



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 6 February 2018

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 6 February 2018

The SPEAKER (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 12:00.

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Senate

SENATE VACANCY

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 29 January 2018

His Excellency the Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly a copy of a despatch dated 29 January 2018, received from the President of the Senate, notifying that a vacancy has happened in the representation of the State of New South Wales in the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia through the resignation of Senator the Honourable Sam Dastyari, which occurred on 25 January 2018.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That:

- (1) The House meet in the Legislative Council for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator the Honourable Sam Dastyari.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting the Legislative Council to fix a time and place for the joint sitting.

Motion agreed to.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Private Members' Statements

AUSTRALIAN DEAF GAMES

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (12:12): As the member for Albury and to represent the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, I helped open the 2018 Australian Deaf Games—the pinnacle of deaf sporting events in Australia, which ran from 20 to 27 January. The Australian Deaf Games have been secured for both 2018 and 2022 by the New South Wales Government via our tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW, and were brought this year to Albury and Wodonga in association with the Victorian Government. The New South Wales Government is underpinning this endeavour not just with words, as important as they are, but also with a significant injection of cash, promotion and support for the Australian Deaf Games. The Government is a proud supporter.

The New South Wales Government is committed to securing events for rural and regional New South Wales because it knows they help provide a real boost to local economies. It is estimated that the 2018 games attracted more than 1,100 visitors, including athletes. Fourteen games records were broken and many hundreds of thousands of dollars were injected into the local economy. This is a huge result for our local restaurants, cafes, hotels, motels, businesses and tourism operators who have benefited from the influx of visitors that the Australian Deaf Games provides. On the field, on the court and in the pool the athletes met in competition and friendly rivalry and then socialised in a spirit of camaraderie. Sports tournaments remind us of our basic and essential human equality and worth; they also remind us that much good can come from better understanding each other—where we come from, how we manage the challenges of life. It is the power of simple goodwill.

Wherever one went, athletes were in competition. Darts were flying in the Albury Commercial Club; there was beach volleyball, touch football, basketball, futsal, lawn bowls, netball, table tennis, tenpin bowling, swimming and, for the first time in a deaf games, the sprint triathlon and aquathlon were featured as exhibition sports. I congratulate Nicholas Layton, who was named Athlete of the Games, and the NSW Deaf Touch Football teams—men's, women's and mixed—which won Team of the Games. For the first time in 15 years, the New South Wales team came away with the major award for the tournament, the JML Cup.

Beyond these overarching awards are countless stories of individual and team success, new records and personal bests. In a few of these, the athlete has a connection to Albury. Swimmer Brooke King showed great promise by setting three records in the pool and winning many medals, including five gold in the under-13 section and a silver in the open category. Brooke was named the female swimmer and under-13 swimmer of the games. Declan Campion broke the under-18 and under-20 games records for high jump at the athletics track. Declan was recognised last year with a nomination for the Norske Skog Young Achiever of the Year Award, selected by Sport Albury-Wodonga.

Alex Jones, chair of the 2018 Australian Deaf Games, summed up the time in Albury thus: "What was amazing for the deaf community is that the Albury community has welcomed us with open arms by being willing to learn sign language and attend Deaf Awareness Training. It is estimated approximately 125 people from Albury attended classes to learn how to communicate with us. The deaf community felt right at home right away because everywhere they went people were able to communicate with us and there were no barriers. Albury will always be remembered by the deaf community and will attract many more deaf visitors in the future because of this remarkable experience."

The Deaf Games can lead athletes along a pathway of excellence. Athletes can gain the attention of Deaf Sports Australia's high performance program, with potential selection to participate in the Asia Pacific Deaf Games and even the Deaflympics. For some athletes this may have been their first visit to Albury and the border region, but I hope that it sets them on this journey. I acknowledge Visit NSW, the Victorian Government, and the councils of Albury and Wodonga for their financial and promotional support for this year's deaf games. I also thank President of Deaf Sports Australia Kathryn Armfield, the Deaf Society, Australian Hearing, Alex Jones and his team, and all of the competitors and visitors

I recognise our local and visiting Auslan signers, who had a busy time in Albury. Their commitment and support was most valuable. My wife and a member of my staff have both studied Auslan, and I have a number of friends in the border Auslan, deaf, hard-of-hearing, hearing-impaired and cochlear implant community. The local contingent was amplified by the team at Hands to Communicate Australia. Two years ago I spoke in Parliament about the Australian Deaf Games and their significance and value. It was terrific to finally see the athletes, their friends and families find success and friendship in Albury after the long build-up to the games. I extend Albury's best wishes to the community of whichever New South Wales regional centre is chosen to host the 2022 Australian Deaf Games. They will have a ball.

The SPEAKER: Constituents from my electorate visited the Deaf Games and spoke highly of the event.

RANDWICK LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:17): It is with considerable reluctance that I raise my concern about apparent gross impropriety relating to decisions made by the Department of Planning and Environment and others relating to a planning proposal in my electorate. The proposal is to amend the Randwick Local Environmental Plan [LEP] 2012 under a gateway determination pursuant to section 56 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The K2K plan was developed by Randwick City Council in accordance with undertakings given to the then Minister for Planning Rob Stokes in meetings between me, the member for Maroubra and the mayor, general manager and director of planning of Randwick City Council. It was developed to take control of the Kingsford and Kensington town centres after five unsolicited planning proposals were received from developers to build buildings of up to 25 storeys or 85 metres high along Anzac Parade. With the support of the then Planning Minister, those applications were refused.

The council met the timetable in accordance with the undertakings given to Minister Stokes, and under instruction from the Department of Planning and Environment it undertook extensive community consultation as well as a design process. The K2K Urban Design Competition, run by Randwick City Council, received a Planning Institute Australia Award for Excellence in 2017, a Greater Sydney Planning Award in 2016 and an Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Award in 2017. There was obviously merit in it. The submission of the request for the gateway determination effectively means only putting the K2K plan on exhibition. Exhibition is essential; many of my constituents feel the proposal is far too dense and too high. The developers, on the other hand, think it is not dense and not high enough. The merits or otherwise are matters for future consideration after consultation. After all, the proposal provides for 5,000 additional apartments along the three-kilometre stretch of Anzac Parade.

The Department of Planning and Environment indicated to the council that it should make provision for 600 more apartments. Whilst it might be for the State to have that view of an entire planning proposal, it did something so bizarre that the determination cannot be honest. The department determined, in a planning proposal that runs along Anzac Parade for three kilometres, only five sites where the height of buildings should be increased to 25 storeys. For example, at the intersection of Anzac Parade and Todman Avenue, Kensington, the K2K plan provides for a 16-storey building to be built on each of the four corners; the department proposes, without

explanation, that one of those buildings be increased to 25 storeys. What raises my concerns is that the chosen site is where Toga Pty Limited or its related companies have already twice been refused similar applications by the joint regional planning panel. With a plan on exhibition, one could assert that all four buildings were either too high or too low, but to single out one building simply stinks to high heaven. In fact, I have been advised in respect of the five sites bizarrely referred to in the gateway determination that three are sites where Toga Pty Limited has an interest and has previously been refused by the Joint Regional Planning Panel.

In addition, the council proposed that developers would pay higher levies to fund a \$300 million public benefits package including new public plazas, open space, public art, car parks, a community centre and support for start-up businesses. That was refused by the gateway determination. To dismiss value capture like this without explanation is more than normal Department of Planning and Environment incompetence. I have been seeking to meet with the usually responsive and attentive planning Minister but, unusually, he is refusing to give me an appointment despite conveying to his office my concern about the propriety or otherwise of this matter. I hope it is not because of political donations or that the lobbyist involved is a Liberal Party operative.

I will provide the House with details of these matters at another time but, as the House would appreciate, I have done my research. I have consulted the member for Maroubra, whose electorate is impacted, and he agrees with me. Randwick City Council has requested reconsideration of the gateway determination and I will make my views known to the Planning and Assessment Commission. Both the member for Maroubra and I are so concerned about this matter and what we have uncovered that we have jointly decided to refer this matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. As the House would appreciate, I do not raise these matters lightly; I have sought as best I can to raise them privately with the Minister for Planning who normally is very responsive, and he has refused to see me.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:22): On what was an absolutely perfect Australia Day for 2018, my husband, John, joined me in attending official celebrations in the beautiful electorate of Port Macquarie. We started the celebrations early in the morning at the commanding North Brother Mountain overlooking the beautiful Camden Haven before we headed into Port Macquarie to the very picturesque town green. We were joined there by local Indigenous dance groups and by elder Uncle Bill. Of course, it was their ancestors—the Biripi people—who cared for this land for more than 60,000 years.

With countless friends, families and strangers gathered at all sorts of venues across the electorate, across the State and across the nation, in parks and community halls, at significant landmarks and, of course, even in backyards, it was a clear indication to me that this day means so much to the more than 24 million people who call Australia home. Much has been said lately about Australia Day. I was proud that the local Aboriginal community in my area, with the strength of its elders like Uncle Bill, played a prominent part in our celebrations, activities and events in recent years right across our local community. They welcome us to their traditional lands and, in my view, we should respectfully walk beside them as fellow Australians towards reconciliation. It was a day to celebrate and acknowledge what makes this country so great. It is about the land, its natural beauty, the man-made attractions, our growing nation and its place in the world, and it is about the influence we have individually and jointly on the outcomes for future generations.

Australia Day also represents the diversity of our people, our qualities and strengths and the contributions we make to this great land, whether we were born in Australia or whether we have chosen to call Australia home. I congratulate and welcome those who joined us as new Australians on 26 January. One of the defining qualities we share as Australians is our willingness to help others. When faced with adversity, Australians have the wonderful ability to come together and to help a mate in trouble—during natural disasters, in times of personal tragedy or when someone just needs an extra shoulder for support.

Australia Day is an opportunity to recognise and praise our volunteers who every day change the lives of others. We as a nation owe a great deal to the millions of people across this country and the thousands in our own communities who give up their time so freely in the pursuit of helping others. Many wonderful people were nominated for Australia Day awards locally, and I acknowledge the recipients of the Port Macquarie-Hastings awards, which were announced at the Glasshouse on the eve of Australia Day. The Community Group of the Year Award was won by Friends of Mrs York's Garden, a group I have been pleased to support with funding in the past 12 months.

George Campbell was named Senior Citizen of the Year, with nominees being Gladys Gleeson and Barry Barr. Rhiannon Simmonds was named Young Citizen of the Year, with nominees being Jack Wilson, Mitchell Paterson, Jorga Attard, Morgan Critchley and Lindsay Kraul. Geoffrey Shelton was named Citizen of the Year—a very worthy recipient—with the nominee being Port Macquarie local Alistair Flower. All these people represent the very fabric of our society with their selflessness, dedication, generosity and the extraordinary

and often unknown contribution they make as volunteers helping others in the community. In fact, across Australia more than six million people volunteer each year. This represents tens of millions of volunteer hours and billions of dollars to the Australian economy. I extend my sincere thanks to those people for everything they do for our local community and our country.

As the House knows, Port Macquarie is blessed to be home to the beautiful Hastings River. It was on the mighty Hastings on Australia Day that a wonderful flotilla of boats did a sail past celebrating all things nautical. I make special mention of those people who made the event possible and who were integral to its organisation, including Greg Davies and Steve Thomas from Port Macquarie Marine Rescue; Wayne Evans and Rick Eller from Sailability; and Geoff Roberts from Flamin' Dragons Port Macquarie, who all worked extremely hard to make the event so successful. I thank the organisers of Australia Day events in the Camden Haven and Port Macquarie area for allowing Don and me to be a key part of this wonderful celebration for our communities.

DUBBO ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (12:27):

I extend best wishes to everyone in the House for the coming year. Today I pay tribute to Australia Day award recipients in the Dubbo electorate from the Dubbo Regional Council communities of Dubbo and Wellington. When I next have the opportunity I will highlight the winners and recipients from the Mid-Western Regional Council from Trangie and Narromine communities. I have said in this place that Dubbo and its surrounding region have some of the best communities in New South Wales. The area has natural attractions and opportunities but the communities are great because they are made up of great people. Every Australia Day we have the opportunity to honour and recognise many of those people who contribute to the health and prosperity of our communities, and that was exemplified by those who were recognised this year.

Dubbo's Citizen of the Year was Mr Tom Gray, a veteran and wonderful community man. Tom is President of the Dubbo RSL Sub-Branch, a position he took on following distinguished service in the Australian Army and from being a member for 26 years. He volunteered for 36 years, 17 as coordinator of the Dubbo Day Club. When Tom is not looking after returned service personnel or the elderly, he volunteers for the Dubbo CYMS Old Boys Rugby League Football Club, which raises significant funding for the community. He has served for 30 years as manager of the Group 11 Rugby League and was awarded life membership in 2010. He is also a keen and active member of the Dubbo Ducks AIF Swimming Club. Obviously through his role with the sub-branch he conducts special and moving ceremonies at each of our poignant war commemorations throughout the year.

The Minister for Sport will recognise the strength of Dubbo in sport. This year the Service to Sports award was taken out by Mr Ross McDermott, who played rugby league for South Dubbo primary and high school teams, Police Citizens Youth Club junior grade teams, Macquarie under-18 teams and grade leagues. He represented Group 11 and Western Division, and played against the touring English side in 1979. He also had stints with Westside and the Geurie Sharks. He has been a coach and secretary of clubs, and was president of the South Dubbo rugby league club from 2008 to 2013. He became president in Macquarie in 2018. He went into administration and was treasurer of Group 11 from 2003 to 2006 and president from 2009 to 2014. In recent years he moved back to the secretary role. He was a member of the Country Rugby League committee from 2009 to 2016 and has been executive deputy chairman of the Western Rams—the Mighty Rams—since 2012. He is a highly respected administrator in this State and is held in very high regard. We could not find a more humble and deserving recipient of the Service to Sport award in my area.

Simone Grounds was awarded Sportsperson of the Year for her contribution to cycling. Simone won the individual time trial, road race and criterium at the National Masters Road Championships on the Gold Coast in 2017. Winning all three events is known as the "holy trifecta" in cycling circles. She kept the pedigree of great cyclists from our Commonwealth Games champion league in Dubbo. Simone was the first Dubbo cyclist to win three major races at a championship event and her outstanding performance earned her the title "Champion of Champions". Simone also races for the Dubbo Mountain Bike Club at the top tier of mountain bike events and is an active member of the Dubbo Cycle Club. She gives back to that group by training other members.

Kurt Eather won Young Sportsperson of the Year for his contribution to the sport of cycling. Kurt was awarded silver in the State road time trial and won the country track championship in the State sprint and the State criterium. He was also selected for the Western Region Academy of Sport cycling squad. He has had outstanding success in cycling. He represented New South Wales at the Track National Championships, State road championships, and the National Road Race Championships. He took out the title of national under-15 junior road racing champion.

Our Young Citizen of the Year, Isabella Tipping, started a petition requesting that when major airlines upgrade their fleets, they modify their planes to allow those with significant physical needs to travel with their own wheelchairs. Isabella's ultimate goal is to have legislation changed to allow this. After connecting with Virgin

Australia, Isabella was asked to participate in the airline's quality assurance team. She works to ensure that people with disabilities can travel with dignity and safety on Virgin Australia flights. Having met this young lady, it is clear that she has an impressive future. I congratulate all the winners in Dubbo and look forward to honouring those throughout my community.

CAMPBELLTOWN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:32): I welcome back all my colleagues for this final sitting year of the 56th Parliament. It is appropriate that we take the opportunity to reflect on 2017 and focus on the priorities that lie ahead in 2018. As was the case across much of the State, 2017 was a big year in Campbelltown. There was much that caused concern, but also much to celebrate. When local students who attend the University of Wollongong return to their classes in a couple of weeks, they will have double the number of bus services to get them to and from university. This change has been a long time coming, with local students forced to endure uncomfortable and unsafe conditions for far too long. I congratulate the parents, students, university staff and many others who have campaigned for extra services for so long. This is a great result for our community.

