

have offshored more than 1200 direct jobs and 2800 indirect jobs for a new intercity train fleet worth \$2.3 billion.

I will just go back. The Premier, the then transport Minister—and what a mess she made of it; in fact, she makes the current transport Minister look all right, which is saying something in itself—set up local manufacturers to fail by announcing ahead of the tender her preferred outcome was to purchase off-the-shelf trains from overseas. She had already made her decision, and it was a disgraceful decision. Unfortunately, the Government does not

care about the jobs of our manufacturers in New South Wales. There is no doubt that the Government hates working people. But what should be mentioned today is the great utopian moment—the moment when the Government discovered its new trains do not fit the track. What a joke the Government made of this whole process. Not only was the Government comfortable ensuring that Australian manufacturers, the hardworking manufacturers of the Hunter and the steel industry in the Illawarra—our strong regions that have served us well for a long time—do not have a job, but then they screwed it up. [*Time expired.*]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Discussion on the petition has concluded.

*Committees*

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**

**Membership**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** I report the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That:
- (a) Ms Ward be appointed as a member of the Joint Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General Committee to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr Pearce,
  - (b) Mrs Maclaren-Jones be appointed as a member of the Legislation Review Committee to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr Pearce, and
  - (c) Mr Martin be discharged from the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission and Mr Fang be appointed as a member of the committee.
- (2) That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly conveying the terms of the resolution agreed to by the House.

Legislative Council  
23 November 2017

JOHN AJAKA  
President

*Motions*

**CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:52):** I take this opportunity to offer my sincere wishes for a safe and happy Christmas to all members of this House, and to all of their families. Regardless of any political differences we share—and there are many—I thank all members of this House for their professionalism, their passion and their dedication to their local communities over the past 12 months. I thank those on my side of the House for their friendship and support. Over the past year the Labor team has shown great unity and cooperation, and I am truly proud to stand alongside each and every one of my colleagues. I start by saying thank you to the leader of my party, the Leader of the Opposition, and his deputy, the member for Maroubra, and to all of their staff. I thank them for their tireless efforts, for organising and uniting our members of this House and for ensuring that this Government is held to account for its words and its actions. I also thank all members of the shadow Cabinet for their dedication to their portfolios and for their constant fight to improve our great State.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You have to be nice to us. It's Christmas felicitations.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I will be as nice as I possibly can. I will try my best. I also acknowledge the Speaker's panel and all of those on that panel. It can be a difficult job sometimes. I also take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to every staff member who works inside Parliament House and ensures this institution runs like clockwork, which it does. I thank the member for Cabramatta in his role as Opposition Whip, and Colleen Symington in her role as his staffer.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Councillor Colleen to you.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I stand corrected. Councillor Colleen is a beautiful person on the inside and on the outside. I cannot say enough about how professional she is.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** She should have been a Lib.

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** She is not that silly. There is not a sitting day that goes by that Colleen and I do not have a conversation. I call into the office for her guidance and clarification. She is an excellent support to this House; she keeps us all organised each and every sitting day. I also acknowledge the Government Whip and Deputy Whips for their efforts over the past year to ensure that this Chamber runs smoothly and efficiently. I enjoy very much working with the member for Camden, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Holsworthy and,

as I mentioned before, the member for Cabramatta. I acknowledge and thank my staff in my electorate office—Sandra Mitrevski, Louise Hogan, Jessica McLean, Elise Delpiano, and Jessica Sparks—for all their efforts and support of not only me but of the entire community of Shellharbour. I extend my thanks to the residents of Shellharbour, who have driven my efforts and have supported their neighbours and friends over the last 12 months. People power has forced this Government to deliver a public hospital for Shellharbour, and therefore I will always be grateful for community effort.

I thank the Clerks, the Deputy Clerks and their entire team for upholding the traditions of our House and for reminding us all of the honour and responsibility that comes with our role as elected representatives within this institution. I thank the Legislative Assembly attendants and the front desk staff for their assistance and for always being so accommodating. I thank the Hansard team for their eloquence and dedication, and I thank the Table Office for their efforts behind the scenes. I would like to credit the security staff and special constables for their tireless work to ensure each and every individual who either visits or works in our Parliament can do so feeling safe, regardless of the day or hour. My thanks go to the catering and cafeteria staff who work so hard to make our workplace feel like a home away from home. The IT department, our library and our research service do a magnificent job.

Finally, I thank the cleaning and maintenance staff here at the oldest Parliament in Australia. The work those staff members provide is a critical element in the functioning of this institution and I am so grateful for their efforts and professionalism. It is because of these efforts that we have a clean, safe and comfortable workplace. But, sadly, as I stand here in this House, amongst my colleagues, rightfully praising the work of every New South Wales Parliament staff member, I cannot help but be reminded of this Government's decision to bring into question the rights of our cleaners. I put it to the Government that it should back our cleaners. If the Government truly supports workers, the Government will ensure that our cleaners have a job—and not just the cleaners in Parliament House but the 7,000 cleaners in New South Wales who work in government buildings. To praise the work of every individual within this House would be a battle and I apologise if I have left anybody out. I acknowledge that I am both privileged and honoured to work in the nation's oldest Parliament and I am grateful to so many of my fellow workers. Before I finish, I want to thank my family: my daughter, Sophie; my son, Joseph; my partner, Garry; and my brother, Sean. Without their support it would be so hard to do this job.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:58):** I wish a merry Christmas to everyone. Christmas is a special and joyous time of the year. It is a time for family and friends and a time when we think about the year that has gone and prepare for the year to come. There is nothing better than spending that time with our family and friends. We should remember that it is also a time when things can happen, so I wish everybody the very best for Christmas and for them to have a safe and healthy Christmas and new year period. Mr Temporary Speaker and member for Tweed—100 per cent for the Tweed—I wish you and yours a merry Christmas. I also appreciate the support I have received from both Liberal and Labor members in this House. Although we are adversarial in the Chamber, we can be civil and polite and, in some cases, have friendships outside of the Chamber.

We all have family and this is a time when we think about our families and about those who mean so much in our lives. I thank my colleagues in The Nationals. I thank in particular John Barilaro and Deanna. John is a great champion for regional New South Wales. I also mention the Deputy Speaker and Lion Thomas George. I wish him and Deb well for Christmas. I also wish the Premier well for Christmas. She does a fantastic job. I had the pleasure of having her visit my electorate a few weeks ago. The people in the Myall Lakes electorate appreciate a Premier who is so down to earth. She is well liked and appreciated for the way she conducts herself and the way in which she is able to mix with people. The crowds there fell in love with her.

I wish the very best to the Speaker in her role. We all know how hard it can be for her during question time, but her conduct and that of her staff in Parliament is outstanding. I thank all the staff in Parliament for what they do and the way they are able to help this place function and make it so much easier for us as members. I thank the Clerk, Helen Minnican, Les Gönye and all the staff. I thank Tas and Stuart in accounts and their staff for what they do. I pay tribute to the member for Camden. He said earlier that he carries me. Well, if you look at *Hansard* from 12 months ago, for a bloke who cannot count and does not know the alphabet, I have been carrying him all year. Nothing has changed. On the other side of the House, I thank Nick Lulich and the Whips for the Labor Party. I also do work for them. They cannot count either, so I do that for them as well. I also thank Mel Gibbons, the Deputy Government Whip. I wish them all a very merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year.

I thank the Myall Lakes community for the trust they have placed in me and the honour and privilege of serving them. I listen to what they say and then I bring their point of view to Parliament. Something the views I bring may not necessarily accord with the way I have been brought up. But it is not about Steve Bromhead; it is about my electorate and the people I represent. I have voted on bills before the House in accordance with their wishes and I would have voted done so on bills that did not reach this House because they were defeated in the other place. I thank my family, including my wife, Sue; our children Amanda and Jacob and their child, Ruby, in

Spain; Nicole and her husband, Bryce, and their children, Lachlan, Hamish and Angus; Trent and Amy and their son, Aiden; our daughter Caroline; our son Stuart and his partner, Belle, and their child, Summer; Kathryn and Luke who have just had their son, Patrick; and our daughter Victoria and her child, Olivia. I wish them all the best for Christmas and I look forward to seeing most of them during the Christmas break.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (17:03):** A Christmas felicitations speech is probably the most pleasant of the speeches members of Parliament get to make in this place during the year. In the seven years I have been in this House I have offered Christmas felicitations not only to my electorate but also to those who work with us. The Premier, Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have acknowledged the work of those who spend so much time in this building to make our lives easier. Their work often goes unrecognised. For me, Christmas is a very important part of the year not just because it is the greatest celebration in the Christian calendar but also because it is an opportunity for all of those in leadership positions to reflect on what makes this country great and what we should be thankful for, while acknowledging milestones that have occurred during the year.

As a Minister and the member for Baulkham Hills, this is a special and heartfelt opportunity to thank those who support me in both those capacities. I start by thanking my chief of staff, Katherine Danks, who is often acknowledged by my parliamentary colleagues as being the woman who balances me. I do not understand that observation because I think I take a fair and appropriate approach to all my parliamentary duties. I thank my Deputy Chief of Staff, Tanya Raffouls, who this year accompanied me, the member for Miranda and the member for Rockdale to Beersheba. Tanya's knowledge of Arabic helped to keep me out of trouble. The visit gave us an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices that have been made over the last 100 years. I thank Shae McLaughlin, one of my assistant advisers, as well as Patricia Wild and Cheree Offner, my departmental liaison officers. I thank Mitchell Clout for also attempting to balance me—although on occasions he provides me with advice that I agree with, which may mean he is not exactly on the money when it comes to policy. I thank Vincent So and Karl Taylor, my driver.

I thank Aron Mola, who joined my electorate office staff this year, replacing the great Keith Topolski who spent seven years on my staff from my preselection until recently. I wish Keith the very best as he starts a new life in Canada and I thank Aron for choosing Team Elliott as his future career. I thank Michelle Byrne, who is leaving my staff as an electorate secretary and going to the Gold Coast. I do not know why anyone would want to live there. I thank our receptionist, Alice Collins, who always has a smile on her face. I thank my private secretary, Kylie Irwin, who has provided me with great support this year. She replaced my former secretary Rachel Taylor, who left at the beginning of this year after 12 years service. I thank Lucinda Watson, my adviser on counterterrorism, and Leigh van den Broeke, the son of Mrs van den Broeke, my press secretary who has taught me my trade. When he started with me, I reminded him that the worst job in the world is to be the press secretary to a former press secretary. If Leigh had been press secretary to Peter Collins and John Howard in the 1990s both of them would have had long and enduring careers.

As Minister for Veterans Affairs, I pause and reflect on the 100,000 Australians who have died in theatres of war since 1885, when Australia lost its first soldier in the Sudan confrontation. We must not forget that the loss of those 100,000 Australians has affected 100,000 families who have spent multiple Christmases without a loved one. As a former serviceman, I know how hard it is to be away from family at this time of the year. If we do anything over the course of this period, we should reflect on the sacrifice, the courage and the beauty of service to one's fellow man by members of the Australian Defence Force. As Minister for Correctional Services, I remind everybody of the service of the officers working in prisons over the course of the Christmas period, when we are at home tucking into the turkey. They keep our communities safe. I also remind everybody of the inmates of our correctional facilities. For them, we hope that next year will be one of rehabilitation and thinking about how they can make a positive contribution to society. I note that Jesus himself was a prisoner in the hours leading up to his crucifixion. I thank the House for the opportunity to contribute to season felicitations and I wish everybody in my electorate and in this building a very merry Christmas.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:08):** At the end the parliamentary year I recognise all the wonderful things that occurred throughout 2017. It is not possible to mention them all, but I will make a start. This year was many things but it was never dull. We started the year with one Premier and we ended the year with another. I recognise every person on this side of the House who contributed to that occurring. They are hardworking Labor members who have worked day in and day out to hold the Government accountable. In my electorate Mr Scot MacDonald works to make me a better member every single day of the year. It would be cruisy without his constant sniping.

Our leader, Luke Foley, and his deputy, Michael Daley, have shown true leadership throughout the year and it has been a great year for the True Believers. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve on the front bench of this great Australian Labor Party. It boasts the largest contingent of women on a front bench in any

Opposition or Government in the State's history. In Maitland we have a lot to be thankful for, including a new mayor, Loretta Baker. Since 1863 no other woman has served our city in this role. We worked very hard towards that goal and achieved it in less than 10 years. It is a testament to the quality of the candidate. Ms Baker has done a wonderful job in the short time since donning the mayoral chains. I look forward to working with her.

I congratulate new councillors Ben Whiting, Robert Aitchison, Henry Meskauskas and Donald Ferris. I congratulate all new councillors and note the huge increase in women councillors across all parties. Maitland is the fastest-growing city in New South Wales outside of Sydney. I work with my community to ensure that the Government is providing the services it desperately needs. Preparatory works have commenced at the long-awaited hospital. There are three mobility access lifts being installed at Victoria Street Station. We will always want more infrastructure but I do say a small and quick thank you before the Government becomes complacent in that space. I have enjoyed engaging with the community.

The first female Premier of this State and candidate for Bennelong, Kristina Keneally, visited Maitland to speak to the community and tell her story. It was a wonderful evening. As well as the fans she is making in Bennelong, she now has fans in Maitland. As a convener of the New South Wales branch of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians [CWP], I have been privileged to be involved in a number of initiatives and wins for female members of Parliament and staff during the past 12 months. The opening of the family room and the Millicent Preston-Stanley Room were initiatives of women working across party lines. I am passionate about increasing the number of women in this place.

In my capacity as shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and shadow Minister for Small Business, I have visited communities across the State from Cooma to Murwillumbah, Broken Hill, Orange, Dubbo, Albury and all points in between. I have heard from small business owners about what we can do to make their lives easier. I have heard from social workers and victims and survivors at domestic violence refuges who tell me their stories. These visits are valuable and I cherish the opportunity it gives me as a member of Parliament to keep in touch with the community.

Personally, I have had a gap year—my daughter is in Germany on exchange. I am looking forward to her coming home in January and hopefully taking over the cooking from my husband. My son, Josh, has just finished his Higher School Certificate and I am proud of him for his hard work and dedication throughout the year. My husband, Robert, supports me in all the things I do. I am lucky to have such a great family and I thank them and look forward to spending time with them over the break. I thank my office staff: Jordan O'Brien, Race Barstow and Mellissa Lannen. I am grateful to have my chief of staff, Christine Boyd. She is a treasure.

I thank all my colleagues in this place. We have had a great year. I thank the staff of the Leader of the Opposition's office: Chloe Bennett, Chris Willis, Maegen Sykes, Lizzie Arnold, Bron Matherson, Julian Lee, Michael Samaras and Michael Buckland for their hard work. I thank Colleen Symington for the work she does. I thank the Clerk, Helen Minnican, and David Blunt, the Clerk in the other place. I thank Tom Isaksen for the work done for the CWP. I thank the cleaners, catering staff and security staff. They work long days and nights and do all they can to help us. I wish you all a happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:14):** This time last year I had the great privilege of visiting Israel and Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus. At that time I had no idea that this year I would be standing in this place. It has been a wonderful year for me—a challenging year at times. But every day I think about the wonderful opportunity I have to represent my community, the great fortune I have to represent the people of North Shore to try to make a difference in this State for my community. At Christmas time it is always important for us to reflect on what we have, what support we can give to others and thank those people who have made such a difference.