While Campbelltown has a proud history of welcoming new residents, existing residents are becoming understandably anxious and frustrated about the lack of investment in infrastructure and services to keep pace with growth in population and development. This is demonstrated in the Government's plans for urban renewal along the railway corridor between the Macquarie Fields and Macarthur stations. The plans, which were released late last year, will see approximately 20,000 new homes and dwellings built around these six train stations over the next 20 years. In principle, higher-density housing located around major public transport hubs makes perfect sense: Residents will have access to public transport and will therefore be less likely to drive cars. However, this idea relies on the availability of adequate services at those train stations. Services are already lacking, a problem that will only be compounded with the acceleration of urban population growth.

The Government's new timetable is nothing short of a disaster, and has consequences across the network. Hundreds of train services every week have been removed from train stations in areas in which the Government is now seeking to build 20,000 homes. My message, and the message of the people in my electorate, to the Premier and the Government is simple: If the Government wants 20,000 new dwellings to be constructed it must provide the infrastructure and services that our region needs to cope with such growth. Even if the train services were up to scratch it would still be necessary to invest in vital road infrastructure. Projects such as the Menangle-Spring Farm link road with connections to Appin Road and the Hume Motorway, a rail overpass connecting Broughton Street and Badgally Road, and an upgrade of the Raby Road junction with the Hume Motorway, along with the promised 450-space car park at Campbelltown station are vital to the long-term connectivity of the Macarthur region, and are equally deserving of the Government's attention.

The same can be said for our region when it comes to the key government services of health and education. Local residents, who are sending their kids to schools that are already overcrowded, are understandably apprehensive about the thousands of new residents set to come to our region. Many of those schools have an enormous amount of outstanding maintenance work. Parents are understandably apprehensive when they see 53 per cent of patients waiting for more than four hours for emergency treatment at Campbelltown Hospital. They also experience some of the longest waiting times for elective surgery in the State. Health services are stretched to the limit in Campbelltown, as are our schools. The Government must invest in new schools, classrooms, teachers, doctors and nurses, and bring forward the stage two upgrade of Campbelltown Hospital as promised, along with the appropriate resources and support for our doctors and nurses, and other health workers.

I—like most of the people I am privileged to represent—am generally optimistic about the future of our region and our city. I can recognise that the years ahead represent exciting opportunities for the Macarthur region to grow and to prosper. But I also recognise that growth and prosperity will be achieved only if the Government invests in the infrastructure and services necessary to realise that potential. The year 2018 represents an opportunity for the Government to hit the reset button, look seriously at the infrastructure and service needs of the Campbelltown-Macarthur region, and make the required investments in capital and recurrent funding to ensure that new residents in our region enjoy the same quality of life that existing residents have enjoyed for generations. I urge the Government to consider all of these points and many others as we set the agenda for 2018. There will only be positive outcomes if the focus is on the betterment of all families in the city and regions of my electorate.

PENRITH ELECTORATE EVENTS AND AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:37): It is fantastic to be back in the Parliament and to be able to update the House on some of the fantastic activities in the Penrith electorate over the summer period. It is important for me to acknowledge the people in the Penrith community who were recognised through the awarding of Medal of the

Order of Australia awards and those who were recognised by Penrith City Council through the awarding of local Australia Day awards.

The Penrith community was lucky enough to have a few people recognised under the award scheme. One of those was Mr John Bateman, a well-known Penrith identity, who served as Mayor of Penrith between 1998 and 2000, and as a councillor between 1995 and 2004. He was the founding president of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation; I served on that founding committee at the same time as John. John Bateman held various board positions including on the board of the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and the board of the Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation. John Bateman was a big supporter of Nepean Philanthropists, which supported a number of our local health services.

Neville Barnier was also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia award for his service to people with a disability in the Penrith community. Neville has lived in Penrith since 1970, and over that period—almost 50 years—he has made an outstanding contribution to the local community. He was instrumental in the growth of the Penrith RSL Club and is a life member of that club. Neville has been heavily involved in the Australian Foundation for Disability, a foundation for people with a disability, for the past 34 years. That foundation provides a large number of services.

Neville's leadership and guidance across both the disability sector and the RSL community is one of the reasons he has been recognised with this award. Standing alongside Neville and John was another Neville, Neville Glover. Although he is no longer a resident of Penrith, he is a former Penrith Panthers player who represented New South Wales and Australia in rugby league. He served with distinction on the NSW Police Force for 29 years. It is fantastic to see people from Western Sydney and Penrith recognised through the Order of Australia award scheme.

Michele Ellery, founding director and chief executive officer of the Queen of Hearts Community Foundation, was recognised for her service in the community to those who have suffered the trauma of domestic violence and abuse as a young person. She is truly a great person and is deserving of the Penrith Citizen of the Year award. The Queen of Hearts Community Foundation received \$16,994 through the Community Building Partnership program to upgrade its facility in order to expand and enhance the services and counselling support it provides.

This Government has announced Community Building Partnership grants for the Emu Plains Anglican Church to refurbish its community kitchen, where all the community activities occur. Emu Heights Public School will receive a grant for new electronic signage. Penrith South Public School will use its grant money for a fitness track across the campus site. It is great to see a school backing healthy, active lifestyles. A number of projects that the Government has been working on came to fruition during the summer period, none more visible than the Nepean River pedestrian bridge. I committed to this project when I was first elected to this place. It was a contentious issue at the time as the 1867 bridge did not have appropriate pedestrian access. The new safe pedestrian access for this iconic bridge will improve visibility and provide amazing views as it stretches across the river.

The \$576 million redevelopment of Nepean Hospital is the single largest investment that has been made in this hospital. As well as the infrastructure, yesterday the Premier, the member for Mulgoa and I welcomed 56 new medical interns to the hospital. These interns are excited about the future of Nepean Hospital because they know that this Government is introducing new facilities to this hospital. It is great news for these future doctors, who are looking forward to a bright future, and it is great news for patients. Commuters travelling on the M4 will have noticed the widening of the M4 between Roper Road and the M7. This Government recognises the area's population growth and is investing in infrastructure to cater for the transport needs of the community.

ABORIGINAL JUSTICE AND SOVEREIGNTY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:42): This year on 26 January more than 10,000 people marched on the streets of Redfern—and tens of thousands more across the country—for Aboriginal justice and sovereignty. I was humbled by the invitation to speak at a rally for Aboriginal justice and sovereignty, which was held at The Block, Redfern. Together with my Greens colleague Mr David Shoebridge, we gathered on Gadigal land. I was pleased to tell those attending the rally that as I crossed the electorate of Newtown that morning to The Block I did not see a single Australian flag but I saw hundreds of Aboriginal flags. It is a sign that the movement to recognise 26 January as invasion day or survival day is growing strong. The struggle by Aboriginal people for sovereignty and justice must continue.

The rally at The Block was not the only action that occurred in Redfern. A wonderful gathering of people at the significant site of Redfern Park marched to Hyde Park to celebrate human rights and to commit to a treaty for First Nations people. At Victoria Park, in the electorate of Newtown, thousands of people gathered for the City

of Sydney Yabun Festival to celebrate Aboriginal culture and creativity. It is crucial that we stand in solidarity with Aboriginal people. We must see an end to the deaths in custody, the inequality and the injustice faced by so many Aboriginal people.

As my Greens colleague David Shoebridge said to the rally, it is not only about recognising the historical wrongs that have been done; it is also about recognising the wrongs that continue today. It is part of the history of this State and this country, and it is still happening in 2018. It is shameful that Aboriginal children are taken from their families at twice the rate as occurred when Kevin Rudd said "Sorry". When someone says "sorry", it is implied that it will not happen anymore. It is clear that we need to change the date, but we also need to change the system. Although I was born in this country, at times I have felt excluded and that I do not belong, as a result of the overt demonstrations of Aussie pride. I have felt the direct racist undertones of Australian nationalism. I cannot begin to imagine the impact that celebrating a day like this would have on our First Nations people.

Next week marks 14 years since TJ Hickey, a young Aboriginal, was killed as a result of police actions in Waterloo. On 14 February, hundreds will gather—as they have every year since his death—on the site where this tragedy occurred. I will join them, as I have previously whenever possible, and we will march to this Parliament yet again demanding justice for his death and a memorial to be placed in Waterloo in recognition of this tragedy. The commitment given last year that a memorial would be built in Waterloo in TJ Hickey's name was welcomed. Unfortunately, the building of the memorial has been deferred as a result of the delays that continue with the redevelopment of public housing in Waterloo. The purpose of this year's rally is to demand that the memorial, which was designed by TJ's family, be built immediately. It cannot wait for the Waterloo redevelopment to be completed, which, according to the Government's own timeline, is slated to not happen for another decade or more.

The need for justice requires the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry to look into the incident. It is not acceptable for the police to self-investigate. Too many questions remain unanswered. The injustice that TJ's family face is only one of the many struggles for justice faced by Aboriginal people in this State. The struggle for justice will continue until there is justice not only for TJ Hickey and his family but also for the many others who have died in jails in New South Wales at the hands of police. It must continue until all the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody are implemented and until the indicators and measures for Aboriginal young people in this country are equal to those of non-Aboriginal young people. I put on record my thanks and acknowledge the Indigenous Social Justice Association Sydney for its tireless work in campaigning for justice and to bring an end to Aboriginal deaths in custody. I represent the area known as Redfern and the significant site that is The Block. I give my commitment to stand united in support of Aboriginal sovereignty and justice in this State. It was and always will be Aboriginal land.

LANE COVE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (12:47): I speak about 14 individual groups that have shown their commitment to my Lane Cove electorate and have been well supported and rewarded through the 2017 Community Building Partnership program. Those 14 entities represent religion, education and sport; they represent sharing, caring and competition. The magnificent 14 I speak about today are driven by achievers under the guise of directors, presidents, vice-presidents, principals, chief executive officers, church secretaries, board members and club captains. Whilst they may have differing aims and ideals, they bring dreams and ideas to Lane Cove, and they have been recognised with funding under this Government's latest release of the Community Building Partnership program.

Please indulge me as I name the entities from across my electorate: Lane Cove Country Club, Gladesville Occasional Child Care, North Shore Rowing Club, Greenwich Sailing Club, Catholic Parish of St Michael's Lane Cove, Sydney Community Services, Artarmon-Longueville Uniting Church Parish, Anglican Property Trust Diocese of Sydney, and Holy Cross Junior Rugby League Football Club—go the Rhinos. I add to that great list Giant Steps Australia, Birralee Preschool, Villa Maria Catholic Primary School, Lane Cove 12ft Sailing Skiff Club, and the Ryde-Hunters Hill District Hockey Club. These clubs, parishes and schools have received varying amounts, ranging from modest to significant, to carry out projects that will benefit the electorate of Lane Cove.

Lane Cove Country Club, through Barry Watkin, has been awarded \$18,000 for its restoration replacement project. Badrunnesa Begum's application has secured Gladesville Occasional Child Care Centre \$15,000 to fix the outdoor playground. An application by Richard Sheldrake resulted in \$39,300 of program funding for the North Shore Rowing Club to upgrade the old rowing pontoon, ramp and deck facilities. Greenwich Sailing Club, through Bernie McCartney, has received \$15,000 for its safety and training boat replacement. On behalf of the Catholic parish of St Michaels, Steve Conlon has obtained \$52,954 for refurbishment of its primary school hall. But the largesse of the Community Building Partnership program does not stop there.

An application by Gillian Batt secured \$19,844 for a seniors hub remodelling by Sydney Community Services. Christine Butters led the call that was answered with \$5,500 for the project restoration of Artarmon-Longueville Uniting Church. Let me assure the House that these grants represent real money for worthwhile projects in my electorate of Lane Cove. The Anglican Property Trust Diocese of Sydney will be able to tackle its community hall kitchen at Putney Anglican Church because of the \$19,859 that Roger Hooper helped secure. Brad Wilson and his squad kicked a goal in securing \$30,000 for a full replacement of the field flood lighting at the Holy Cross Junior Rugby League Football Club. Michelle Jocum worked to secure \$15,000 towards the refurbishment of the secondary outdoor space for Giant Steps Australia.

Birrahlee Preschool in Lane Cove can now get a shade sail because of a grant of almost \$6,500 secured after an appeal led by Elizabeth Lennon. We will see the netball court and playground resurfacing at Villa Maria Primary School after successful lobbying by Melissa Jose and her supporters. I give a big shout-out to principal Kevin Turner and the fantastic staff of Villa Maria. John Hayward worked tirelessly to secure almost \$25,500 to go towards the slipway decking refurbishment for the Lane Cove 12ft Sailing Skiff Club. A committee led by Glen Castensen has seen Ryde-Hunters Hill District Hockey Club receive \$20,500 for the upgrading of its centre playing surface fencing.

That is almost \$300,000 that will be spent on necessary and worthwhile projects within my electorate of Lane Cove—money allocated through the Community Building Partnership program, which is possible because this Government is responsible and manages the public's money wisely. I take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who do such great work within our communities. The Community Building Partnership program is critical because it enables volunteers to get on with the job of sailing, sport or providing meals rather than having to conduct fundraising to underpin those activities.

WALLSEND ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:52): On the first day back at school the 870 bus failed to appear and pick up students from the Callaghan College Wallsend Campus. Parents were forced to leave work early to pick up their kids. Some students walked five kilometres to get home. The *Newcastle Herald* reported that Tony O'Leary thought that his 15-year-old daughter Alanah had missed the bus home when she rang him. He said:

It was a fluke that I happened to be home from work. She can get to her grandparents' pretty easily, but it's more about the kids that haven't got any alternatives.

Indeed, Mr O'Leary said that one teacher actually drove a number of students home. I acknowledge and applaud that teacher for going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the kids got home safely. The next day, a constituent messaged me to say that the 11 bus, due at Jesmond at 9.23 a.m., never arrived. Neither did the next one. Illustrating the impact of unreliable nature of public transport in Newcastle these days, she said:

My daughter catches this bus to John Hunter Hospital to connect with bus 26 so she can get to Kotara for work. It's just disappointing when the government is encouraging us to use public transport, and we may be in the position of having to get a second car again.

That is because of the unreliability of public transport. These are only the latest of the problems that have occurred in the wake of the handover of Newcastle buses and ferries to private provider Keolis Downer. What started with hundreds of services cancelled without notice and drivers going without proper pay for weeks at a time in the aftermath of the handover has devolved into full-blown chaos. The rollout of new routes and a new timetable on 14 January this year was a catastrophe for many residents in Wallsend. One outraged Wallsend resident wrote to me and stated:

Public Transport is a requirement by ... governments to supply and support, not sell off for a quick fix hit to private contractors who think in dollars in their pockets mentality. And here yet again is proof of the incompetence of these decisions. What does Keolis Downer have to say in the face of all these complaints and documented issues? The latest general manager, Mark Dunlop, told the *Newcastle Herald*:

Overall, from what I've looked at this network, I'm very confident that the package overall is a quantum step up. The network here hasn't changed since 2008, and, whilst I haven't been in Newcastle for that long, but with any community the dynamics and geography and social parameters change over that time.

Mr Dunlop is right about one thing: Some measured, responsible change would have done the Newcastle bus network the world of good. Keolis Downer has delivered full-blown transport chaos. Often without warning schoolchildren and commuters are left stranded and unable to get to school or work. Drivers are going without pay and entitlements and receive abuse from frustrated commuters when tensions boil over. Rather than a "quantum step up" in service delivery, inconvenience has skyrocketed. There is no direct service from Wallsend to inner-city Newcastle, and the services connecting Wallsend residents to commercial hubs such as Kotara and Charlestown have been cut. When commuters complain—either directly to Newcastle Transport or via my office—their concerns go unaddressed. Last week after more than 100 representations had been made to the office of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and to Keolis Downer, I had yet to receive a formal reply.

I understand that the Minister is under pressure at the moment, but so are the commuters of Wallsend. The bus network in Newcastle is in chaos. I am calling on the Minister to intervene immediately and give our commuters some peace of mind.