As this year has been such a big year, I wish to thank a number of people. In particular, I thank the Premier, who has given me close personal friendship, support and guidance. I thank the Deputy Premier and all The Nationals and Liberal Party members who collectively helped me during the by-election. I thank the Speaker, Shelley Hancock, and her staff, particularly her chief of staff, Luke Sikora. Her entire staff give me great support throughout the year, including Jane, Bryce and Brigid. I thank the Government Whips, Chris Patterson and Melanie Gibbons, and their staff, particularly Becky. They have taught me a lot in my short time here and I best endeavour to meet their diktats. I thank the Ministers and colleagues who have been supportive of me during my journey to this place and since becoming a member. We work closely trying to advocate for the interests of my community and deliver for the people of North Shore.

I thank the Clerk, attendants and committee staff, who are helping me in my membership of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services, my first committee. I thank all the staff in Parliament House who feed me—perhaps too well on occasion—and those who ensure that our offices and facilities are clean. As a new member, Christmas felicitations is my first opportunity to thank those who helped me become a member and serve my community. I thank Marilyn Cameron, Ros Rigby, Lachlan Finch, Will Spence, Brent Marshall,

Janelle Wilkinson, Greg Westenberg and Kim Preston-Hiney for supporting me along the journey so far this year. I thank those in the Premier's Office and Ministers' offices who have given me great guidance, including Sarah Cruickshank, Frank Burton, Matt Crocker, and Alicia McCumstie

I thank also my conference executives in the Liberal Party. The journey here requires our community to support us, to gives us their trust and confidence. I would not have had that opportunity had I not been the Liberal candidate for North Shore. My local branches and branch members are incredibly important in their support, guidance, advice and ongoing commitment to ensuring that we keep the seat of North Shore in Liberal hands and deliver for the community. I acknowledge my conference's executive, president Simon Moore, vice presidents Neville Mitchell and Val Sinclair, secretary Marilyn Cameron and treasurer Lisette Walsh.

I acknowledge too the presidents of all local branches in the Liberal Party. They include Andrew Goodsell, David Maclean, Ben Taylor, Ross Freeman, Simon Moore, Marilyn Cameron, Ted Jontec, Geoff Underwood, Lisette Walsh and James O'Neill. All these branches continue to give me active support in campaigning, fundraising and advice, which as I new member I appreciate. I thank the Liberal Party secretariat. I do not want to dwell too much about being elected by way of a by-election but it was a difficult challenge for the party. Indeed, it is going through a similar challenge with the current Federal by-election. I thank Chris Stone of the secretariat, who does such a great job in supporting us. I thank also party president Kent Johns for all his work.

At the end of the day, we would not be anything without our families. I thank, in particular, my husband, Sam Ison. The member for Oatley knows very well that Sam is a wonderful supporter of me and the Liberal Party. It really is a team journey as we try to have two-for-one support for the North Shore community. He walks alongside me every day in everything I try to achieve for the community; he is constantly supportive. I thank the rest of my family—my mum, my sisters and their husbands, my nieces and nephew, who are very giving and forgiving of the lack of time I spend with them now as I seek to be a good member of Parliament. I thank them for their constant love and support. At Christmas time I think family is the most important thing to reflect upon. I thank the broader community for working with me as I get to know their concerns, needs and work to advocate on their behalf. Last of all, this Christmas I hope we can all spare a thought for those who are in need, those who are less fortunate and who deserve our support at this time. I say a prayer for those who need our support. Merry Christmas to everybody in the House, in my electorate, in the Liberal Party and across the community.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:19):** I have always believed that a team makes any workplace much better. There are 93 members in this place who make important decisions about the way our State is run. It is not only the 93 members but also the incredible team of people who make the Parliament of New South Wales work properly. I am happy that a couple of my good friends are in the Chamber—the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Rockdale. This is the first time I have contributed to debate on Christmas felicitations. I know Steve Kamper is keen on felicitations because he has been talking about them non-stop. I am sure he knows how to spell "felicitations".

**Mr Mark Coure:** He loves Christmas.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** He does love Christmas. Steve loves everything and everyone loves Steve. I acknowledge the Temporary Speaker, the member for Shellharbour. It is always important to thank people. Felicitations is about giving thanks, especially at festive times, but the last sitting day makes it especially important to offer our thanks. It has been another big parliamentary year. We skirmish over a lot of issues but, as I have said many times, the most important thing is that we are all here to do the best we can to make our society better. Regardless of our ideological beliefs, we are all here to do the best for our communities. I could not achieve what I do without my outstanding electoral team. We have a great relationship and they always keep me on track. We support each other through the great times as well as the difficult times. We run our office with dignity, professionalism, good grace, heaps of laughs, and lots of food. The local community expects sincerity from us. We often talk about whether we are doing our job and whether we made a difference. Did we do everything we could for the people who walked through our doors? In many cases we are their last resort so we cannot let them walk out the door without trying to do everything possible to help them.

I acknowledge my team. They make everything possible and I appreciate their hard work. I thank Cathy Callaghan, the team captain. People who know Cathy would be aware that she is the real boss. I thank Alexandra Lewis who has joined me since day one as a volunteer, Taghred Kabalan and Joumana Al Hannoui. I have to be careful not to talk them up too much because I know a large audience is tuning in and I do not want anyone to poach my staff, who make up the best electorate office team in the State. I thank my Labor colleagues, the Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the entire caucus. Members on this side of the Chamber believe in a fair and more equitable society. I know the 2019 election will be fought on those grounds. I acknowledge members from all parties, including members on the crossbenches. They are doing what they can to advocate for their respective communities. I offer my best to my parliamentary sparring partner for this year,



education Minister Rob Stokes, and his family. We often partake in battles, as people would expect, but I appreciate it is always done with respect and dignity, as was demonstrated recently when we were both dealing with a tragic incident.

There is a lot to be said about the way Parliament works and the relationships in Parliament. It is okay to have battles over ideas but we must always ensure that personal respect and dignity are maintained. I also thank my team. I know Colleen is watching and I am looking straight at her through the camera. Colleen is the absolute best. I thank her for being understanding and for the constant text message reminders. I thank her for keeping Nick Lalich, our Whip, in shape and for looking after Anna Watson. We could not do what we do without Colleen. I acknowledge the people who do not always get acknowledged such as Urma, the cleaning lady on our level. I catch up with her every now and then. She works with pride and passion and gives her best to the job. She is always smiling and I am grateful for her efforts.

I thank the Clerks, led by Helen and Les, who are always helpful. I thank the Table attendants for not getting too upset when I stuff things up. They are always very kind, even when I hand up handwritten notices of motion in the worst possible handwriting. Lynne Vitale is leaving. She is an outstanding person. Everyone who works in Parliament makes us feel good about being here. I again apologise to the Hansard team for my handwriting. I thank them for making sense of the things that I say. They correct my grammar on occasion and make me sound really good. A couple of hours after the House has adjourned they are still working away. They do an excellent job in capturing what is said. Every now and then members say important stuff and we need the people reporting it to do the job properly.

I thank the Serjeant-at-Arms, Cheryl Samuels, and the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, Ian Delahunty, for many things but especially for those moments when they are gentle when I am asked to leave the Chamber. They are very nice about it, and I appreciate that. I do not know whether I should thank or apologise to the information technology team, especially Andrew and his team. I apologise for always asking really dumb questions and I appreciate their help. I thank the special constables, all corporate officers, and the catering, facilities, human resources and accounting staff. There are only three people here with big egos and big personalities. However, it is the unsung heroes who make us look better than we are, and I value and appreciate that.

I wish everybody the very best for the festive season. Everyone will tell us to spend time with loved ones, who are our rocks when things are difficult. We sacrifice our time with them to do the things we must for our constituents. We should also take the time to think about those less fortunate than us and do whatever we can to help them. Even on our toughest day, there are still people who are facing greater challenges and we must remember that. I thank everyone in this place, the members and the staff. The work that we do is important and this State needs us to do our very best. We can do that only when we all work as a team. I wish everyone a merry Christmas. I hope you have a wonderful break and see you again in 2018.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:25):** I appreciate this opportunity to acknowledge and thank those individuals and groups who deserve mention today. These Christmas felicitations mark the end of my first year in this place following my election in November last year. My anniversary was 12 months on Tuesday. In my former workplace I was involved in policing untamed streets and prosecuting the many criminals who inhabited those places. That adversarial environment was normal for a police officer, and I now find comfort in the familiarity of the verbal combat in this place.

I thank those members from both sides of politics who took the time to assist me in my transition as a member of Parliament. I came into this place on my own and I do not have the privilege of having colleagues in this House. It has been a learning process, but many members—too many to mention—have helped me to develop and to learn the ropes, and I thank them for that. I make special mention of Greg Piper, a fellow member of the crossbench, who has been of great assistance to me in the time that I have been here. I also thank the other members of the crossbench.

I thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Despite the occasional hostility in this place, members have been friendly and professional in their dealings with me, and I thank them for that. I also thank Madam Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Assistant Speakers for their assistance and patience. I thank the parliamentary staff—the Clerks, the Hansard team, those in the Table Office staff, the Speaker's staff, the Parliamentary Library service, the catering team, the cleaners and the special constables, who work here 24/7 to ensure our security. They should be acknowledged and thanked for their fine work.

I also thank my colleagues in the other place from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the Hon. Robert Brown and the Hon. Robert Borsak, and their team of hardworking staff—Filip Despotovski, Rob Despotovski, John Townsend, Stephen Larson, and Senada Bjelic—for their unwavering loyalty and steadfast support of me. I thank my electorate office staff—senior electoral officer Brett Cook, Rebecca Hawkins and

Will Mortimer—for their outstanding work. Being new to this role, they perform beyond my expectations. Brett is an excellent speech writer and Rebecca and Will, who perform duties in my electorate office, face many relentless telephone calls and counter inquiries on a daily basis. They have a cheery disposition day in, day out despite the significant and constant workload they face. I also thank the people of the electorate of Orange for placing their faith in me last year to be their State's political steward and gatekeeper both there and in this place where I will continue to be vigilant and advocate for them, always keeping their best interests at heart.

I thank my family, my wife, Nadia, and my five boys—Daniel, James, Peter, Mathew and Sean—who endure my absence from home during the 18 weeks that we sit in Sydney. Many regional members of Parliament know the impost that places on their family. I appreciate my family's understanding of the long absences, sometimes absences on birthdays, other special days or parent and teacher nights at school. We would all like to attend them but we cannot. I thank them for their unwavering support and understanding. Finally, I thank everybody here today and wish them all a very merry Christmas and a happy, safe and prosperous new year. I ask those who are travelling to be careful on the roads. If they are going overseas, I urge them to take care. I wish them all the best. It can be a busy time of the year on the roads and I would like to see everybody back here in 2018. I wish everyone here and their families a very merry, happy and prosperous Christmas.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:31):** I take this opportunity to congratulate both sides of the House on making it through another year in the New South Wales Parliament. I wish all members and their families a happy, safe and joyful Christmas and a wonderful start to the New Year, 2018. I thank the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers for their service and for ensuring that our work in Parliament is done efficiently, productively and fairly. I do not envy their role. It is tiring and often difficult when the House does not come to order, which, as we all know is quite a frequent occurrence. I thank them kindly for their patience. May their brief holiday break be restful and rejuvenating. I also thank the Government and Opposition Whips and Deputy Whips for their service and wish them a merry and safe Christmas.

I thank the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, for her leadership, vision, support and friendship in 2017. It meant a great deal to me and my electorate that her first visit as Premier was to Hurstville, in the St George area. The Premier has worked tirelessly this year to deliver some outstanding results for New South Wales across many key areas including transport, infrastructure, education and health, to name a few. It has been an exciting year personally with so much to celebrate and be thankful for. We have seen the opening of stage two of the redevelopment of St George Hospital. We have announced a commuter car park in Beverly Hills. Narwee Station was recently upgraded and a lift was installed, with the whole project being under budget and far ahead of schedule.

I take this opportunity to congratulate and extend my gratitude to all Government frontbench members and their staff for their work over this past year and for making the projects that I mentioned earlier a reality. I count it as an honour and privilege to work with them to improve the lives of many in my electorate, whether through Health or Transport or other portfolios. The massive amount of infrastructure being built and the transport systems being upgraded across our State, and especially so in my electorate, is due to their vision and their desire to provide the best possible services for residents.

I thank Treasurer Dominic Perrottet for his commitment to ensuring that New South Wales is number one again and for funding important projects in my electorate, in Sydney and across New South Wales. I extend a special thanks to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Hon. Andrew Constance. It has been a real honour to work as his Parliamentary Secretary since January this year and I look forward to what next year has to bring. I admire your leadership and I deeply appreciate all the work that you do. I wish you and your family a joyful and peaceful Christmas season.

I cannot overlook the work done this year by the Minister for Sport, Stuart Ayres, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Matt Kean, the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, and the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts, Don Harwin, in the other place. They and their office staff have been invaluable and I wish each and every one of them a festive and safe holiday break. It has been a privilege to work with Minister for Health and Medical Research Brad Hazzard to strengthen medical practices and health in the St George area. I thank him for all he has done for the electorate of Oatley and in particular for St George Hospital.

Whichever side of the political spectrum we are on and wherever our political views lie, I pay special tribute to members from across the St George area and adjoining areas: the member for Kogarah, the member for Rockdale and the member for Lakemba. I also thank my parliamentary colleagues in the shire: the member for Cronulla, the member for Miranda, the member for Heathcote and the member for Holsworthy. I acknowledge the people behind the scenes who work tirelessly to host visitors in this place, keep our facilities secure and ensure parliamentary functions are in order. My sincere thanks go to the Legislative Assembly attendants, the front desk staff, the information technology staff, security and those who work in the cafeteria who are always so

accommodating. Although we probably do not express our gratitude as often as we should, I extend my appreciation on behalf of all parliamentary staff and members for their work.

I cannot conclude my brief speech without thanking the staff in my electorate office—Team Coure—Shane Kocass, Astrid von Hackewitz, Chris Ashton and Diandra Corallo for coming on this journey with me and for being exceptional young people who work with constituents in my electorate. I thank the people of Oatley for their ongoing support and advice. I will never take for granted the responsibility they have given me and I will do my best every day to represent them. For those who sit in this House, we owe much to our families, who often come second to the demands of the job. I wish the husbands, wives, partners, children and families of all the members of this Chamber and the other place the very best. We are lucky to have them in our lives and we appreciate all that they do for us. On a personal note, I acknowledge my wife, Adla, and our son, James, for their love and the joy they bring. They are my greatest motivation.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:37):** I feel privileged to be here for another year to wish everybody in this House a merry Christmas once again. As my dear friend Jihad Dib stated, I have an enormous appreciation for Christmas felicitations. I thank him for his friendship and support throughout the year. I also thank Mark Coure, my neighbouring member of Parliament in Oatley, for his kind words. I wish him the very best for Christmas this year. I thank the many parliamentary staff who work so hard to facilitate the business of this Chamber: the Hansard staff, Clerks, librarians, front desk, catering staff, bar staff and the staff of Ministers and members. I thank the cleaning staff who are here long before we arrive and well after we leave. They have to clean up the mess of Jihad Dib's room and mine. I thank them so much. I feel lucky to work alongside such a dedicated group of people.