RURAL FIRE SERVICES

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (12:57): I commend the great work of members of a number of Rural Fire Service [RFS] brigades in the Northern Tablelands region who recently battled one of the most severe fires the region has ever experienced. Few members of this House will be strangers to their local RFS brigades or the efforts of the brave men and women who take up the call when fire and emergency situations threaten people's lives, homes and communities. In January one such crisis affected the wonderful small community of Bundarra, nestled 40 kilometres to the south of Inverell and approximately 80 kilometres to the north-west of Armidale. On 18 January after several days of intense storm activity, a landholder spotted a blaze burning in the hills of his property approximately 10 kilometres to the south-west of Bundarra. I am told the RFS believes a smouldering tree hit by lightning may have been burning for several days, finally spilling a mass of burning embers onto the dry earth around it.

First reported as a relatively minor fire of approximately 150 hectares, this blaze quickly spread on ground that was very dry. It did not stay small for long, and two days after it began the fire doubled its size and kept doubling until it reached more than 10,000 hectares at its peak, spanning an area of more than 12,000 football fields. Warm and windy conditions meant the local firefighters were on the defensive from the very beginning. Supported by aerial water-bombing, the RFS cleared containment lines, created firebreaks and back-burned in sweltering conditions, with temperatures frequently hovering around 40 degrees, to ensure the safety of properties, stock and fodder. Instrumental in this battle were the efforts of members of the Thirldene brigade who, despite a marked decline in membership in recent years, fought with the tenacity and force of a brigade many times its size. I am told that many people are now signing up to rejoin the brigade, which is terrific news.

In the dense hills to the south-west of Bundarra, local knowledge of the terrain is essential to fighting fires. One cannot strategise or plan without a detailed understanding of the slopes, gullies and vegetation, and where fires tend to move. Landholder Sean Gleeson provided that overview to the Rural Fire Service command, not only serving as the eyes and ears of the RFS but also actively spraying and back-burning in conjunction with local units. Warwick Young from South Bonney coordinated the battle on the other front—assisting by providing leadership in chasing the fire with a bulldozer to deny it fuel. When Warwick drove the dozer until it would go no more, he abandoned the busted machine, found another and continued to knock down trees to create a break and contain the fire. His efforts were essential in stopping the blaze in its tracks and preventing it from reaching the village of Bundarra.

Crow Mountain brigade member Wayne Elliot found himself informally acting as captain and for six days straight he did not leave the fireground. Catching only moments of sleep in the cabin of a truck, he worked tirelessly by performing backbreaking work and leading the volunteers. Under Captain Peter Gregory, the Bundarra brigade fought the blaze for almost two weeks, maintaining a crucial wall against the fire on the northern or town side. I commend Spencer Hall from the brigade, who for two weeks spent an average of 20 hours a day battling alongside the brigade and informally leading the troops.

I commend Bob Crouch, who is not an RFS member but was one of many former Bundarra landholders who returned to help out and provide the benefit of their local knowledge. Given that the event was declared a section 44 fire emergency, I acknowledge the efforts of Lachie Onslow and Andrew Menzies from Fleet Helicopters, who rained down flame retardant and water on the fire to keep it contained, particularly in its latter stages. Their work was essential. I cannot speak highly enough of the volunteers and the work they did. They deserve the congratulations of everyone. I am glad that through Local Land Services the Government is stepping up to the mark in supporting the landholders. BlazeAid is in town this week to also help them out. I again say thank you to all of our Rural Fire Service volunteers.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:02): The New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership program awards grants for community infrastructure projects and aims to create vibrant, inclusive and well-served communities. The most recent annual program involved applications opening last June, with successful projects being announced in December. It will continue to deliver for my local Davidson community in a variety of ways. The largest single grant of \$80,000 was allocated for the construction of a new bus bay at the Lindfield Sports Centre to enable schools and community groups to share the facilities that West Lindfield Sport and Recreation Club provides.

Other recipients of the current round of grants include St Ives Bowling and Recreation Club, which received \$15,000 to build a new outdoor shade awning. The Forest Districts Australian Football Club received \$50,000 for new club rooms and an electronic scoreboard, the Northern Suburbs Cricket Association received \$15,000 for larger synthetic wickets at Wellington oval and the St Ives Junior AFL Club received \$30,000 for new female changing rooms. Ku-ring-gai Council received \$30,000 to build a new playground with improved access at Lindfield Soldiers Memorial Park, the Scout Association of Australia NSW Branch was allocated \$4,994 to repair a leaky roof at the 2nd/3rd Lindfield Scout Hall and the Castle Cove Public School Parents and Citizens Association received \$32,758 for new air-conditioning and storage units for band equipment at the school.

The Anglican Property Trust Diocese of Sydney received \$12,000 for new fencing to surround the play area at St Andrew's Anglican Church in Roseville. Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury, which is based in Gordon in my electorate but which services a much wider area, received \$10,100 to upgrade from fluorescent lighting to environmentally sustainable light-emitting diode lighting. Chabad House of North Shore Limited received \$20,000 to create a fully operational commercial kitchen for community use. I look forward to the scheme hopefully continuing in the future. I very much appreciate support from, in particular, the Treasurer and the Premier in enabling such local funding initiatives. I commend those involved in administering the program and overseeing the relevant processes. The process appears to be quite efficient: It is largely run online.

One feature of the process that is particularly appropriate is that each local member of Parliament helps to direct valuable community resources to worthwhile local causes. I certainly take that responsibility seriously. I believe local members of Parliament are very well positioned to judge groups that are best able to deliver benefits to the local community. I look forward to the completion of the current year's projects and to my local community reaping the benefits of this wonderful program. In conclusion, I thank all the organisations who submitted an application, whether or not successful, as part of their desire to create or enhance much-needed local facilities. I welcome the Government's Community Building Partnership program and look forward to its continuing to serve local communities for many years.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT MR JOHN MURRAY, OAM

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:06): I pay tribute to an outstanding friend of the Bankstown community, Mr John Murray, OAM, who on Australia Day 2018 was awarded the prestigious Medal of the Order of Australia for his services to the community. John Murray's tireless efforts as a lifelong volunteer, a champion of charitable causes and a driver of community progress have enriched a countless number of lives and are deserving of recognition. Occasionally along the journey of life we meet people who step up, reach out and shine the torch for others. Without question, John Murray is one of those people: unpretentious, self-effacing, considerate and of course generous—a rare gem. Unsurprisingly, John Murray had his humble beginnings in Bankstown. He was the youngest of 11 children and grew up in a challenging era when many who went to war never returned.

Sadly, John lost his brother, Frederick David Murray, who was in the infantry and was posted to New Guinea in 1942. The tragic loss of his brother inspired John to raise funds for troops. Encouraged by Ms Steele, at the tender age of seven John began volunteering for the Red Cross. That would be the start of a lifelong commitment to supporting others in need. One of John Murray's greatest achievements has been his championing the growth of the Bankstown Sports Club—an institution that has provided, over time, more than \$60 million in funding to our local community and an institution of which I am proud to be co-patron. In 1981 John became a member of the board of directors. In 2006 he was appointed president. Although John carries the statutory responsibility of a board director, his position is voluntary and he receives no remuneration.

The Bankstown Sports Club provides funding for more than 40 local sporting organisations which, in turn, service 8,000-plus members. The club invests directly in our communities. Each year the club provides hundreds of thousands of dollars through the ClubGRANTS program, which channels much-needed funding across many community and charitable organisations and helps them to provide sporting, recreational and cultural programs for our community. In addition to that club's activities, John became a member of the Lions Club of Bankstown and supported many of the Lions club's causes over the years. John's family has had many challenges, one of which is coping with John's granddaughter having been born with a rare genetic postnatal neurological disorder, Rett syndrome. Tragically, that has left her unable to walk and speak, and in need of full-time care.

John and his loving wife, Lily, have devoted their lives to supporting their daughter and granddaughter, and for more than 15 years have raised well over \$1.5 million for research into Rett syndrome. His family's challenge made John more determined to see the Bankstown Sports Club provide support to the less abled and the vulnerable. He played a significant role in ensuring that the club established and supported Bankstown City Aged Care. It was under his stewardship that the club found a permanent home for the Recreational Sports and Aquatics Club, which allows adults and young people with a disability to access sporting opportunities. In the past decade,

John has ensured that the club has worked closely with Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets program to support vulnerable young people. John also has personally organised a variety of events to raise funds for the leukaemia research fund at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney and to help the Lisa Farmer Foundation to raise funds for children with cancer.

John also served on Camden Council as an Independent alderman and then as councillor from 1989 for eight years, or two local government terms. I know that he is held in high regard in the Camden region as well as in the Bankstown region. In January 1988 John pursued one of his other great passions and began his three-decade-long service to the Rural Fire Service, during which he has received many accolades for fighting bushfires and attending serious motor vehicle accidents, light plane disasters and clean-up operations after the disastrous storms on the North Shore as well as the devastating 1994 bushfires in New South Wales. Given the personal tragedy of losing his brother, John's compassion extends to many war widows and the families of those who have served their country. Over the past 15 years, he has encouraged the Bankstown Sports Club to support Legacy, and the club continues to do so.

I thank the club's directors, management and staff for their tremendous support of John's passion for community service and for ensuring that he was recognised with such a well-deserved honour. To be a recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia speaks volumes about the value of his contributions. Lily, his family, his friends and, in particular, everyone at Bankstown Sports Club must be very proud of him—and rightly so. Once again, I extend my congratulations to John on behalf of the community of Bankstown and this Parliament. I am delighted that this privilege was bestowed upon such a first-rate, exemplary and all-round good bloke. Congratulations John Murray, OAM.

BANKSTOWN-LIDCOMBE HOSPITAL CATHETERISATION LABORATORY

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) (13:11): On Tuesday 23 January 2018 I had the great pleasure of attending the official launch of the new catheterisation laboratory at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. After a long six-year battle, it was great to launch the new state-of-the-art \$1.6 million cath lab. We will now be able not only to deliver innovative and world-class cardiac care at the hospital but also to save the lives of many people such as Ernesto Hernandez, who was the first patient to use the cath lab.

I acknowledge the doctors, nurses and administration staff at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital, all of who have fought hard to establish this life-saving facility. I thank in particular Dr Edmund Hasche and Karen Furniss, who came to see me when I was first elected in 2011 to bring this issue to my attention. Since that meeting, the cardiac department at the hospital and I have been fighting to make this facility a reality. One of the problems is that the hospital is very small, despite the fact that it serves hundreds of thousands of people. However, in the end we prevailed. I thank Dr Edmund, Karen and the staff of the cardiac department for their tireless dedication in the fight to make the cath lab a reality.

The facility will help to save many lives because heart disease is one of the biggest killers we face. Patients attending Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital will be comforted to know that they can access this facility rather than travel to other hospitals for treatment. More people will now be able to receive life-saving treatment closer to home. For more than 58 years I have had a strong relationship with Bankstown hospital—I was born there; as were my two sons.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Now we know your age.

Mr GLENN BROOKES: That is not hard. I will continue to support Bankstown hospital and its staff. We all know the importance of staff to any good hospital, and the staff at Bankstown hospital continue to help make it the great facility it is.

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:14): I congratulate the member for East Hills on his longstanding advocacy for the Cardiac Interventional Unit at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. It is well known that a quick response for a person in need of cardiac care increases that person's chances of survival. What the member for East Hills has done for his community in helping to get this life-saving facility in place cannot be underestimated. Ernesto Hernandez was the first patient to use this facility and, as the member said, "We will be able to save many lives such as those of Mr Hernandez". I also thank all the medical staff at Bankstown hospital for their advocacy and hard work. My congratulations to everyone involved.

Community Recognition Statements

WALLSEND DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB PLAYER JASON SANGHA

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:15): I congratulate renowned former Wallsend cricketer Jason Sangha on his stellar performance at the recent 2018 Under-19 Cricket World Cup. Jason captained the

Australian team all the way to the final. He was the leading run scorer for Australia, with a total of 229 runs and an impressive score of 88. Jason got his first break with the Wallsend District Cricket Club, playing first grade as a 13-year-old. He was then selected to play in the Australian under-16 cricket team. I thank our many community volunteers who support local cricket and allow the sport to flourish. In particular, I acknowledge the Wallsend District Club president Stephen Storey and secretary Chris Bushell. I am proud to acknowledge Jason for his sportsmanship and commitment to cricket.

HALLIDAYS POINT LIONS CLUB CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:16): I inform the House of the Hallidays Point Lions Club citizen of the year award, which was presented to Black Head Surf Life Saving Club personality Terry Aldridge. Terry is a hands-on club member and club administrator. He has held many positions in the Black Head Surf Life Saving Club, including president, vice president, treasurer, director of junior activities and director of competition. Since 1968 he has also been an instructor and trainer. In that time he has trained many lifesavers. Humbled by the honour, Terry congratulated the other nominees on their contribution to our amazing community and finished by saying, "I'm not great on speeches; I'd rather just do some work." On behalf of all those in the electorate of Myall Lakes, I thank Terry for his work.

TRIBUTE TO WENDY SAVILLE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (13:17): I inform the House about local constituent Wendy Saville and her contribution to the great sport of tennis. Following a long and productive journey Wendy retired recently as a director of Tennis NSW. For 18 years she was also a member of the board of directors of Tennis NSW; for 24 years she was a director of the NSW Country Tennis Association, 12 as chair; for 25 years she was the head of the NSW Open Ballkid program; and recently she received the affirmation of life membership of Tennis NSW and Tennis Wollongong. I am proud of Wendy and the enormous contribution she has made to so many who play tennis. Everyone in the Illawarra loves tennis, but it also brings so much joy to people right across New South Wales and nationally.

ALBURY ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:18): I congratulate Albury Citizen of the Year, Graham Smith, who is recognised for outstanding involvement with Albury Scouts; Isabella Percy, the Albury Young Citizen of the Year; and Albury State Emergency Service unit controller Kevin Kennedy on being named Albury Volunteer of the Year. I congratulate also the Federation Council's Citizen of the Year, Peter Seeliger, on his involvement in many community organisations, and its Young Citizen of the Year, Liam Summons. Greater Hume Shire's Citizen of the Year Award is shared by Mick Broughan and Diana Wegener in recognition of their community work.

Mitchell O'Keefe was named Young Citizen of the Year. Murrumbidgee Council's Citizen of the Year is Sadie Herrick, who is recognised for her commitment to the Jerilderie Tidy Towns Committee. Jerilderie Sportsperson of the Year is John Purcell; and two Little Aussie awards went to Lucy Simpson of Jerilderie Public School and Mia Neessen of Saint Joseph's Primary School. In Tumbarumba, Tony and Susie a'Beckett were named Citizens of the Year for their extensive community work. The Senior Citizen award went to Margaret Wolter, and Charlee Blencowe was named the Young Citizen of the Year. Congratulations to all recipients.

CAMPBELLTOWN YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR ASTRID GRAHAM

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:19): I recognise the wonderful and ongoing achievements of Astrid Graham from Minto, who this year won the Campbelltown Young Citizen of the Year Award. Astrid, who is known as the Rainbow Warrior, is the community's charity champion. She is an inspiring and dedicated young woman who despite her young age has achieved so much. Her "Help Astrid Pay It Forward" charity and achievements include collecting clothing and toys and putting together care packages for those in need; growing her hair for the sole purpose of having it cut off and made into wigs for kids with cancer; putting together 50 Easter packs with winter pyjamas, colouring books and pencils; and visiting nursing homes at Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day since she was seven years of age. She has helped out at the Wayside Chapel and the WILMA Women's Health Centre, and I could go on. As well, Astrid is a talented dancer, athlete and dedicated student. We are very lucky and proud to have Astrid in our community. She is a role model for everyone in our community, young and old.

FRENCHS FOREST LIONS CLUB

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:20): I acknowledge the wonderful work of the Lions Club of Frenchs Forest for raising more than \$10,000 for charitable causes through its Santa Sleigh and the fortieth annual Christmas Carols, which are held at Lionel Watts Oval in Frenchs Forest. Having attended the popular community carols event in my electorate on 10 December, I commend the Lions Club president Wayne Brown

and his team, ably assisted by Rachael Jackson, an energetic and active community member, in organising and coordinating local community participants. As guest speaker at a Frenchs Forest Lions Club dinner meeting in January, I was delighted to hear the members resolve to allocate \$8,000 of the funds raised to the Australian Lions Childhood Cancer Research Foundation and \$2,000 to the Kids With Cancer Foundation Australia. Congratulations to all involved in these activities in the Forest area. They have tapped into a wonderful community spirit while contributing to extremely worthwhile charities.

SYDNEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FUNDRAISING

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:21): Today I recognise the generous spirit of eight-year-old St Clair resident Matilda Saunders. Matilda spent the six days leading up to Christmas busking outside St Clair Shopping Centre and Minchinbury Bunnings, where she raised \$1,620 for the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. Her younger brother, Caden, who has been diagnosed with bowel dysmotility, has spent the past five years in and out of hospital for treatment. It was after one of Caden's most recent hospital visits that Matilda was inspired to support the hospital. As a first-time busker, Matilda took it upon herself to learn enough music so that she could play her violin for 90 minutes straight. I extend my thanks to the local community and her school, Clairgate Public School, for supporting Matilda and this worthy cause. I commend Matilda for her giving and selfless nature. It is truly incredible to see Matilda use her talents to help and support others. On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament, I thank and congratulate Matilda for her remarkable fundraising efforts.

BAHAYRA YOUTH ASSOCIATION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:22): Last Sunday I had the pleasure of attending the Bahayra Youth Association's Saint Maroun Feast Day lunch. Thanks go to Nassim Jelwan and the association for generously hosting me and my family on the special day, which included the unveiling of the association's new kitchen at its centre in Punchbowl. Special thanks to my good friend the member for Lakemba, Jihad Dib, for supporting the Bahayra Youth Association's upgrades to its kitchen through the Community Building Partnership grants program. I acknowledge also Nassim Jelwan who, with his board, has championed the centre's growth. The centre was granted an initial \$30,000 in 2014 to begin upgrades to the centre, which I was delighted to support. I acknowledge also councillors Alex Kuskoff, Rachelle Harika, Bilal El-Hayek and George Zakhia for their attendance and support of the association. I am delighted and honoured to be the patron of the Bahayra Youth Association and I am a great supporter of the association's work and endeavours in the community.

MARY'S HOUSE WOMEN'S SHELTER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:23): I acknowledge the work of Mary's House and the North Shore Women's Benevolent Association. Mary's House is an amazing North Sydney not-for-profit organisation that provides crisis accommodation for women and their dependent children escaping domestic violence. I was fortunate recently to have the opportunity to meet with Mary's House staff, which includes Maggy Farago, Joanne Villacruz and Christine Clover, to discuss how we can work together to support women and to address domestic violence in our community. I thank them for the work they do in supporting women and their children in need. I recognise the community leadership shown by the Jesuit Parish of Our Lady of the Way in North Sydney, which led a crowdfunding campaign to create this crucial shelter, and all the supporters, including our local Mater Hospital.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT MR DAVID WALKER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:24): I recognise the significant contribution made by Mr David Walker, a resident in my electorate, and I congratulate him on receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia in this year's Australia Day awards for his service to the community. David's lifelong passion and commitment to brass bands has seen him teach in Hunter schools, play at ANZAC ceremonies, and serve long stints in a variety of community bands. Not only has David achieved significant accomplishments in music, he also has achieved 50 years of service in the Australian Army Reserves and a long career in coalmining. This makes David a coalmining, musical Army Reservist. What a mix. I acknowledge the incredible contribution that David has made to our community and express our gratitude for his service.

RETURN AND EARN LITTER REDUCTION SCHEME

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:25): The new Return and Earn scheme has been an enormous success for the Central Coast community, with more than 1.5 million drink containers returned so far. As of this morning, 358,000 bottles have been returned to the reverse vending machine at Woolworths at Erina Fair and 434,000 were returned at Carpet Court in Erina. Both sites are in my electorate of Terrigal. The four other collection points across the Central Coast are all well utilised. The new Return and Earn initiative is a 2015 election commitment that has now been delivered. I am pleased to be a part of this Government, which is

delivering on its promises. This scheme also forms a core component of one of the Premier's priorities: to reduce litter by 40 per cent by 2020. I thank everyone in my electorate and across the Central Coast who has done the right thing by disposing of drink containers and bottles responsibly. I encourage everyone to make the most of the 10¢ refund and return their drink containers at one of the reverse vending machines across the Central Coast.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:26): Many stellar Port Stephens residents were recognised this year on Australia Day. Citizen of the Year was awarded to Colleen Mulholland-Ruiz for her active role in the Positive Behaviour for Learning framework and for going above and beyond to support the community of Raymond Terrace as the centre manager for Raymond Terrace Marketplace. Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Mackenzie Bell, who participated in the MS 24 Hour Mega Swim. The Cultural Endeavour award went to Robyn Killen for her tireless work with the Port Stephens Community Arts Centre. Sportsperson of the Year was awarded to Colin Machon, who, over the past 25 years, has overseen a huge increase in membership of the Newcastle and Hunter Rugby League Club. Port Stephens medals were awarded to Geoffrey Bassar, Peter Clough and Leon Lindsay for their extensive contribution to our community through a myriad of organisations. Former Port Stephens councillors Geoff Dingle and Sally Dover were awarded the highest honour, becoming Freeman of Port Stephens. I thank all award recipients for their dedication to our community.

BUSHLINK DISABILITY PROGRAM

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:27): I will update the House on the good work of Manly Rotary and its relationship with Bushlink. Manly Rotary has provided Bushlink with a \$10,000 grant to fund a pilot program that will engage young people with disability from across the Northern Beaches to learn skills in building and caring for vegetable garden plots. This wonderful project engages schools by offering the installation of these garden beds at no cost to the school. This project helps to educate local kids about horticulture and healthy eating. The program assists the Bushlink team members in acquiring important skills for further employment and boosts their self-confidence. Construction on the first vegetable bed began last week and is progressing well. I thank my friends at Manly Rotary and Cathy Hockey from Bushlink for their ongoing efforts. I commend the work of Manly Rotary for supporting such a worthwhile organisation.

TUGGERAH RAILWAY STATION LIFTS

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:28): I thank and acknowledge constituents of my electorate who contacted my office regarding a letter they received from the Minister for Transport in response to a petition they had signed asking for lifts to be installed at Tuggerah Station. I acknowledge Ann Sattler, Terry Baird, Lauren Winstanley, Dr Brian McKeown, Kenton Moon, Bradley Geary, Maureen Kiernan and John Green for sharing their concern about the lack of lifts at Tuggerah railway station with the Minister and me. Their stories, which are only a few of many, demonstrate the importance of this issue to the whole community. Their campaign for lifts at Tuggerah station has been long, but through their passion and contributions I am sure they will get the Minister's attention in due course.

ST GEORGE CENTRAL ROTARY CLUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:29): I acknowledge the work of the Rotary Club of St George Central and congratulate the club on its service to our local community. Due to insignificant membership the club can no longer operate and so, as of 1 January 2018, the club has officially ceased to operate. Although it is saddening to see this outcome, I acknowledge and congratulate the club and all its members on its service to the local community. The club has offered its members the opportunity to pay it forward and to have a positive impact in their local areas. I have worked closely with the club over many years to deliver successful fundraising and charitable work not only in my electorate but also across the St George area. I acknowledge the outgoing president of the Rotary Club of St George Central, Jenny Lam, and I wish her the very best in her future endeavours. I thank each and every one of the members of the Rotary Club of St George Central for their contribution to the Rotary movement right across the St George area, raising much-needed funding for many worthwhile groups.

RANDWICK BOTANY LITTLE ATHLETICS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:30): It was once again my honour to attend the season opening of Randwick Botany Little Athletics, this time for its fiftieth year, at Hensley Athletic Field. Randwick Botany is truly an exceptional club. It was New South Wales' first Little Athletics club, and to this day members of the club proudly wear number one on their shirts in recognition of the club's special place in history. Many people in our community have had some involvement with Randwick Botany Little Athletics, whether it is the kids themselves or as parents. It is a testament to the fantastic service it provides to our community, and many children are involved year after year. For more than four decades Tony and Judy Vecellio have been the heart and soul of the club and

the club's success in no small part is owed to these two stalwarts. I ask the House to acknowledge and congratulate the club on 50 fabulous years, and may there be 50 more.

OAKVILLE BUSHFIRE BRIGADE AWARD RECIPIENT RONALD SMITH

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:30): Today I acknowledge Ronald Smith who was recognised with the Australian Fire Service Medal in the Australia Day 2018 Honours List. Ronald joined the Oakville Bushfire Brigade in 1956 at the age of 13 and was elected equipment officer two years later. The fire station was situated on his family property. He is a former member of the Kenthurst brigade, where he served as deputy captain, senior deputy captain, captain and president. In 2003 he moved to Hallidays Point—a very smart man—and joined the Diamond Beach brigade where he has served as the training officer and is currently a deputy captain. Ronald has also acted as deputy group captain for the Taree Manning Valley district. Ronald Smith has dedicated more than 60 years of service to the NSW Rural Fire Service and has no plans of retiring any time soon. Ronald, thank you for your service to our community and to this great State.

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE LIFE MEMBER WENDY PEARSON

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:31): Today I congratulate Ms Wendy Pearson, founder of Maitland's University of the Third Age [U3A] chapter. Ms Pearson was recently named a life member by the chapter for her continued contributions to the group. Wendy is personally responsible for bringing the U3A concept to Maitland through a public meeting she organised at the local town hall. The first courses for the Maitland chapter were offered in January 2013. Five years later the chapter offers more than 50 courses and activities for members to participate in. It is an important institution for older people in our community in that it helps them to keep learning, to keep their minds active and to engage in a social and informative forum with each other. Many thanks go to Ms Pearson for her efforts to give ageing and older people in Maitland an opportunity to connect, learn and live a life of value in a new way locally and now through a global education platform. I look forward to welcoming members of the chapter to Parliament House next week.

ALBURY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:32): The Australia Day Honours List this year listed several noteworthy recipients in the Albury electorate. Jenny Ellis, a midwife at the Albury Wodonga Health Maternity Unit, was awarded an Order of Australia medal. Jenny has been in the profession since 1976, after finishing her general training at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. Andrew Spilva of Mulwala was also awarded the Order of Australia medal for his great service to the community of Yarrawonga and Mulwala. Holbrook State Emergency Service volunteer unit worker Phil Downs received an Emergency Services Medal. Phil is one of the founding members of the unit. Congratulations to all the worthy recipients.

GOSFORD MUSICAL SOCIETY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:33): Gosford Musical Society—a fantastic family of love, support and success. I congratulate every single member of the team who worked to create the fabulous performance of *HONK*. *HONK* was the summer Gosford Musical Society youth production of *The Ugly Duckling*. Not only did we see a brilliant show but we learnt an important message of acceptance and inclusion. Behind the scenes was a complex commitment from the Gosford Musical Society family who worked so hard on production, props, costumes, lighting, singing, dancing and musical tutorials, and promotion, and the list goes on. My heart is alive with the community passion of the talented eight to 18-year-old performers of today on the coast, who will perform and produce on stages around Australia and in the future around the world and—fingers and toes crossed—eventually return to the beautiful Central Coast community to give back. Thanks so much to the young people of Gosford and to their mentors and supporters, who were once the young people of our community.

WAKEHURST OVAL RESURFACING

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:34): On Friday 2 February I was pleased to attend an opening ceremony for the resurfaced Wakehurst Oval in my electorate. The event was attended by Wakehurst Rugby Club president David Cleary, patron Julie Sutton, and Gareth Blades, who was instrumental in the resurfacing project. The playing surface benefited from regrading, returfing and improved drainage, with \$50,000 in funding awarded from the 2016 Community Building Partnership grants program. I also had the opportunity of speaking to parents and children about the New South Wales Government's new Active Kids \$100 voucher program which is available to school-aged children and youth across the State. It was extremely well received. I commend all involved in the project on their commitment and anticipate that Wakehurst Oval will continue to serve Wakehurst Rugby Club and other community groups for many years to come.

GLEE COFFEE ROASTERS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:35): Today I speak in recognition of a Central Coast business that has made itself a home in Wyong, Glee Coffee Roasters, which is located in the beautiful historic Chapman Building in Wyong, a place now extremely popular with locals. The company's distribution centre is also located in Wyong. From there they roast, cut, bag and ship all of their coffee. Glee Coffee Roasters fixes machines and bottles cold brew to supply their stores in Wyong and Erina Heights. Glee Coffee Roasters began with brothers Ben and Chris Gleeson and has remained a family affair. Their close-knit team is always friendly and fast. They make a great cup of coffee as well as great food. The team specialises in specialty coffee and always aims to be at the forefront of what it does. It offers a range of barista courses to inspire coffee enthusiasts and professionals alike. I congratulate Glee Coffee Roasters on their success so far and look forward to seeing what they do in the future. I look forward in particular to going to their headquarters at North Wyong and sampling all their coffee.

PENRITH REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:36): On the first Sunday of February each year a gathering of national servicemen, their families and dignitaries join together at Victoria Park in St Marys to commemorate, honour and remember the service and sacrifice of our national servicemen. The proceedings this year were organised by John Taylor, President of the Penrith City Australian National Servicemen's Association [ANSA]. Harry May, Graham Ware, Tony Mullavey, Mick Visinko, Tony Fryer, Deputy Mayor of Penrith Councillor Trisha Hitchen, and State President Ron Brown, OAM, all participated in this important event. We remain indebted to Tom Kelly and Harry Morfoot, who have now passed, for their determination to see this perpetual tribute in Penrith city in honour of our national servicemen. I am proud to have known Harry Morfoot in his last years. I remain committed to always supporting our national servicemen and our veterans, for without their service and dedication to protect our nation the history of Australia would be very different and our freedoms not what they are today.

BANKSTOWN ELECTORAL OFFICE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:37): Last Wednesday I had the pleasure of hosting the official opening ceremony of my new electoral office in Bankstown, which is right across from Bankstown Sports Club. At the outset, I thank my good friend the member for Maroubra, Michael Daley, for opening my new office, and the Federal member for Blaxland, Jason Clare, and the member for Fairfield, Guy Zangari, who were in attendance. I acknowledge and thank the Speaker and parliamentary staff for their support in helping us move. I thank the Bankstown Sports Club, Ronis Real Estate and everyone who has been involved in helping us move to this wonderful location. I thank also Uncle Harry for his welcome to country, John Murray, OAM, Councillor Alex Kuskoff, Mark Condi, Vern Falconer, Jim Ronis, Trent Engisch, Mark Kirkland from the *Torch*, Father Panagiotis from the Greek Orthodox Parish of St Euphemia, and Father Macwan from Christ the King parish, as well as the many other representatives from the local community who came and helped us celebrate such an important occasion.

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:38): I acknowledge the recipients of the Australia Day citizenship awards across the North Sydney municipality. I was privileged to join with North Sydney mayor, Jilly Gibson, and deputy mayor, Stephen Barbour, to recognise these recipients. The North Sydney Citizen of the Year award was given to Sister Carmel McDonough for her role as a mission educator at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College. I joined Sister Carmel at Monte last week to make a special presentation in acknowledgement of her contribution to social justice issues and her influence on educating young women with purpose and impact.

I congratulate the two winners of the Community Group/Event of the Year. Helen and Kostas Mallikopoulos are well known across my electorate for their stunning Christmas light display that draws large crowds and has raised money for various charities over the past two decades, including tens of thousands of dollars for the Cancer Council. The Uniting North Sydney Local Area Coordination Team was also recognised for helping those with disability better engage with their community and live a quality life. Congratulations to all the recipients on their North Sydney Australia Day citizenship awards.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:39): I ask the House to recognise Luke Elsegood of Salamander Bay, the winner of my 2017 Port Stephens preschool Christmas card design competition. I received a number of wonderful entries and it was difficult to pick a winner, but in the end Luke's entry won over my selection panel, which is my children. Luke, who is five years old, was a student at the beautiful Karingal Preschool in Nelson Bay. I thank Luke for his winning entry and encourage him to continue making great art. I also commend the other finalists: Holly from Raymond Terrace, Rory from Shoal Bay, Arabella from Nelson

Bay and April from Soldiers Point. I thank the preschools that participated, especially Raymond Terrace Community Preschool and Karingal Preschool in Nelson Bay. I wish all of last year's preschool students well with their future schooling. I thank all of the wonderful teachers and educators at all of the beautiful preschools and long day care services across Port Stephens, who support children to be all that they can be every day.