I give special thanks to my office staff: George, Michael, our new George, and Ed, who worked so hard throughout the year. I appreciate what they do and sometimes I do not say it enough. I thank the people of Rockdale for their ongoing support and for trusting me to serve them in this place. I thank the mayor of Bayside Council, Bill Saravinovski, and his fellow councillors and council staff for their service this year. It is great to have elected representation back on the local scene. I thank all of my local colleagues on this side of the House who have provided such great support and friendship throughout the year. I particularly thank our leadership team: the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, the deputy leader, Michael Daley, the Opposition Whip, Nick Lalich—good old Nick—and the Deputy Opposition Whip—our favourite—Anna Watson. All the work you do to keep us on track is greatly appreciated.

A very special thanks to Colleen Symington, who keeps us on track all year. I send my love to Colleen. I also thank the shadow Ministers and members on our side who keep up the good fight for a better New South Wales. I also wish to thank those opposite. Although our politics may differ, at the end of the day we are all here because we want to make our State a better place. In particular I thank the members of the Executive who have helped me on a range of local issues in my electorate of Rockdale throughout the year. I appreciate that when it comes to my constituents I can usually get a fair hearing and on many occasions have been able to get the Government to come to the table to help me deliver for the people I represent.

I am thankful in particular for the work that has been done in expanding Kyeemagh Infants School to a K-6 school thanks to Minister Stokes. Further, the maintenance of historic Primrose House as a landmark of Southern Sydney and its imminent opening as a new campus of The Scots College would not have happened without the then Minister and now Treasurer Dominic Perrottet listening to our community campaign. I thank the other Ministers for the many other little things they have done over the past 12 months which have supported the people I represent. They may be only little things, but they mean a lot of to the people of my community. When we come back to this place in 2018 we will be a year out from the next State election, and, sadly, I will have to stop being so kind to those opposite. There will be no more Mr Nice Guy. I will keep the good going for the rest of today. Although I do appreciate the support, all good things must come to an end. With that being said, I thank the Speaker, Shelley; the Deputy Speaker, my trusted friend from up north, Thomas; and all the temporary speakers for their work throughout the year. They keep us in line, occasionally even fairly.

I acknowledge the many people in this State who are doing it tough this Christmas. Christmas can be an incredibly tough time when things are not going well. Christmas is a timely reminder that we should always be thinking about those who are in need when we vote on legislation in this place. Finally, I thank my family, in particular my wife, Magdalene. We are currently going through renovations and I am confident that having survived 32 years of marriage we can live through six months of renovations, if only just. I thank my children, Tina, Eleni, Paul, Nick and Chris; their partners; and my grandchildren, Ross, Dean, Stevie and Stavros and the newest additions to the Kamper clan, Keanu and Steve. That makes six grandsons. Magda and I still do not have any granddaughters, but with five children between the ages of 22 and 32 there is always hope for next year. This has been a great year for me and my family. I have felt incredibly honoured to serve the people of Rockdale for another year. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a brilliant holiday season. God bless.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:42):** I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and happy New Year. I thank all of the staff who make this Parliament work, including those in Hansard, the Clerks, the Serjeant-at-Arms, the special constables, the cleaners, maintenance staff, everyone in catering, the Department of Parliamentary Services staff, and the Legislative Assembly staff. They all work together to make this House work and make a fine contribution to the people of New South Wales. I acknowledge my colleagues in this House and in the upper House:—David, Dawn, Jeremy, Justin, and Mehreen—and all of their staff, who are generous with their time and expertise and who provide information to my lower House colleagues and me.

I thank my colleagues the member for Newtown, Jenny Leong, and the member for Ballina, Tamara Smith. When I was first involved with The Greens we thought getting elected to Parliament at all would be miraculous but I am now joined in this House by two other colleagues. It has been a delight to work with them. I have been really impressed by everyone's tenacity, skills and capacity. It is a great opportunity to look back on the fantastic year and know that there are so many more opportunities to come. I take the opportunity to thank my staff—Adam Taylor, Gemma Pitcher, Sharon Butt, Monika Baumann and Parissa Zand—all of whom worked so diligently to support the people in my community. I also acknowledge the staff of Tamara's office: Ria Keenan, Camille Keenan, Patrick Flannagan, Kim Simpson, Bec Talbot, Holly Bueller and Erin Copeland. I acknowledge the staff of Jenny's office: Lydia Smithers, Cathy Peters, Mithra Cox, Melissa Brooks and Dan Buhagiar. All these people put in an incredible amount of time, and I am sure all members will agree that our electoral staff do an amazing job.

I thank all the members of the House—Government, Opposition and crossbench. We often talk about two sides, but actually there are lots of sides in this Parliament. I particularly thank my fellow members of the crossbench and in particular Alex Greenwich, the member for Sydney, and Greg Piper, the member for Lake Macquarie, both of whom are compassionate and active, and make valuable contributions with the three Greens members. We are very proud of our work together. I thank all of those who work in the public service of this State, whether they be teachers or nurses or those who work in policy. No matter at what level they work, all of those people contribute to making our State a very special place and one of the best places in the world to live.

I also thank all of those who volunteer in my community and around the State. Volunteering is the backbone of any strong community. I thank Martin Brown, Mary Blackwood, Sandra Langtree, Paul Boundy, Lindsay Hardingham, Conrad Walters and Derek Bolton, who are just a few of those who support the work of my office to make sure we can function in a proactive and positive way. I thank all those who work within The Greens NSW or its constituent member groups. All of those groups meet about every six weeks to form our peak decision-making body, which is attended by several hundred members from all over the State, to decide on the policies. As members of The Greens, we are directed by our membership and by that group. I thank them for their work. I thank the executive officer, Lesa de Leau, and the convener of The Greens, Debbie Gibson.

Members have reflected on the fact that it is important for us to always appreciate the support we have in our local communities. I thank all of the voters and people in the community who supported me and The Greens throughout New South Wales. In many areas it is difficult for us to get not only elected members but also the type of vote we would like. But people stand in elections because they believe that we can make a difference and we deserve a better State. I thank all of those people. In fact, I thank those from all parties who stand in electorates where they know they will not win but they want to fly the flag for their party and their values. That is something that we should respect in our democracy.

I acknowledge Rebecca Cartwright in the Government Whip's Office and Chris Patterson, both of whom have been very helpful. They are very open when we talk to them about our participation. It is hard when you are a small party—although it is a little better now that we have three members—to make sure that you are included in the processes of this place. I thank them for their openness and respect for our role in Parliament. I conclude by thanking everyone in the Parliament for their service to this State and acknowledge we have just one more year until the election. I look forward to that with great relish to make sure we can help improve the lives of not only the people of New South Wales but also the environment of this State and its future generations.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:47:3):** I am glad that the member for Shellharbour is in the chair this evening. I have really enjoyed sitting next to her on the Opposition bench.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson):** And I you.

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** Ho, ho, ho and a fabulous festive season to all! Thank you to Jamie Parker and The Greens, to all of our crossbenchers and especially to Phil Donato and Greg Piper who have shared the hotel with us out-of-towners during the session. I give a massive thank you to all the staff in the Parliament who have been so welcoming as I entered this place as the new member for Gosford. Thanks to the library staff who from day one have assisted in delivering information much faster than the 35 days supported by the Government. I also thank them for the fabulous stash of great non-fiction books, which I have found recently, since I have no time to

visit the Gosford library and need something to read in the evening to empty my brain of my parliamentary responsibilities to the people of Gosford.