DANCE UPON A DREAM COMPETITION WINNER EVIE MCGARRY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:40): A champion young dancer lives in Forresters Beach in my electorate of Terrigal. Nine-year-old Evie McGarry was recently crowned the 2017 best "mini dancer" of the year in the Dance Upon a Dream competition, which means she was awarded the top prize in the under-10 category worldwide. This international competition involves dancers uploading videos of their dance routines. The competition was set up several years ago by *Dancing with the Stars* judge and Central Coast local Josh Horner. Local newspapers have described Evie as a "pocket rocket", given her impressive record of achievements: Last year in Los Angeles at the Olympics equivalent for dancing, Evie won six medals. She also recently won the national junior hip hop and student choreographer categories. This qualified her to attend the national dance titles on the Gold Coast earlier this year, at which she was runner-up. This is an incredible record of achievements, especially given that Evie is just nine years old. I congratulate Evie on her passion and persistence in her dancing.

ST CATHERINE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:41): It was wonderful to join the community on 25 November 2017 at the St Catherine Greek Orthodox Church in Mascot to celebrate the feast day of St Catherine of Alexandria. Referred to in Greece as the Great Martyr, St Catherine is the patron of philosophers and preachers. It is always fabulous to join Greek community members in my electorate. They are more than just supporters; they have been dear friends throughout my many years in public life. I thank the leaders of St Catherine Greek Orthodox Church for the invitation. I thank His Grace Bishop Seraphim and Father Arthur Giatsios. The NSW Police Force was represented at the feast day by Detective Superintendent Arthur Katsogiannis, who is a fine example of the long and commendable contribution made to our country by generations of Greek migrants. To the Greek community of Heffron I say, "Ef-har-isto".

MUSIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF NSW

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:42): I acknowledge the dedication of the Music Teachers' Association of NSW in my electorate. The association is a membership group for music teachers at professional and studio levels who nurture aspiring musicians in their talents and pave the way for a promising future in music. I recently had the privilege of being given life membership, as well as being appointed as a patron of the association. I recognise and thank President Rita Crews and her entire team for their ongoing work and dedication in fostering a creative culture in my electorate. Rita and her team support and advocate for music teachers who work in schools and who tutor privately. The association has nurtured many successful performers through its commitment to the betterment of music education. The association has always been and continues to be a community-based organisation. I congratulate members on their outstanding work.

MAMBO-WANDA WETLANDS CONSERVATION GROUP

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:43): I recognise the enormous effort made over the Christmas break by the terrific Mambo-Wanda Wetlands Conservation Group. The group spent the entire Christmas period—from the end of November until today—obtaining signatures for a petition to save the Mambo wetlands. The petition is very simple: it asks the Government to buy back the Mambo wetlands which it sold off last year. Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter, Scot MacDonald, has described the sale as a mistake. Our community is asking the Government to fix that mistake. This group has worked so hard and has obtained more than 13,000 signatures on the petition, which I have tabled today. I look forward to the debate in Parliament to understand why this Government will not act to fix its mistake and return the Mambo-Wanda Wetlands to public hands.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT DONNA BALLARD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:44): I congratulate Donna Ballard who, on Australia Day, was awarded the Wingham Rotary Club's Citizen of the Year award. Donna is the coordinator of Akoostik Festival, which over 10 years has grown from a one-day event to a three-day festival. In 2004 the Akoostik Festival gained Destination NSW funding as a flagship event. Last year it attracted more than 5,000 people to the Wingham showground to enjoy music from legendary Australian artists such as Kasey Chambers, Russell Morris and the Eurogliders. In accepting the award Donna recognised the Akoostik family, a group of more than 140 volunteers. "I just pull the threads together," she quipped. I thank and congratulate Donna Ballard on behalf of the Myall Lakes community.

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR BILL SARAVINOVSKI

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:45): I recognise and pay respect to His Worship the Mayor of Bayside, Councillor Bill Saravinovski, the inaugural mayor of Bayside Council. For more than three decades Councillor Saravinovski served the City of Rockdale as both a councillor and mayor. He did so with great zest and dedication. He has now taken on the job of leading a newly merged council, which has completely different demographics and service levels. It is an enormous task. Bayside Council covers part of my electorate—the part that I represented as mayor for more than three decades. It is a hard task to provide services to my constituents but Bill Saravinovski has done so with great dedication, zest and zeal. The House should thank him for his services to the Bayside community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): It being 1.45 p.m. I will now vacate the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Announcements***MS JO HAYLEN, MEMBER FOR SUMMER HILL**

The SPEAKER: I inform members of the happy news that on 14 December 2017 the member for Summer Hill, Jo Haylen, gave birth to twins: Elliot Rose Haylen Williams and Dylan Lucca Williams. I am informed that mum, dad, Archie and the babies are doing well.

*Commemorations***CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR**

The SPEAKER (14:18): An hour before the break of daylight each morning soldiers lined the fire steps of the trenches along the Western Front with their rifles loaded and bayonets fixed. Most attacks were launched under the cover of pre-dawn darkness, so forces were deployed defensively each morning in a routine known as the Stand-To-Arms, or simply Stand-To. Most mornings there was no attack. Most mornings soldiers stood together in the slowly breaking light, quietly reflecting on the memory of fallen comrades. Today, the melancholy silence of the Stand-To has become the annual observance of the Dawn Service.

A century ago this month, Reverend Arthur Ernest White, a former Army chaplain with the 44th Battalion, held a requiem mass for the battle dead in St John's Anglican Church in Albany, Western Australia. Many claim White's mass was a dawn service, the first to be held for fallen Anzacs. Twelve years later, having returned to Albany following time in the eastern States as a curate, Reverend White conducted a dawn service on Anzac Day. The ceremony was followed by the casting of a wreath into the harbour from which 30,000 Anzacs had embarked for the journey to Europe in 1914, many never to return. In the decades since, such ceremonies have become the most solemn and important tradition in our annual remembrance of the Anzacs and their sacrifice. Lest we forget.

*Announcements***ACTING CLERK-ASSISTANT, TABLE, AND DIRECTOR, TABLE AND CHAMBER SERVICES**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that:

- (1) On 27 November 2017 Carly Maxwell was appointed Acting Clerk-Assistant, Table.
- (2) On 8 January 2018 Simon Johnston was appointed Director, Table and Chamber Services.

Both appointments are until 1 July 2018.

DEATH OF PETER MACQUARIE TOMS, A FORMER MEMBER FOR MAITLAND

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 1 November 2017 of Peter Macquarie Toms, a former member of the Legislative Assembly. He served as the member for Maitland from 21 February 1981 to 26 August 1981. On behalf of the House, I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

DEATH OF JOSEPH JOHN SCHIPP, A FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 23 November 2017 of the Hon. Joseph John Schipp, a former Minister of the Crown. He served as the member for Wagga Wagga from 6 December 1975 to 5 March 1999. On behalf of the House, I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained. The death of the Hon. Joseph John Schipp will be the subject of a motion of sympathy on a future day.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

**DEATH OF STANLEY ALFRED JAMES KNOWLES, A FORMER MEMBER FOR INGLEBURN
AND MACQUARIE FIELDS**

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 30 December 2017 of Stanley Alfred James Knowles, a former member of the Legislative Assembly. He served as the member for Ingleburn from 19 September 1981 to 22 February 1988, and as the member for Macquarie Fields from 19 March 1988 to 11 October 1990. On behalf of the House, I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

DEATH OF BARRY CHARLES WILDE, A FORMER MEMBER FOR PARRAMATTA

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 18 January 2018 of Barry Charles Wilde, a former member of the Legislative Assembly. He served as the member for Parramatta from 1 May 1976 to 22 February 1988. On behalf of the House, I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

Bills

EDUCATION AMENDMENT (SCHOOL SAFETY) BILL 2017

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AMENDMENT (EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT) BILL 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2017

ROAD TRANSPORT AND RELATED LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017

RURAL CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2017

NATURAL RESOURCES ACCESS REGULATOR BILL 2017

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (REGIONAL JOINT ORGANISATIONS) BILL 2017

ELECTORAL BILL 2017

STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SURCHARGE) BILL 2017

TERRORISM (HIGH RISK OFFENDERS) BILL 2017

BUILDING PRODUCTS (SAFETY) BILL 2017

Assent

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bills.

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor:

T F BATHURST
Lieutenant-Governor

Government House
Sydney, 4 December 2017

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 5 December 2017

General David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

*Question Time***THE HON. ANDREW JAMES CONSTANCE, MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:25): My question is directed to the Premier. Does the Premier stand by her comments on 25 January that the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure has done a great job and that the people of New South Wales are lucky to have him?

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sure the Leader of the Opposition wants to hear the Premier's answer. Members will cease interjecting to allow that to occur.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:26): If only the Ministers in the former Labor Government had the same record as our Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the Premier. The member for Londonderry and other members will stop screeching. The Leader of the Opposition has asked a question and I cannot hear the Premier's answer. Members will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let us not forget that those opposite cut 400 daily rail services. Since we have been in government, under this Minister's leadership 28,000—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. The member's interjections are inappropriate.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They slashed 1,500 weekly bus services and hundreds of ferry services. Since we have been in government, this Minister has introduced 28,000 extra services.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let us not forget that one of the reasons they had such a debacle in public transport was because suddenly the Minister's chief of staff became the Deputy Director General of the Ministry for Transport. Who was that? It was the member for Keira.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber. Government members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What did they oversee? Do members remember the T-card—\$100 million wasted with nothing to show for it? Let us not forget the CBD-Rozelle Metro—half a million dollars down the drain with nothing to show for it.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite opposed the Sydney Metro to Bankstown. We are all for it, and this Minister will build it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I wish that every question I am asked today is about the performance of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Charlestown will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government is overseeing not only record numbers of services in transport but also an infrastructure agenda that has never before been seen. The questions we need to ask are: Why does the Labor leader oppose the Sydney Metro? Why does he oppose WestConnex? Why does he oppose the light rail? Why does he oppose extra services? I remember those days under Labor when their transport Ministers changed the definition of "on-time running" because it did not suit their purposes. Under our Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, on-time running is over 90 per cent. When those opposite were in government, they changed the definition and still could not meet the targets.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Whether it is public transport, health or education, the people of New South Wales know that the record of those opposite was abysmal. I am proud of all of my team, and I am proud of a Minister who is delivering extra services and record infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting or they will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It does not matter what those opposite say, we know that the people of New South Wales are grateful that we are working hard for them day in and day out.

The SPEAKER: Order! It has been a poor start to question time. Several members have been called to order and one member is on three calls to order. I will resort to the old system that any member on one call to order who continues to be disorderly will be placed on three calls to order and removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day. The House will come to order.

ROAD TOLL STATISTICS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:31): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government working to reduce the road toll and make New South Wales roads safer?

The SPEAKER: Order! I advise members that they should not interject during this answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:31): I thank the member for Terrigal for his question. I know that for him and all members of this place road safety is a serious issue. Our Government is committed to doing everything we can to reduce not only the number of deaths on our roads but also serious injury and other occurrences, which are causing heartache to too many families across the State. Sadly, last year 392 people lost their lives on New South Wales roads—that is more than one a day—with countless others left injured. There is a serious or fatal crash on New South Wales roads every 41 minutes. As a result, families and individuals are left with despair and heartache. As a government and community, we know we need to do more.

Today, alongside the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, I announced even more measures to ensure that we are doing everything we can to keep the community safe. Before I go into detail, I will say something about personal responsibility. No matter what laws we pass as a government, even if they are the strongest laws on the planet, every time any one of us gets behind the wheel of a motor vehicle we must do everything we can to keep ourselves safe and, more importantly, to keep others safe on the road. We all must account for our personal responsibility. As a government, we have to remind people of their responsibility through public campaigns and education, and we will.

As part of the measures announced today, the Government will expand the Mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program to include all mid-range drink-driving offenders. That means from now anyone who is charged with a mid-range drink-driving offence will have an interlock system fitted to their car which prevents them from starting the car if they are over the alcohol content limit. Police will be given the power to issue on-the-spot fines and licence suspensions for low-range drink-driving offences. This ensures swift and certain penalties so that people will think twice before they drink and get behind the wheel of a motor vehicle. Further, we will amend legislation to allow camera technology to be used to enforce mobile phone offences.

We have heard many horror stories about people being distracted by mobile phones and other electrical devices, especially those just starting to drive. A senior police officer told me that his advice to parents was that mobile phones should be kept in the boot so that they did not distract young drivers. We will do everything we can to provide deterrents so that people are not distracted on our roads. Given the unfortunate high incidence of heavy vehicle crashes in New South Wales, additional speed cameras will be placed in certain locations to monitor heavy vehicle average speed limits. On top of the record amount we are investing in road safety, we are also investing an additional \$125 million in Saving Lives on Country Roads. That will include the installation of safety barriers, tactile line markings, wide centre lines and safety upgrades at high-risk curves. We know that there are hotspots where accidents unfortunately recur. We will be investing those dollars where they are needed most.

We have already announced that we will include cocaine testing in the roadside drug testing regime and we will double the number of roadside drug tests to 200,000 per year by the end of 2020. People are beginning to get the message about drink-driving, although not enough. We know that we need to also remain vigilant against driving whilst under the influence of illegal drugs or other drugs. We will work with local government to deliver additional 40 kilometres an hour zones in high pedestrian activity areas. That will be done in consultation with local government because the high incidence of accidents is due partly to accidents on local roads, not just State roads.

In addition to those measures that we will legislate for, we will also review a number of other areas in which we think we can play a role. A review is underway into restrictions on people who drive after using prescription drugs, and the interagency group will report back to the Government in April. We know that prescription drugs can impair people's ability to drive. As a government, we want to ensure that we leave no stone unturned. Of course, we will be consulting with health and justice experts to receive their advice. The NSW Sentencing Council will also be looking into the sentencing of repeat traffic offenders who may pose an ongoing risk to the community. We are also reviewing road safety campaigns to find out what is and is not working

and where we should be targeting our funding. If there is more that we can do to get the message out to the community, we will do it. [*Extension of time*]

I assure the community that we are thinking outside the box when looking at ways to increase road safety. For example, we will look at whether it is possible to take advantage of new technology such as dashboard cameras to allow people to take control and do in dangerous drivers. These are the types of conversations that we want to have with the community. As a government, we know that there is no single solution for reducing the road toll; there are several things we can do. That is why our Road Safety Plan is so comprehensive. I thank all those in government who have been working on this for some time. I assure the community that the Road Safety Plan will involve not only those whose job it is to invest in our roads but police, health experts and justice representatives will also be involved in ensuring that we implement the strategy in the most appropriate way.

We know that the measures we have announced today will go some way towards saving lives on our roads, but it is up to all of us to take on an extra level of responsibility when we get behind the wheel. I feel very strongly about that. Strict laws and penalties will only go so far. We need to make sure that we are doing everything we can to support the community. Everyone must realise that when they act dangerously behind the wheel they put not only their own life but also the lives of others at risk. I assure members of this House and the community that if there is more we need to do we will do it. If we receive more evidence or advice we will act on it. We will work hard to ensure that no other family experiences the heartbreak that too many have suffered, especially in the past few months.

SYDNEY FERRIES "NAME YOUR FERRY" SURVEY

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:38): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Given that pensioners are forced to live on less than \$25,000 a year, why would the Minister spend four times that amount on a survey to find a name for a new ferry, only to ignore the results and then, in a moment of ministerial brilliance, call it *Ferry McFerryface*?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order; they are not helping. I will not be able to hear the Minister's answer. Opposition members will come to order. Some of them are on a knife's edge of being removed from the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:39): I saw that Paul Keating made the press last week with the Leader of the Opposition. One of my favourite Keating quotes is when he said that it is "like being flogged with a warm lettuce." If that is the best Labor has, things are looking pretty good.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. She will cease interjecting. I call the member for Charlestown to order for the first time. I warn all members not to interject. The member for Maroubra, who asked the question, will come to order. Opposition members will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am very pleased that the final ferry in the Emerald class fleet to be named has been named after the iconic Australian children's author, May Gibbs, who had a lifelong love of Sydney Harbour and who gave so much to our State. The current Minister for Disability Services appreciates—and as a former Minister for Disability Services I also know only too well—the enormous legacy that May Gibbs gave children with disability. May Gibbs handed over her literary copyright to wonderful organisations such as the Northcott Disability Services and the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. *May Gibbs* is a fitting name for a ferry.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. She will cease interjecting or she will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Prospect and the member for Port Stephens will come to order. I remind the member for Swansea that question time is not a debate.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Opposition members know full well that the panel, with assistance from my department, named five ferries. I reiterate that May Gibbs is an incredibly important person to our nation. This year marks the celebration of one of her finest works, *Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie*.

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

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Ultimately, the ferry was named appropriately. I asked the Minister the reason for spending \$100,000 of taxpayers' money on chasing one of the relatives of Ronald McDonald to name the ferry after them.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order and I uphold it. I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have named the five ferries and the last ferry to be named was the *May Gibbs*. What is particularly interesting is the person the Opposition wanted for the name of the last-named

ferry. I wonder what the reason might be for that. The naming of the ferry *May Gibbs* is synonymous with the wishes of the children of Sydney.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease making puerile and juvenile interjections. The member for Strathfield will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I gave an undertaking to the boss of the Maritime Union of Australia to revisit the name of the ferry after summer, and I did. I am very pleased that the State now has a ferry named after May Gibbs.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Canterbury that she is on three calls to order. If she continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber. I warn members, particularly Opposition members, that continual interjection will not be tolerated.

BEACH SAFETY

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (14:42): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is the Government ensuring that swimmers and surfers have the best level of protection from dangerous weather and sharks on our coastline?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:43): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He represents an area with splendid beaches that are frequented by many tourists. I am sure that during the summer break many members enjoyed spending time with their families by visiting their local beaches. It is great to see all members back here safely. Approximately three weeks ago a most remarkable rescue occurred at Lennox Head on the North Coast of the State. Often this House discusses infrastructure investment by the Government in programs and services. New South Wales is the start-up State. The Government is very proud to back entrepreneurs, start-up companies and innovation. The investment of \$430,000 in drone technology originally was pitched to the Government as one means among others of keeping swimmers at our beaches safe from sharks. What was remarkable about the recent incident was that one of those drones was used by Surf Life Saving Australia and some great lifesavers to rescue two teenagers.

At about 11.30 a.m. lifeguards were preparing for a training session to familiarise themselves with a drone when two teenagers, Gabe and Monty, were swimming in a powerful surf about one kilometre north of the flags at Lennox Head. A member of the public noticed that the boys were struggling and, of course, notified the lifeguards. Lifeguard supervisor Jai Sheridan launched the Little Ripper UAV drone and guided it to the young men. Once Gabe and Monty were located, the drone hovered over them and dropped pods that they then used to make their way back to shore. Those who have not already watched the video of the rescue should do so; it is well worth viewing.

The rescue has been reported across the world as the first time that drone technology has been used to save lives at sea. The entire rescue took only 70 seconds. As members know, seconds are the difference between life and death when we are dealing with rescues. The Government's small investment of \$430,000 in drone technology has produced a fantastic outcome. We cannot put a price on a life. The Hon. Ben Franklin, the Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy and Northern NSW, is doing fantastic work representing the people of Ballina and Byron Bay.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will cease being silly.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We have already seen today that members opposite simply want to play politics. This is a story about saving two teenagers from drowning. This Government's investment was championed by the Hon. Ben Franklin, who should be congratulated on the work he has been doing. As I said, this story was reported by media outlets across the world, including the *New York Times*, CNN, NBC and the BBC. People throughout the world are talking about how this Government's investment in drone technology was the difference between life and death for two teenagers who were enjoying their summer break with their families. The commentary included discussion about other applications of this technology, such as supplying water to mountainous areas. A former lifeguard said it was awesome and that there was no doubt we were witnessing the next generation of rescues.

I must not forget to thank our lifeguards and volunteers. A person in the United States quipped, "Amazing rescue. What they didn't tell you was that they also dropped two tinnies of beer and a bucket of shrimps." Members opposite said they wanted the Government to provide shark surveillance; that is being done. They said they wanted the Government to provide shark nets; that is being done. They said that they wanted to see more science and research; that is being done. They also said they wanted more community education; and that is also being done.

This Government has done everything asked of it by members opposite. The rescue of those two young men is a good example of the benefits of this Government's action. It could have been a tragic story. It is great to be here in the Parliament today to relay a good news story that is the result of this Government's investment.

TRAIN TIMETABLES

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:48): I direct my question to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Why did the Minister implement the new timetable when Transport for NSW did not have the 150 extra train drivers it required?

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn members about interjecting before the Minister has even started to answer the question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:48): I welcome this question because the Government has delivered an extra 28,000 weekly train services across the network and it is implementing the largest public transport infrastructure program in the State's history. It is also building three new metro projects and three new light rail projects. In addition, it is delivering the largest train procurement program in the State's history with 24 new Waratah trains, light rail vehicles, metro trains, intercity fleet trains and the soon-to-be implemented XPT regional fleet replacement program. This city and this State are undergoing incredible growth. Last year patronage on the Sydney train network increased by 11 per cent. Unlike those opposite and their do-nothing approach, we have invested \$1.5 billion in new staff and new trains and we are delivering an uplift in services to accommodate the needs of the people of Western Sydney.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Gosford that this is not a debate.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is very telling that those opposite have said, "Let's go back to the old timetable. Let's just disregard the 11 per cent growth and the projected 21 per cent growth—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —Let's just leave people standing around on platforms unable to get onto trains." That is the policy of those opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question related to train drivers and the inability of the Minister to have the extra train drivers to run—

The SPEAKER: I heard the question. I will listen further to the Minister, who is being generally relevant. There is no point of order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thank the shadow Minister for her question on the timetable. We have delivered hundreds of additional services across the weekends, in the late evenings, in the intra-peak period and across the peak period to the people of Western Sydney. The Leader of the Opposition now needs to explain to communities at places like Penrith, Parramatta, Seven Hills and Blacktown why he is going to cut their services. Why is he going back to the old timetable?

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question specifically related to—

The SPEAKER: I heard the question. If the member stopped interjecting she might be able to hear also. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Given that 11 per cent increase in patronage growth, I am happy to argue the benefits of timetable changes for the people of Western Sydney every day of the week. One of the things I have heard those opposite say—and, of course, there is an enterprise bargaining agreement on at the moment—is that they want to bust the wage cap.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Later this year the Leader of the Opposition is going to have to account to the Parliamentary Budget Office for the wage increases he is going to give the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU]—that wonderful union that has donated \$206,000 to the Labor Party.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What I would say to those opposite—

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: How are those opposite going to pay for that? Are they going to put fares up? We know they are bad with money—really, really bad.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who continue to interject will be out of the Chamber until tomorrow.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Since coming to office the staff on our train network have worked with the Government to increase customer satisfaction by 10 per cent. They are hardworking. They are not a political football for the Leader of the Opposition or anybody else.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: These hardworking staff are working around the clock to deliver more and more services to our growing city. We have invested \$1.5 billion to improve infrastructure across the network. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and member for Hornsby, knows that within three weeks over the summer period we transformed the largest train junction in the nation. We did this to improve reliability and to enable trains to pass through that section of the network more quickly.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many conversations and interjections in the Chamber. The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: At the same time we had to use additional staff to stable those trains that required stabling and could no longer be housed at Hornsby. Again, the workforce provided that support to the Government as we made that investment. We make no apologies for investing \$1.5 billion in a new timetable and we make no apologies for investing in 24 brand new Waratah trains, which will start to arrive this year. Those opposite want to play politics when we are about delivering services to the people of this State.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (14:53): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. How is the New South Wales Government helping to keep communities safe on the roads across the State?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:54): I genuinely thank our new member for Murray for that question—a member who has hit the ground running and who, I have no doubt, has spent an enormous amount of time in his car over the past few weeks. To give members an idea of the number of kilometres the member for Murray has to do—as does the member for Barwon—the most easterly point in his electorate is actually closer to Sydney than it is to Leeton, and the most westerly point in his electorate is closer to Sydney than it is to Wentworth. I am grateful to him and to the new member for Cootamundra for the discussions we have had about having thorough conversations with country people about the challenges we face. As the Premier pointed out, every 41 minutes in New South Wales someone is killed or seriously injured on our roads, bringing unimaginable heartache to so many. We saw way too much of it over the Christmas period.

It was a pleasure to join with the Premier today as we launched the New South Wales Government's Road Safety Plan 2021—a plan that was developed not just over the summer period but over the past 12 months—which includes a comprehensive package that addresses speeding, drink-driving, drug-driving, driver distraction, driver fatigue and truck safety. The plan includes funding to deliver important infrastructure to make country roads safer immediately. The package announced in today's Road Safety Plan 2021 includes expanding the Mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program to include all mid-range drink-driving offenders. An interlock is a breath-testing device fitted to a car's ignition system. The driver must provide a negative sample for the vehicle to start. Police will be given the power to issue on-the-spot fines and licence suspensions for low-range drink-driving. The plan ensures swift and certain penalties.

Another measure is permitting camera technology to be used to enforce mobile phone offences. The community is very forceful and strong with us in this conversation. People realise that mobile phone distraction is a problem on our roads. Too often we drive past people using their phones—texting, breaking the law and being unsafe—so we are prepared to look at that technology in this modern age and at how we may be able to use it to ensure that people do the right thing. Another measure is using 11 additional heavy vehicle average speed camera locations across metropolitan Sydney to address risks associated with greater truck movements related to our infrastructure program, particularly in this city and in regional New South Wales, as heavy vehicle movements increase across the whole State.

Madam Speaker, you and I had a conversation in recent weeks around our \$125 million Saving Lives on Country Roads program, which will ensure that we can have rumble tape to alert drivers that they are coming to a problem area or to let them know they might be drifting off the side of the road, but will also ensure that we have wire safety barriers in the centre of the road. Eight out of 10 accidents in country areas happen when people

go across the median strip or across the lines, or go off to the left. That is the greatest cause of serious injuries across New South Wales. To have an immediate funding mechanism for that is an appropriate way forward to ensure that we not only improve the infrastructure but that we also spend a lot of our energy improving driver education and information.

We are going to double our roadside drug testing from 100,000 to 200,000 tests a year by the year 2020. It is important to remind the House of one of the most significant initiatives that this Government introduced in 2012, which was the creation of the Community Road Safety Fund. We want the community to understand that when they do the wrong thing by speeding and are fined, that money is not just a revenue-raising source for this Government—that money is reinvested into road safety. Sixty per cent of the \$282 million Community Road Safety Fund budget comes from people doing the wrong thing, but it is going in for the right reasons: to improve road safety, our advertising and our capability to get the message out to the community that we all must be better behind the wheel. [*Extension of time*]

If we did everything right 100 per cent of the time, we would not have the statistics that we have across New South Wales and the whole of Australia. I also acknowledge that New South Wales has the strongest heavy vehicle driving laws and regulations in the country, but we have to work alongside our State counterparts in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, all of whom have signed up to the national heavy vehicle register. We must be able to work alongside them because we cannot stop trucks registered in Victoria, Queensland or South Australia from using our roads.

I am proud of the work that the Highway Patrol and Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] have been doing in recent weeks on the heavy vehicle crackdown. We have been monitoring, assessing and conducting roadside blitzes, which drive home the message that we do not want dodgy truck drivers in this State. They will be caught and they will be found out. The other big, underlying, fundamental thing this Government has done in New South Wales to improve road safety is to double the Roads budget. Because we can manage the budget and are managing the State well, we have been able to invest taxpayer dollars into improving the road network across New South Wales.

Thanks to the contribution of the Commonwealth, the Pacific Motorway is 80 per cent complete. We have \$1.5 billion of forward works going to the Princes Highway. We have trebled the amount of money going to the Central West, improving projects on the Great Western Highway, the Golden Highway and the Newell Highway. We are investing in New South Wales to make the infrastructure better and safer. But it is not just infrastructure; it is driver behaviour. We want everybody to work together to lower the road toll. I thank all members of the House for their support.

BUS SERVICES

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (15:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Given that Access Industries, an employer of people with a disability, has been severely impacted by the new bus timetable, will he now admit that his privatised bus service has failed the people of the Hunter?

The SPEAKER: There is no need for the member for Gosford or the member for Rockdale to interject before the Minister has even started his answer. Members will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:01): I thank the member for Newcastle for his question. In asking a question about people with disabilities. He would be aware that there are national requirements in relation to access, and this Government has been investing in more access than ever before. Given that that fleet operates under a franchise model, any suggestion that we are cutting services for people with disabilities is simply wrong. If the member has evidence of it, I am happy to see it.

The SPEAKER: Order! If members continue to interject they will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Canterbury is on her last warning. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Through the introduction of the new network, customers in the Hunter, Newcastle and the Lower Hunter have been given access to more than 1,000 additional services. That means better connections and increased frequency.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Swansea that this is not a debate or an argument. She will cease interjecting. The member for Swansea will not tell me what to do. I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time. I call the member for Swansea to order for the third time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: For the benefit of those opposite, the new network has led to a doubling of services to and from Wallsend, a doubling of services between the University of Newcastle's Callaghan and

City campuses, improved connections between major shopping destinations including Charlestown Square, Westfield Kotara and the Newcastle central business district, on-demand services and better, more reliable services to the beaches.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Those opposite seem to have an aversion to the private sector being involved in the delivery of transport services.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens may debate this later, but not now. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I came across a quote from a former Minister for Transport, which reads:

... the needs of the community are not being met under the current arrangements. It has become clear that public transport services cannot be effectively managed under a system in which the delivery agency is a State-Owned Corporation ...

Guess who said that? His former chief of staff sits in the Chamber with us. It was David Campbell. I wonder if the member for Keira might have written that.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Another quote reads:

Even privately operated transport service providers have contracts with Government that provide for far greater accountability than the model that currently applies to government-owned rail and ferry services.

I refer to the model that used to operate in Newcastle. That quote is from a former Labor transport Minister. We have seen an uplift in services—which the Labor Party opposes for some philosophical reason, given its socialist underpinnings—and an improved service for the people of Newcastle.

The SPEAKER: Order! The experts on the Opposition benches will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If the member for Newcastle is alleging that people with disability have been affected, I am happy to look at that, but he has not raised that issue with me outside this Chamber. I look forward to meeting with the member for Newcastle to hear his concerns.

NSW POLICE FORCE FRONTLINE POLICING

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. How is the New South Wales Government supporting frontline police?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (15:05): I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question and for her ongoing support of all the police and emergency services in the Cootamundra electorate. On Australia Day I received one of those phone calls that no Minister wants to receive. I was informed that Detective Sergeant John Breda had been brutally stabbed by an alleged child sex offender in broad daylight at a busy pub in Maroubra. After numerous surgeries and countless blood transfusions, Detective Sergeant John Breda has somehow made a miraculous recovery, but there is still a very long road ahead of him both physically and emotionally. He is fortunate to have come under the care of the wonderful expert surgeons, staff and medical practitioners at St Vincent's Hospital. I thank the Minister for Health for his support of that wonderful institution and I thank all of the medical staff for their wonderful care of Detective Sergeant Breda.

Detective Sergeant Breda is fortunate to have the support of his magnificent wife, Kim, and his two young kids and, of course, the entire NSW Police family. It would be remiss of me to talk today about support for frontline officers without referring to the broader Blue family and the way in which they have wrapped their arms around the Breda family in recent weeks. I refer to not only his colleagues, the Commissioner of Police and the executive but also the Police Association of New South Wales and his closest friends. It is very heartening to know that they have not left the side of the Breda family over the past couple of weeks and will be by the family's side for the ensuing months.