Thank you also to the super friendly staff of Café Quorum, who have kept us fed and caffeinated day in and day out. I thank you especially on behalf of the great team from the Central Coast, including David Harris, who joins them for breakfast every Wednesday morning. Thanks also to Charlotte, Sandra, Jackie and the rest of the team for the fabulously friendly service during our lunches, evenings and special functions across the Parliament when we are trapped in here for what seems like days and hours on end. Yum! Thank you to the security staff and our super friendly special constables for their smiles and greetings to us, as we come and go. I thank them also for unlocking our offices at those times when keys or passes are left behind. I send much love and gratitude to the cleaners in Parliament House. We appreciate your early morning greetings. We love our clean spaces and I enjoy visiting your HQ on level 5 for a chat. Please know that we stand by you and all the public sector cleaners across New South Wales in support of a fair workforce which does a very important job in our schools and workplaces.

To the Clerks, the Serjeant-at-Arms and the people who take our questions, our tedium and our petitions and the team in the Table Office, I thank you so much. The human resources and payroll office is somewhere on the upper floors and I thank the people there for keeping this place ticking along. I say to the IT desk, "I wish you were open at 6.30 a.m.!" No, I don't—you give me two extra hours of free time without the computer. I thank the IT people for planning for the future and the ongoing solving of all our information and technology hiccups. I turn now to the staff who have the gorgeous heritage offices at the front of the building, our Hansard staff. I admire my colleagues who come into the Chamber with three ideas scrawled on a note pad and then speak like wildfire with passion for minutes on end. I thank the Hansard staff for putting these ideas on the record for ever more. I thank the front desk staff and our attendants, especially Danny, whose super friendly smiling face and supply of tissues when things move me to tears is always appreciated. I would also like to thank—in their absence, at the moment—the people who contribute to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, for the opportunities offered to all of us to improve the lives of people living in democracies throughout the Commonwealth.

I send Christmas wishes, especially, to all of our electoral office staff. I thank the staff in my Gosford office. I cannot say thank you enough to the boss of my office, Richard Mehrtens, for the work he does to keep this very new politician in line and on track. Thank you, Richard; I know you might be somewhere drinking champagne. I also thank Jessie and Brodie, who are little more than rookies themselves, and continue confidently to keep the Gosford office kicking goals during our parliamentary commitments. Thanks, also, to Keenan, and now to Emma, who has downsized her workload to work part-time so that she can spend more time with her children and with us. She brings years of expertise to the office at Gosford.

What a great time we have at work, both in the electorate office and here in outer space—I mean, in Parliament. Thanks to our fearless leader Luke Foley, Michael Daley, Chris and Popple, and to Lizzy, Megan and Chloe and the team in the leader's office. Wow, you guys continue to amaze me. I offer a huge thankyou to our shadow Ministers and my Labor colleagues—the whole Labor team who have joined me in the Gosford electorate office this year and have continued with their advice here in Parliament. Their wisdom, teaching and support have been invaluable and appreciated. I send a special shout out to Nick—or is it Colleen, or is it both of them?—who keep us on track.

On behalf of people with disabilities across New South Wales I thank the staff here in Parliament for all the work they have done and will continue to do to make this place and our electorate offices accessible and inclusive to all. As legislators we represent, lead and make decisions on behalf of the people of New South Wales. It is so very important that we make no compromise at all in delivering all aspects of equitable access to our built, technological and socially inclusive places of work. In closing, I would like to thank all the teachers across New South Wales for the amazing work they do day in and day out to support and educate our diverse student population of New South Wales. Teaching, like politics, is a relentless job with great responsibility which requires incredible patience and passion. I miss teaching. I miss my colleagues and I miss my students, but most of all today I miss the fact that the last day of school is the last day of school.

Finally, I wish everyone in this Chamber a fabulous break—although I am yet to believe that that break will happen—and a time of joy and relaxation with family and friends. I have had an absolute ball in here, enjoying the ferocious theatre in the bear pit, the performance battles, the joviality across the Chamber and the support of parliamentary colleagues outside the Chamber and beyond. A heartfelt Chrissie wish to the people of Gosford. We live in the best electorate of New South Wales. I have loved my first eight months of working for you and I look forward to so much more. To my hubby, Mark, my partner, I say: You are the absolute best. Thank you. Fabulous festive greetings to you all. Yay!

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:53):** I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and all the best for the seasonal activities ahead. I take this opportunity to acknowledge those who will not be getting a holiday this

Christmas, such as our emergency service personnel. I am going away this Christmas. Indeed, this will be the first Christmas in 10 years that I have not done a patrol on Christmas Day. Volunteer lifesavers will be working on Christmas Day and so will many others, for example, volunteers in our hospital system. We acknowledge and thank all volunteers for the important work they do in serving our communities. We should also be thinking about those who will be doing it tough this Christmas. This morning I was made aware of a friend who last weekend became a victim of domestic violence. She and her children have had to leave their home. At this time of year, whilst many of us are out celebrating, it can be very difficult time for others—victims of domestic violence, the homeless and people with no family who feel very alone. I wish all those people a very merry Christmas. I hope they will find solace and help in our communities.

As a regional member of Parliament, when the House is sitting I spend a lot of time away from home and, to a certain extent, the staff at Parliament House then become my family. Happily, there are many friendly people on the parliamentary staff. I acknowledge them all and thank them for the work they do in supporting us, but I can only mention a few specifically. I begin by mentioning Danny Heldal, Hayley Jarrett and Chris Papadopoulos for their work in this Chamber. Each sitting day I enjoy coming into the Chamber shortly before question time to listen to Peter Tuziak. Peter used to be a school teacher. His introduction to the school students is always entertaining, even though he tells them not to laugh at our bad jokes. Ian Delahunty is a great guy. He has done a wonderful job acting as the Serjeant-at-Arms. In particular, I love his pirate welcome. I also thank April Lowndes, Monica Parsotam and Lynne Vitale, who is leaving us today. They are all friendly and look after us, which members particularly appreciate when we are away from our families.

I thank Colleen Michael; Zac Harrison; Judie Weber; Lesley Downey; Jake Allen, who has now moved on; Ann Bokkerink; and Daniel Turner in my electorate office. They do such a good job that people do not know I am away from the office. They are great with social media and addressing the needs of the constituents of Wyong. That takes a lot of work. I thank Pam Payne, the cleaner at my electorate office, and Irma, the cleaner on level 10 here at Parliament House. Anyone who looks at my desk will see that I am not one of the cleanest people in the world. Those ladies do a wonderful job. Thank you to Hansard. Since my return to Parliament I have, in the main, stopped using written speeches. Hansard does a fantastic job making sense of what I say. In fact, sometimes when I sit down I do not remember what I have just said.

To my parliamentary colleagues and the staff who work in the Leader of the Opposition's office I express my gratitude for the way in which you support us. I thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers. I have only been thrown out of the Chamber on one occasion and that resulted in an interview with Alan Jones. So I save it up for special occasions. I appreciate not being penalised too severely when I have a tantrum. In conclusion, I pay tribute to Colleen Symington in the Whip's office. I sit with Colleen a lot filling in time between speeches et cetera. She is a wonderful lady. She is very knowledgeable and she has the kindest heart in the world.

There are not enough words to describe the way that Colleen looks after us all. I often say to her, "You will get sick of me sitting here looking over your shoulder" and she has never said, "Yes, get out of here, get lost". Thank you to Colleen. Thank you to everyone. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and I look forward to seeing everyone back again next year when we re-engage before the upcoming 2019 election.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:59):** By leave: It is with great pleasure I speak this evening and extend my felicitations for Christmas and the festive season. Merry Christmas to all and I wish everybody well for the next few months. In giving my short address this evening, I start by thanking the Clerks of this House, especially Helen Minnican, Les Gönnye and all the wonderful people who make this place tick. Thank you.

The Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers in this Chamber, we know how difficult their roles are and we value their contributions. I also thank the Whips—the Government Whip, the member for Camden, and the Opposition Whip, the member for Cabramatta and my very dear friend. I thank the member for Cabramatta for his kind words, his jokes, his wisdom and his leadership. I also thank our Deputy Whip, the member for Shellharbour. It is nice to have her and the member for Cabramatta supporting us. To our secretary in the Opposition Whip's office, Colleen Symington, thank you. I hope you are listening to this, Colleen. Thank you very much for all the work that you do, for your kind words and the ear that you give us at times when we need it. Thank you very much, Colleen, for being so understanding.

To the Leaders of the House, both Government and Opposition, I say thank you, especially to the member for Maroubra for his mentorship and support. I wish both gentlemen well because, as we know, in the combative nature of this place they both do an outstanding job. I thank the Legislative Assembly attendants, especially Danny, who keeps us refreshed with the coolest and freshest water. As Danny says on a daily basis, it is freshly squeezed from Warragamba. The Legislative Assembly attendants are hardworking people and deserve praise for sitting in the Chamber and for putting up with our speeches. I do not know how they do it but they do and I thank

them very much. I am sure they are seldom thanked for what they do, but I say thank you and I am sure other members join me in doing that.

I thank the cleaners. I know previous speakers have mentioned it, but this place looks absolutely wonderful. It would not look wonderful without the hard work of our cleaners. I am sure that they do not get thanked enough. I implore the Department of Parliamentary Services not to outsource the cleaners of this place. They are like family to us and we want them to stay. To the dining room staff, the Café Quorum staff, and the amazing chefs who whip up some of the best food in the State, using, of course, New South Wales fresh produce, we say thank you. When visitors come to Parliament House they realise what a special place this is because we serve very good food that is made, grown and caught in New South Wales.

I thank all those brave men and women in security who stand outside Parliament House rain, hail or shine to protect us. I sincerely thank them from the bottom of my heart. To the Hansard staff, thank you very much. I hope that you rest over Christmas. Give your hands and ears a rest because listening to our drivel is certainly a workplace health and safety issue. They don't get paid enough. To my wonderful electorate staff—Stella Patane, Mathew Craig and Jess Daniele—I say thank you for giving me wonderful support and guidance this year. I wish Mathew Craig well as he is going to get married in December to his beautiful fiancée, Tammy.

To the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, it has been another great year. Keep up the good fight. I thank him for his leadership and hard work. I look forward to doing it again in 2018 as we head towards 2019. To all my shadow Cabinet colleagues and all my Labor colleagues, we have had a wonderful year going to by-elections and wonderful new members coming in. It is lovely to have the member for Gosford here.

To the people of Fairfield, thank you for what you do in our community. Fairfield is a great community and I thank each and every one of the Fairfield constituents for supporting me. In turn, I will do my best for them. To my wife, Melissa, and our children, I thank them for another great year and I look forward to spending a little more time over the Christmas break with the family. I hope to get some fishing in up at Port Stephens. Finally, I thank the emergency services personnel, who do a great job day in and day out but particularly during Christmas. I thank the police, ambulance officers and Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW State Emergency Service, the NSW Rural Fire Service and Marine Rescue NSW volunteers. I thank them for their service. During this time when some people do not make the right choices, our emergency services personnel are out there putting their own lives at risk. I wish everyone a very happy and holy Christmas and a safe and wonderful new year.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:05):** By leave: I wish you, Madam Temporary Speaker, and all my parliamentary colleagues from both sides of the House a merry Christmas. I hope that you are able to take time to be with your families and loved ones during this festive season. I take this opportunity to thank the many people who make this place function like a well-oiled machine. We sometimes take it for granted and forget that the smooth running of this place is as a result of many people working behind the scenes. I am grateful for the support of each of them.

I acknowledge the work done by the Opposition Whip, Nick Lalich, and his deputy, the Temporary Speaker and member for Shellharbour, Anna Watson, and the real whip in the office, Colleen Symington. They keep us all well disciplined. I thank the Legislative Assembly Clerks office and table staff, who are always helpful, particularly in relation to procedures and guidance. I thank the Hansard staff, who use their command of the English language to make our speeches look better in print than they sounded when we presented them. I thank the security staff for keeping us safe and informing us, as members of Parliament, about suggested security measures.

I put on record the work of the Parliamentary Library in providing information to members. That service is even more crucial when we are in opposition and without the support of government resources. I acknowledge and thank the facilities staff, the catering staff and the information technology staff for the competent and professional service they provide to members of Parliament. I acknowledge the parliamentary press gallery for keeping the public informed of the many issues raised in this place. I thank all members, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and member for Maroubra, Michael Daley, for their great leadership and stewardship.

I acknowledge and thank the New South Wales Labor Party, General Secretary Kaila Murnain and all the staff for their support and assistance. I am fortunate that I have the best office staff any member of Parliament could wish for. They make my office run smoothly and serve my constituents in a very professional manner. In particular I thank my office manager, Sarah Hatch, and my electorate staff, Philippe Desveaux, Yvonne Hajgato and our newest recruit, Montana Byers. Whilst thanking the many people associated with this place, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the many people who will be working over the Christmas break to look after our health, safety and wellbeing. In particular, I thank the Mount Druitt Hospital staff for the outstanding work they do for our community and I thank the Mount Druitt police for keeping us safe.

Christmas is often a time marked by extreme weather conditions, particularly heat and wet weather. I acknowledge the efforts of our volunteers from the NSW Rural Fire Service and our local emergency service who work in extreme conditions to make us safe. I also acknowledge the many volunteering organisations in my electorate of Mount Druitt who look after the vulnerable in our community, particularly organisations that provide Christmas meals for those who are alone during this festive period.

As members know, our job cannot be done effectively without family support. I thank my family for their understanding and tolerance of my regular absence from home. In particular, I thank my wife, Dimyana; my daughters, Natalie and Eustina; my son-in-law, John; and my mother-in-law, Mary. This Christmas I look forward to spending time with my two grandchildren—Elise, who is two years old, and my new grandson, Nicholas, who is only five weeks old. I thank the House for the indulgence to deliver these Christmas felicitations and wish all members a happy Christmas and a wonderful 2018.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson):** The question is that the House take note of Christmas felicitations.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Private Members' Statements*

### **CREATIVE SPACES**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (18:09):** I bring to the attention of the House the state of art spaces in New South Wales. Our State has the largest creative industries economy in Australia, accounting for more than 37 per cent of national industry employment. The cultural and creative industries make up more than 10 per cent of the workforce in the Sydney local government area and a significant proportion in my electorate of Balmain. Creative industries are inextricably connected to future urban growth and investment, city marketing and employment generation. Yet all across our city and our State corporate property developments are squeezing out affordable spaces for artists to work and create.

Hundreds of artists are facing the loss of their spaces across our inner cities. In Carrington Road, Marrickville, more than 1,800 creatives in 220 businesses are facing an uncertain future. More than 50 artists are in danger of being evicted from their site in Balmain Road in Rozelle and more than 20 from Birmingham Street Studios, Alexandria—to name just two locations. One artisan from the precinct in Marrickville told researchers, "If all the people who worked on this street worked in one company and were sacked, it'd be national headlines." Industrial-zoned spaces in the inner city are often portrayed by planners as "in need of regeneration". They are seen as redundant because it is assumed that manufacturing is in a state of inevitable decline and residential property should take its place. This is misleading.