Just days after this dreadful incident, the Police Association of New South Wales and the NSW Police Force kicked off an extraordinary national campaign called #Bleed4Blue, in which State and Territory police forces will compete to donate blood throughout the month of February. I am happy to report to the House that 391 donations have been made in just six days into the month. I look forward to making my own donation and I invite the shadow spokesman for Police to join with me in that campaign. This initiative says so much about the Police Force and the Blue family, of which I often speak. Our police are always willing to go above and beyond

the call of duty to make our State a better place. What is more, they are always willing to go above and beyond the call of duty when it means backing one of their fellow officers.

I extend the gratitude of the House to our police officers. I have passed on many messages from members of this place to the family and colleagues of Detective Sergeant John Breda. We wish him the speediest of recoveries. I am very proud to be part of a government that is prioritising policing and community safety more broadly. I am proud to be a part of a government that is continuing to do all we can to support the men and women who day in and day out dedicate their lives to protecting our communities. Our State is so far ahead of every State and Territory when it comes to futureproofing the NSW Police Force. One only has to look at our crime statistics to see how well our Police Force is doing to keep our community safe, whether in the city or throughout regional New South Wales. Our crime statistics are the envy of the nation. That is thanks to the tireless efforts and dedication of our men and women in blue, who are brilliantly led by the Commissioner of Police, Mick Fuller, APM, and his deputies.

Last year I stood with the commissioner to announce the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force, and this plan is progressing well. The plan was developed with his deputies, the Police Association of NSW and local police to make sure that our police force is modernised and streamlined so we can keep changing and absorb the changing crime landscape that is confronting police. I apologise to the House if I sound like a broken record on this issue, but unfortunately there are some in this House who do not seem to understand when the commissioner says that the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force will not bring about a reduction in frontline policing.

I acknowledge that there is full support on this side of the House and a number of Labor members have been supportive, but some just defy belief in their opposition and undermining of the police commissioner and his team. I will not stand by and let those opposite and some other members of this House peddle blatant lies and mistruths about re-engineering and the support that the communities of this State have from police officers in keeping them safe. The *Central Western Daily* this week did not buy the latest round of garbage proliferated by the member for Orange when he tried again to undermine—[*Extension of time*]

The *Central Western Daily* did not buy his load of claptrap when he tried to undermine the re-engineering process by saying that the Canobolas police district model was not working. It has not started yet. The member for Orange is not in touch with reality. I was comforted by the editorial that stated:

...it gives Orange the chance to have its numbers seriously looked at for the first time in nearly 10 years.

Who can argue with that? That is precisely what re-engineering is all about: It is to make sure they have the right amount of police, in the right types of roles and in the right locations to serve their communities. So my question is: Why does the member for Orange continue to undermine what is best for his community in relation to policing services?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Orange will cease interjecting.

Mr TROY GRANT: And he is joined by a chorus of members opposite and, more shamefully, by the Opposition spokesperson for police, who continues throughout the metropolitan region to talk about a lack of resources when they are tailoring as we speak additional and different types of policing. This person should be front and centre supporting police not undermining the commissioner—something he does on a regular basis. This process is about enhancing community safety, and we will not move away from supporting the commissioner and his team on that.

Since 2011, 1,000 extra police positions have already been added to the ranks and there is more to come, with police doing the job we need them to do. We remain committed to returning police to the front line in communities, patrolling the streets, where communities want them to be, and doing what is needed. We remain committed to this task. There is a simple message for the communities of New South Wales: "If you want to ensure public safety in your communities and that your police are resourced, only one side of this House is interested in delivering on that goal."

POLITICAL DONATIONS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:13): My question is directed to the Premier. Last week the media alleged that hundreds of thousands of dollars in political donations from the pokies and clubs industry have been kept secret. Will the Premier give this House and the New South Wales community a guarantee that neither the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals parties nor her members of Parliament have received any undisclosed donations from clubs and poker machine industry related interests?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:13): I thank and acknowledge the member for Ballina for her question. She referred to an article in last week's media and I am assuming that it was the article from 2 February that spoke about politicians receiving secret pokies cash—and the article went on. The

member may not have cottoned on to the fact that the article was in fact referring to Federal donations declared under Commonwealth law. I ask all members of the House whether they know which party was the recipient of the largest ever political donation in Australian history. It was The Greens, which received \$1.6 million from Wotif founder Graeme Wood.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Newtown to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given that the member for Ballina's question was in relation to gambling and gaming revenue, it is interesting that on the same day the article was published, there was another article that said: "The Greens' biggest benefactor was reclusive high-end gambler, Duncan Turpie, who gave \$150,000."

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Newtown to order for the second time. I call the member for Ballina to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: With all due respect, The Greens can pretend they are pure as snow, but I have just given two examples of where they are not. I did hope the member for Ballina, who represents a beautiful community, would want an update from me on the great job we did in delivering the Byron Central Hospital, Byron Bay Public School and Alstonville High School upgrades, the building of Ballina Coast High School or the 125-kilometre Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade. If the member for Ballina is not prepared to speak on the issues that matter to her community, we on this side of the House will.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONER NUMBERS

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (15:16): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. How is the New South Wales Government delivering more doctors across our State?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:16): I thank the member for Lismore, who is a very enthusiastic supporter of the 12 new interns at Lismore Base Hospital. A photograph that appeared in his local paper indicated the excitement that those 12 young people have generated at Lismore Base Hospital. Before I address the broader issue in the member's question, I follow up on the Minister for Police's statements on the support given by health staff. During the many terrible incidents that occur each day, the medical staff of our hospitals provide the opportunity for us to have a chance at life. Detective Sergeant John Breda was the victim of an appalling assault while he was carrying out his lawful duties. He was taken to St Vincent's Hospital. On behalf of the entire Parliament and, in fact, the entire community, I thank our doctors and nurses. This is not a matter for politics; this is a matter where the community should come together.

I have thanked Dr Priah Nair, the director of the Intensive Care Unit at St Vincent's, on behalf of the Government—and, I am sure, the Opposition—and entire community. There are 100 nurses and 33 doctors in the Intensive Care Unit and, following the assault on Detective Sergeant John Breda, much of their time was spent helping him. Many transfusions later, he has improved dramatically. I thank those doctors, and doctors right across the State in both our public and private hospitals, who do such an amazing job. It is a pleasure to acknowledge that this year, through additional funding, the New South Wales Government has ensured an unprecedented number of interns in our hospitals across the State. One shy of 1,000 interns started work this week. Each of these young interns is enthusiastic and will be undergoing a course of training over a two-year period. Each of them will qualify after one year, but New South Wales is the only State to guarantee two years of training.

This week I had the great pleasure of being with the Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian, my colleague Tanya Davies, the Minister for Mental Health, and the local member, Minister Stuart Ayres. We said hello to a number of the interns at Nepean Hospital. What an interesting mix of people with an interesting mix of experiences is coming into our hospitals! These are people who are called to help us with our health needs throughout our lives. The three young interns we met typified the vast experience of our nurses. Buffie Franklin was formerly a member of the Australian Navy. She told us that her career as a naval officer had, unfortunately, stopped as a result of a car accident.

Emma Roffey is a young intern who was a veterinarian. I think she completed one year of work as a veterinarian and has now done medical training to work in our hospitals, looking after all of us. Emma certainly has an amazing level of talent and experience. Dr Dhiren Dhanji's family were also in the medical profession: his father is a doctor. He talked to us about his enthusiasm. The one thing that the Premier, Minister Davies and Minister Ayres could say that we saw was enthusiasm-plus. The interns were very excited to be in the hospital, and we were excited to have them there.

The bottom line is that under this Government, New South Wales has dramatically increased the funding for our doctors. This Government guarantees a place for every domestic medical student. The number of interns—just shy of 1,000—represents an increase of more than 300 in just the few years we have been in Government. That is incredible. It is incredible that the New South Wales Government, supported by the taxpayers of New South Wales—through the good management of the economy of the State—has been able to employ 319 more interns than Labor employed just a few years ago. The Government needs to ensure that medical staff are trained. I also want to thank the nurses and midwives. More than 2,400 graduate nurses and midwives started this month. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the member for Lismore for calling for an extension of my speaking time and for his enthusiasm and support for the young interns in Lismore Base Hospital. The 2,400 graduate nurses and midwives who started this month bring a wealth of experience from their past lives. At the John Hunter Children's Hospital Kathryn Green said:

Me and my twin brother were born three months premature and spent a lot of time in NICU. Hearing my parents talk about the experience and how the nurses didn't just care for me and my brother, they also cared for my parents, I was drawn to it.

Of the same hospital, Nicole Baldwin said:

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when I was 11. Having experienced paediatric nursing from a young age, I felt connected.

That is the constant theme for the new nurses, the new midwives and the new young doctors. They are connected to our medical system and our community, which leads them to want to do so much more. The New South Wales Government has a range of new young doctors and interns at our respective hospitals. I recollect that Broken Hill has one new doctor and that there were 56 at Nepean Hospital and 70 at Westmead. For these training programs in our hospitals the number ranges from just one or two in some hospitals to 70 in our major Westmead complex. The Government will remain committed to supporting doctors, nurses, midwives and all who work in our hospital system, including paramedics and others. This Government is putting almost one third of the entire State budget into supporting health across New South Wales—\$23 billion. Every cent that goes into supporting our nurses, doctors and midwives and others who care for us in our hospitals is well worth it.

Documents

NSW OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of a report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Operation Prospect: Second report on developments", dated December 2017 and received out of session on 1 December. I order that the report be printed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 24 of the Law Enforcement (Controlled Operations) Act 1997, I announce receipt of a report of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled "Annual Report 2016-2017 Law Enforcement (Controlled Operations) Act 1997", dated December 2017 and received out of session on 18 December. I order that the report be printed.

POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 142 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the final report of the Police Integrity Commission for the year ended 30 June 2017, received out of session on 18 December 2017. I order that the report be printed.

Presiding Officers

TEMPORARY SPEAKERS

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to the provision of Standing Order 20, I revoke the nomination of Bruce Neville Notley-Smith as a Temporary Speaker.

*Documents***AUDITOR-GENERAL****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following performance audit reports of the Auditor-General:

- (1) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Justice 2017", dated 28 November 2017, received out of session on 28 November 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Health 2017", dated 5 December 2017, received out of session on 5 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (3) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Family and Community Services", dated 8 December 2017, received out of session on 8 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (4) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Industry", dated 12 December 2017, received out of session on 12 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (5) Performance Audit Report entitled "Managing demand for ambulance services", dated 13 December 2017, received out of session on 13 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (6) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Education 2017", dated 14 December 2017, received out of session on 14 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (7) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Transport 2017", dated 15 December 2017, received out of session on 15 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (8) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Planning and Environment 2017", dated 19 December 2017, received out of session on 19 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (9) Financial Audit Report entitled "Report on Internal Controls and Governance 2017", dated 20 December 2017, received out of session on 20 December 2017 and authorised to be printed.
- (10) Performance Audit Report entitled "Council reporting on service delivery", dated 1 February 2018, received out of session on 1 February 2018 and authorised to be printed.

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 111 of the Water NSW Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "WaterNSW Operational Audit 2016/17, Report to the Minister, Water—Compliance Report", dated December 2017, received out of session on 18 January 2018 and authorised to be printed.

The CLERK: In accordance with section 33 of the Sydney Water Act 1994, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Sydney Water Corporation Operational Audit 2016/17, Report to the Minister, Water—Compliance Report", dated December 2017, received out of session on 18 January 2018 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT****Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of a report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled "Inquiry into Zonal Taxation—Interim Report", Report 2/56, dated January 2018, received out of session on 19 January 2018 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 234C of the National Energy Retail Law (NSW), I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of the performance and competitiveness of the retail electricity market in NSW, from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, Energy—Final Report", dated November 2017, received out of session on 25 January and authorised to be printed.

NSW SOLAR BONUS SCHEME**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 190A of the Electricity Supply Act 1995, I announce receipt of the report of the Statutory Review of the NSW Solar Bonus Scheme, dated December 2017, received out of session on 25 January 2018 and authorised to be printed.

ASSUMED IDENTITIES**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 35 of the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Act 2010, I announce receipt of the Assumed Identities reports for the year ended 30 June 2017 of the NSW Police Force and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), received out of session on 5 February 2018 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION
AND THE CRIME COMMISSION****Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 12 May 2017 Stephen Bruce Bromhead was elected Deputy Chair of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2) I advise the House that on 23 November 2017 James Henry Griffin was elected Chair of the Legislation Review Committee.

COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2) I advise the House that on 23 November 2017 Michael John Johnsen was elected Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)**Reports**

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: As Chair: In accordance with section 48A of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table of the Public Accounts Committee entitled "Quadrennial review of the Audit Office 2017", Report No. 6/56, dated 6 February 2018. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Reports**

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: As Chair: I table the report of Legislation Review Committee, entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 48/56", dated 6 February 2018. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 47/56.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following petitions signed by more than 10,000 persons have been lodged for presentation:

Western Sydney Incinerator Proposal

Petition calling on the Government to reject the waste incinerator proposal in Western Sydney, received from **Ms Prue Car**.

Mambo Wetlands Land Sale

Petition requesting that the Government reverse the sale of the Mambo Wetlands in Salamander Bay and buy back the koala habitat, received from **Ms Kate Washington**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petitions as orders of the day for a future day.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ROUTINE OF BUSINESS**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:29): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to:

- (1) Permit the consideration of the motion of censure, notice of which was given this day, before determining the motion to be accorded priority.
- (2) Provide for the following speaking time limits:
 - (a) mover—five minutes;
 - (b) member named—five minutes;
 - (c) one other Government member—five minutes; and
 - (d) mover in reply—five minutes.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:33): It is hard to know what to make of the motion that has just been moved by the Leader of the House. He is a wily and experienced character, this member for Epping.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will refer to members by their correct title.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: On the one hand, some might say cynically that this is simply another attempt by the Government, having received yet another motion to censure a hapless and embattled Minister, to act in the manner in which it has acted over the past seven years—that is, to be arrogant and to shut down debate. But that is very unfair on the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. One might wonder whether his "friend" and "factional ally", the Leader of the House, might be tipping him into something that he should not be tipped into. If I were the Minister for transport and I were the subject of a cartoon in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that called me "Pinocchio McRedface", I would want every minute available to me in this House to try to restore some of the honour that I had lost.

If I were the Minister for transport and my Opposition counterpart wanted to refer to my haplessness regarding the eastern suburbs light rail project, which saw 700 trees destroyed and a blowout of \$500 million, if the shadow Minister for Transport wanted to level at me an accusation that the WestConnex was an out-of-control debacle that had blown out by nearly \$10 billion, or if another member wanted to make an accusation that I had reimposed the toll on the M4 that was causing residents of Western Sydney to drive on side roads, I would want to defend myself.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Point of order: With all due respect to my colleague, I ask that the member for Maroubra return to the leave of the motion.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The motion basically says that a 70-minute debate that should involve six members be truncated to 20 minutes and that three members speak for five minutes each. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure can sit there and smirk, but we have all heard about a phenomenon in politics called the pub test. There are not too many members in this House—surprise, surprise—whose names are known in the pubs and clubs and tearooms and at dinner tables across New South Wales. Not many people know who the Deputy Premier is. But there is one person who is a household name, and that is the Minister for transport. The *Herald* called him "Pinocchio McRedface", but the member for Blue Mountains—whose trains do not fit in the

tunnels of her electorate—has another name for him that I dare not repeat in this place. This is a family program! The fact remains that this fellow is embattled; he is hopeless and he is a joke. He ought to stand in this place and justify why he has been behaving in the belligerent fashion that he has.

The Premier said he is doing a great job and that the State is lucky to have him. They are mere words. If the Premier was in control of this show and she wanted Parliament to resume on a proper and democratic note and to fulfil its functions to the people of New South Wales as a House of review and examination, she would make the Minister stand in this Chamber and speak for the time allotted to him under the standing orders. He should not hide under the skirts of the Leader of the House. Today I asked the embattled Minister for transport to answer a very simple question: Why did he spend \$100,000 on a public survey, misleading the public into thinking that they played a role in naming a vessel that they paid for, only to give it a dumb name—

Mr Victor Dominello: Point of order: This is the second time the member for Maroubra has been asked not to debate the substantive motion but to debate the leave.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I will get back to the leave of the debate. When I asked the Minister that question he did not utter a word of defence of his own name. The Minister needs to defend himself now. We want to hear from him loud and clear.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:35): In reply: Censure motions are very important matters. They represent the most significant sanction available in this House in respect of a member's conduct. If the Labor Party is intent on attempting a censure motion it should be ready, as we have stated, to do so immediately as the very instrument speaks to its importance. If the Opposition is not ready it should consider abandoning the motion as it is little more than a craven attempt to garner media attention. Given the causes fall far below meeting the threshold of significance, those opposite should be made to account for them.