Manufacturing has changed but it is far from dead, in particular in inner cities. Instead, manufacturing and the arts are coming together to collaborate in unique maker spaces, driving employment and contributing to the vibrancy of our communities. Many inner-city light industrial sites are already thriving as affordable spaces for artists and makers to connect and create. Industrial zones, such as the Carrington Road precinct, have hosted artists, makers and light manufacturing businesses side by side for years. Buildings in inner-city industrial zones are perfectly suited to these types of creative and light industrial enterprises, offering lower rents and limited restrictions on noise. They can also provide access to distribution and business networks, cultural venues and institutions, and customers.

These affordable art and creative spaces help to facilitate vibrant neighbourhoods, enhance liveability and create jobs. Art, creative and light industrial workers prepare our food and print our books; produce the sounds and images for our movies; arrange flowers and set theatrical stages; and make the ceramics and jewellery that we buy at inner-city markets—to name just a few things. Light industrial and creative industries in our inner cities provide critical support to the drivers of Sydney's economy, including the tourist and high-tech industries and financial and legal services. They also offer valuable employment opportunities to local residents without a university qualification—a group that comprises more than half of the residents in my inner-city electorate. But increasingly, the developers are moving into these inner-city creative spaces. Ironically, it is often the presence of these artists and makers that contributes to the higher property values the developers wish to leverage. But once the sites are rezoned and the high-rise apartments built, this fact gets conveniently forgotten, with artists and makers pushed out.

Academics from four Australian universities surveying creatives who work in the inner city have reported that, for most, moving to the city fringes is not an option. Artisans interviewed by the recent Australian Research Council Discovery Project told the researchers that they will either close, or go overseas. And our cities will be the poorer for it. Sydney urgently needs a policy designed to protect interlinked creative and manufacturing spaces of the type put in place by cities such as New York or Chicago. These cities recognise that such spaces are vital



to generating jobs, enhancing liveability and enlivening local communities. They have understood that inner cities, in particular, must keep a place for production, distribution and repair businesses as well as the arts. In New York, for example, an 8,000 square metre former bicycle factory is being renovated and turned into a production space for small and mid-sized manufacturers that are estimated to create 80 permanent jobs.

In Chicago, after 50 per cent of the city's industrial firms were lost in the 1980s, the city instituted planned manufacturing districts as a bulwark against residential and commercial pressures, providing stable and assured urban havens for industry. In my electorate the 6,000 square metre building I mentioned has provided employment opportunities for artists, manufacturing and retailers. Although the council's local environmental plan was adopted in 2013, the owner of the property and developers are attempting to rezone the building as residential. We need places of work to be close to where we live, and steps to reduce employment in residential areas must be stopped. New South Wales must follow suit and urgently implement a policy to protect the inner-city space and other spaces on which artists, makers and creatives rely. Without action, our inner cities—once bustling hubs of employment and creativity—will be in danger of becoming sterile commuter dormitories.

The objective of any good planning is to make sure that people have suburbs that are not simply dormitories to the central business district or other areas of employment. We must ensure that artists and those in the creative industries have protection through mechanisms implemented by the State Government. Previously councils had the ability to defend areas that were zoned industrial and residential from rezoning, but the Government has taken over through the Gateway process. The Gateway process is leading to ticks and nods by the Government that change zoning from light industrial employment to residential. It is undermining the quality of our communities. I call on the Government to implement a policy to work with creatives in the industry to change that. I will be hosting a round table next week with artists and makers in my community and will bring the issues raised at that meeting to government for action.

#### **TRIBUTE TO CROWN PROSECUTOR JOSE CRESPO**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:14):** I speak tonight about one member of a group of unsung heroes in our community. I am referring to one of our dedicated State Crown prosecutors who, together with the NSW Police Force, keep Ku-ring-gai and the rest of our community safe from those who would break our criminal laws. Tonight I pay tribute to Crown Prosecutor Jose Crespo, who suddenly passed away last week. Those who loved Jose extend their sympathies to Jose's father, his two teenage sons, Liam and Zachary, and his former wife, Gretel, who survive him. I recall clearly Jose telling me some years ago how much he loved his sons and spending time with them.

I had the pleasure to first meet Jose when we were both 18 years old in our second week of university. In the years since then I have always known him to be a fun person to be around, with infectious and charismatic laughter and quick wit. Jose was the son of Spanish immigrants to Australia. He attended Catholic schools near Newtown, where he grew up. Jose's Higher School Certificate mark did not qualify him to enrol in a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws combined degree, but his dream was to do well enough in his arts degree to enter law, and ultimately practise as a criminal lawyer.

Through dedication and hard work he achieved those ambitions, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws combined degree from the University of Sydney, after which he was admitted as a solicitor. A short time later he began work as a criminal law solicitor at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP]. After many years as a successful solicitor with the DPP Jose became a barrister—six months before I was admitted to the bar. Jose read at Trust Chambers, where many excellent barristers were located, including its head of chambers, Dr Greg Woods, QC. Dr Woods later became a District Court judge.

Jose and I appeared together in my first case as a barrister. I had represented our client in a previous civil forgery case that had turned into a criminal prosecution. The committal hearing was set down for six weeks. Jose's expertise in criminal law and procedure was far greater than mine but together we were able to discredit the charges after only two weeks. The case was dismissed with a cost order awarded against the prosecutor.

It is rare to encounter someone with the skill and enthusiasm of Jose and I will always cherish fondly the memory of working closely with him and being victorious in that case. Jose's career at the private bar continued to progress. He moved to the third floor of Selborne Chambers where I joined him as a member of those chambers for a short time. By then Jose was establishing a good criminal practice, regularly winning many criminal jury trials, much to the disdain of the prosecution. I remember Jose telling me how he was slowly refining his forensic skills in front of juries which were designed to charm the jurors into liking him rather than despising his clients. Like Cleaver Green in the television show *Rake*, Jose could indeed be very charming.

At about this time Jose rose to an important leadership position, becoming president of the Spanish Club. He was widely admired by Sydney's Spanish community. I remember him telling me that he felt strange when old

men in the club the age of his father would refer to him with respect as "Don Crespo". After a couple of years the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions must have decided that, in the public interest, they had to stem the impact of Jose's success and invited him to be a Crown prosecutor. Jose had told me earlier that he hoped that this would be the case, as the life of a defence barrister was quite insecure with regard to both work and remuneration.

Jose remained a Crown prosecutor until his death last week. He rose to be the head of the DPP's pre-trial unit. As a Crown prosecutor he was able to turn his hand to any type of prosecutorial work including robbery, child sexual assaults, historical child sexual assaults and drug matters. His major cases included a long-running fraud case and murder trials. One of his murder cases involved a member of the notorious Brothers 4 Life gang. He was known as a dedicated Crown prosecutor who prepared all his matters carefully and ran them with a great deal of energy, still showing the same desire and passion to practise criminal law that he told me about when he was 18 years of age. Director of Public Prosecutions Lloyd Babb, SC, described him as a great barrister, a respected Crown prosecutor and a truly lovely man. He was endlessly generous with his knowledge and he took his role as mentor and senior barrister seriously. Jose was a consummate professional and never said a harsh word about anyone. He was courteous and respectful. He never forgot his humble origins. Our State has lost a loyal and talented servant, who was also a good friend, colleague, father and son. Vale "Don" Jose Crespo. You will be greatly missed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson):** Thank you. I am sure Jose's family will appreciate your words. It was a lovely tribute. He was obviously a very close friend. I am sure that every member of this House sends you their sympathies as well.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 18.21  
until Tuesday 6 February 2018 at 12:00.**