We will seek to amend the number of speakers from the other side necessary to make those weak points. If those opposite cannot articulate an argument with a single speaker they should not be members of this Chamber. Normally the Government would address each point as well with one speaker but this afternoon I have decided to throw in a second speaker just because those opposite are lazy, incompetent and do not listen. We do not want them to miss out on anything. I ask members of the crossbench to think long and hard about the precedent they set when they blindly follow the Opposition into voting on procedural suspensions concerning censure motions. In years past, the crossbench votes have been critical and important. This is a ridiculous censure motion that does not meet the significance test, and that is why it will be debated. We will give the Opposition the opportunity now to say that with one speaker because it only deserves one speaker.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:37): By leave: I think at this point it can be agreed that I represent the crossbench in seeking to have the terms of the suspension of standing orders changed to allow members of the crossbench to participate in the debate. Certainly members of a significant minor party, The Greens, want to address this matter and others—either the Independents or the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—may wish to make a contribution. With the greatest of respect to this House and to the Ministers who are charged with responsibility in acting in the best interests of the State, no heavier matter can be brought before this Parliament than a censure motion from the Opposition—it is much worse if it is from a member's own side.

I have participated in a number of censure motions in this House over the years and I have always tried to approach them in a level-headed way. I am not giving my opinion at this point as to the rights or wrongs of the allegations that are being levelled against the Minister for transport, but I am being asked as a member of this House, as are other members of the crossbench, to make a determination as to whether I will support the censure motion. It is incumbent upon the House to afford the crossbench that opportunity. As I have brought to the attention of the Leader of the House, I ask him to consider an amendment to that suspension of standing orders to allow for up to two members of the crossbench, one member of The Greens and one other member, to participate in the debate.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:40): By leave: I withdraw the motion. As someone who is always willing to listen to the concerns of others in this House and take them on board in my general deliberations, I am happy to include in the motion that the non-government benches, which include the Opposition and the crossbench, share their allocated time of 10 minutes. That is only fair and that gives the Government the same amount of time. It is reasonable and fair and members cannot ask for anything more than that. Therefore, I move, by leave:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sittings to:

- (1) Permit the consideration of the motion of censure, notice of which was given this day, before determining the motion to be accorded priority.

- (2) Provide for the following speaking time limits:
- (a) mover—five minutes;
 - (b) member named—five minutes;
 - (c) one other Government member—five minutes; and
 - (d) one non-Government member—five minutes.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:42): What an efficient and edifying return to Parliament we have. This is an absolute farce. It speaks volumes of everything this Government has done: the way it has conducted itself with every one of its endeavours over seven years. The original standing order relates to a serious debate on what the member for Lake Macquarie has described as one of the most serious accusations, parliamentary procedures and events that can be levelled at or befall a Minister, and that is a motion of censure. It is used infrequently and should be treated with the seriousness it deserves, particularly having been accompanied by the litany of media reports as to the failures of this Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, not just over the past few years but also over the break.

The standing orders provide for six speakers to debate the motion for 70 minutes. This matter has now descended into a farce where the mover of a motion of censure has only five minutes, instead of 20 minutes and then a reply and that is it for the Opposition. I am sure the crossbenchers would not have intended for the original motion to have been amended to become the farce that it is. If any member of this House thinks that the interests of the public and the honour of this place are served by dishing up this sort of tripe for debate on a serious matter, then shame on all of us. We will have none of it. This is a debacle. The Leader of the House has created it, and the Premier sits there and allows it to continue. The Premier is doing herself no service. In the polls the people of New South Wales are saying that she is not competent, she is not a good manager and she is arrogant. I thank the Premier for punctuating everything they think about her today.

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

The House divided.

Ayes51
 Noes38
 Majority.....13

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
 Barilaro, Mr J
 Brookes, Mr G
 Cooke, Ms S
 Davies, Mrs T
 Evans, Mr A
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Griffin, Mr J
 Henskens, Mr A
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
 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
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Provest, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Constance, Mr A
 Crouch, Mr A
 Elliott, Mr D
 Fraser, Mr A
 Grant, Mr T
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Doyle, Ms T
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Hoenig, Mr R

Atalla, Mr E
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dib, Mr J
 Finn, Ms J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Donato, Mr P
 Foley, Mr L
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S

NOES

Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

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**.

Companion Animals on Public Transport

Petition requesting that companion animals be allowed to travel on all public transport, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

The CLERK: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

B-Line Bus Project

Petition requesting a parliamentary investigation into the costs, rationale and decision-making associated with the B-Line bus project, received from **Ms Jodi McKay**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton—Plastic Bags—lodged 21 November 2017 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. Paul Toole—Brisbane Water Channel—lodged 22 November 2017 (Ms Liesl Tesch)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Tuggerah Railway Station—lodged 22 November 2017 (Mr David Mehan)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Wentworth Falls Traffic Lights Upgrade—lodged 23 November 2017 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton—St John's Anglican Church Precinct—lodged 23 November 2017 (Mr Chris Patterson)

*Business of the House***BUSINESS LAPSED**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) General Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) No. 1 [Road Transport Amendment (Autonomous Motor Vehicles Trial) Bill] and No. 2 [Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Enabling All Councils to Require Affordable Housing Contributions) Bill], General Business Order of the Day (for Bills) No. 1 [Public Accountability Legislation Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill], and General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2056 to 2086, 2088 to 2132, 2134 to 2145, 2147 to 2201, 2203 to 2260 and 2262 to 2283 have lapsed.

*Motions***THE HON. ANDREW JAMES CONSTANCE, MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****Censure**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:52): I move:

That this House censures the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure for:

- (1) Misleading the people of New South Wales and wasting \$100,000 of taxpayer funds on a rigged ferry-naming competition.
- (2) Failing to respect transport workers who are the lifeblood of the public transport system.
- (3) Imposing a shambolic and unworkable train timetable on Sydney.
- (4) Forcing a disastrous and unworkable bus timetable on the people of the Hunter region.
- (5) Spending billions of dollars on new intercity trains that are built overseas and do not even fit the tracks.
- (6) Breaking an election promise and privatising inner west bus services.
- (7) Ignoring the impact of construction of the CBD light rail on small businesses.
- (8) Behaving with arrogance, belligerence and truculence, and in a manner that does not befit a holder of ministerial office. In the community, in pubs and on community sporting fields, everyone is talking about Andrew Constance. But they are not saying, "Gee, what a great transport Minister " or "Boy, keep him". They are saying, "Premier, you need to remove Andrew Constance as transport Minister." All members of this House know that the Minister cannot run a transport system. We now know that he cannot even run a ferry-naming competition. Members know that "Ferry McFerryface" was a captain's pick by the Minister. That means the public naming competition was in fact rigged. The Minister spent \$100,000 on a competition and he had no intention of abiding by the result. He then lied to the community and blamed the children. What about that? Who in this House can honestly say—

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order—

Ms JODI McKAY: You will get your chance.

Mr Andrew Constance: The member is using unparliamentary language and I ask that she be directed to withdraw the word "lied".

Ms JODI McKAY: I will not withdraw that word because that is exactly what he did. No-one in this place should be surprised about his arrogance and incompetence. They call him "Angry Andrew" and "Cranky Constance". The community knows that he is incompetent and incapable. Let us talk about the timetable and the hundreds of thousands of commuters who have experienced chaos and confusion because of his shambolic timetable. What is even worse is that when I asked a question about the 150 drivers required to deliver that timetable, the Minister refused to answer. He knew the timetable would not work because his own agency gave him that advice. He introduced it without the trains and the drivers required and despite knowing that it would not work. He did that because his ego gets in the way every time he makes a decision.

The Minister said the problem was the result of an act of God. Only God knows the truth because the Minister introduced a timetable that was not going to work. He was closely engaged in a ferry-naming competition but he distances himself from every other aspect of public transport delivery; he wants nothing to do with it. He is privatising the inner west bus network and he has already privatised the Hunter network. If the Opposition had been allowed a second speaker on this motion, the House would have heard about exactly what is happening in those areas. People are being disadvantaged and isolated and they are being treated unfairly. The Minister promised that inner west buses would not be privatised, but he is moving ahead with that process. Members need only look at the South East Light Rail project to see his arrogance on display. When the Minister was approached by a business owner at a media conference, he said to him, "I don't care. Go jump!" That is a demonstration of the scale of his arrogance and belligerence, and it is why he is incapable of being transport Minister and why he should resign. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:59): I note that the Leader of the Opposition has not moved this censure motion. That indicates how seriously members opposite take this issue. The member for Strathfield just reminded me that she failed to disclose property interests on the pecuniary interests register.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The Minister should return to the leave of the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! This is a censure motion and the debate is wideranging.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Three people sitting on the bench opposite were Cabinet members in the most corrupt and contemptible government ever seen in this State and nation—the member for Maroubra, the member for Liverpool and the member for Strathfield. While they were in office—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. This is a censure motion against Minister Constance, not against anyone else. If the Minister has allegations to make then he can move a motion. Until then, for once in his life he might adhere to the standing orders.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The reality is that we have an Opposition leader who is not prepared to debate this because he knows that I would turn the guns on him and remind the people of this State that he has got a criminal record for drink-driving.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I know where the people are sitting between Gladys Berejiklian and Luke Foley. Let me tell members what people are saying out there about the Leader of the Opposition—namely, they do not know who he is. When they do find out who he is, they do not like what they see. Quite frankly he is nothing more than a creature of the union movement, sponsored by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU], coming in here with silly little motions. Guess what? He is so incompetent that he had to get the member for Strathfield to move this motion. What I heard from the member for Strathfield goes to this point: This Government is proud of the delivery being made in our transport and infrastructure program—very proud. Let us think about this: Opal card versus T-card, lines being built versus lines being cancelled, and services delivered versus services cancelled.

When it comes to public transport that is what Labor is all about. And the reason for that? Labor does not know how to manage the State's finances. When the member for Maroubra stood up it reminded me that when he was roads Minister he blew his budget by \$300 million. That is the level of incompetence of those opposite—they cannot manage money, cannot grow services, cannot build infrastructure and they know how to cancel everything in sight. Over the next 12 months I will be very pleased to talk about transport and infrastructure every day because this Government will continue to deliver every day. We have got brand-new trains coming—

Mr Clayton Barr: We do not believe you.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is alright. I will remember that one.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: One of the key things in all of this, which hurts those opposite the most, is that customer satisfaction has gone up 10 per cent since they were in office. The reality is that we will continue to deliver. When Labor talks about transport its unhealthy obsession with me is ridiculous. Why not make it about the people of this State? Why not take a look at what is going on: namely, 28,000 additional services; a record spend, the largest in this State's history. With this Treasurer we know what is happening in New South Wales and globally—go and speak to the Americans about that—and we have a program of which we are very proud. Coming in here with a list of silly motions does not cut it. Those opposite are out there trying to grab headlines but the bottom line is that we will continue to deliver. This afternoon those opposite are an "F" for fail.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:05): I wonder if we could just bring this debate away from the politics of hysteria, personal attack and falsity that the member for Strathfield wishes to introduce and bring things back to the transport record of this Government, which is absolutely without peer. This Government is currently delivering three heavy rail projects: the Sydney Metro Northwest, Sydney Metro City and Sydney Metro Southwest. Metro will be running from Rouse Hill to Epping, through the North Shore, under Sydney Harbour to Bankstown under these three heavy rail projects. In addition, this Government is delivering three light rail projects: the Sydney central business district light rail project, the Parramatta light rail project and the Newcastle light rail project—where is Crackers? In addition, if we can just focus on the facts—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: It is Standing Order 75. The reference the member for Ku-ring-gai made to the member for Newcastle breached standing orders. He must refer to members by their proper titles.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The reference to "Crackers" should be changed to "the member for Newcastle". I think we all knew who I was talking about, given that I was talking about the Newcastle light rail project. But that is not the end of it. If six rail projects simultaneously occurring under this Government is not enough, there is more. This Government is delivering 24 new Waratah trains this year. It is delivering

512 carriages in an intercity fleet, which will be servicing Labor electorates on the South Coast, the Blue Mountains, the Central Coast and the Hunter. The Government has already delivered six new ferries in the city. The Government has introduced 1,500 new rail services. Since 2011, some 26,500 new bus services have been delivered by this Government. There are 468 more buses in total since 2011, which include 38 B-Line buses servicing the northern beaches. There are also 922 replacement buses.

There is an alternative, and that is to look at the record of the last Labor transport Ministers by contrast. In 1998 Carl Scully promised a Bondi Beach rail line to be delivered by 2002. He promised a high-speed rail link to Newcastle to be delivered by 2010. He promised a Hurstville to Strathfield rail line to be delivered by 2014. He promised a high-speed rail link between Sutherland and Wollongong to be delivered by 2010. He promised a Parramatta to Chatswood rail link to be delivered by 2006. None of them have ever been delivered. John Watkins promised a south-west rail link in 2005. Carl Scully promised another central business district [CBD] harbour crossing in 2005. The list goes on. The Transport portfolio was in such a shambles under the Labor administration that on-time running was as low as 62 per cent in 2004 and 2005.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: This censure motion is against the Minister for Transport. If the member for Ku-ring-gai has something to say in the Minister's defence, he should say it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The new train timetable that those opposite criticise by their censure motion has a 92 per cent on-time running record, but the rate under Labor was as low as 62 per cent in 2004 and 2005. This Minister is industrious, transformative and effective.

Ms Jodi McKay: You do not support him.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: He is performing as no other transport Minister has performed. This hysterical and ridiculous censure motion should not be agreed to.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:11): Before speaking in debate on this censure motion make it clear that Pemulwuy was an Aboriginal warrior. On 14 November the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure tweeted:

It is not everyone's cup of tea, but the people voted for it so we listened.

Earlier this year a report from the *Sydney Morning Herald* exposed that only 182 out of 15,000 people voted for the name Ferry McFerryface. It was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that this Minister made a captain's pick rather than going with the public favourite. The comments regarding the suspension of standing orders for this censure motion have made it clear that censure motions are serious. I acknowledge that the member for Lake Macquarie spoke on behalf of crossbench members and said that they should have the ability to speak in debate on censure motions. I acknowledge that crossbench members are still considering where they stand in relation to this censure motion. In this House The Greens have sometimes supported censure motions and sometimes they have not. We give censure motions a great deal of consideration.

In this case it is clear that the Minister must be censured because at the end of last year he made it clear that the name Ferry McFerryface had won by popular vote, but it had not. He claimed that he was listening to the people, but he was not. If he was listening to the people he would be aware that hundreds of thousands of commuters are impacted by the privatisation of our public transport system. He would be aware that thousands of residents in the inner west are opposed to the privatisation of our bus services. He would be aware that hundreds of people have got up every morning to ensure that trees in the inner city and our urban canopy are not destroyed by his privatised public transport projects.

If the Minister really cared and he had listened to the people he would be making Redfern station—one of the busiest stations in this State—accessible by putting in lifts. If he genuinely cared and he was listening to the people he would not have taken into account the fact that 182 people had voted to call a ferry Ferry McFerryface just for a headline in a newspaper in the lead-up to Christmas. Instead he should listen to the hundreds of thousands of people who want him to stop closing bus stops, to keep public transport in public hands and to deliver accessible transport for our community. Those are the people he should be listening to.

That is why The Greens support this censure motion and that is why my Greens colleague in the upper House Dr Mehreen Faruqi has written to the Governor seeking a special commission of inquiry to look into the systemic issues plaguing transport in New South Wales—bungled projects, inflated benefits, cost blowouts worth tens of billions of dollars, the targeting of public servants, the billions of dollars being poured into projects against the advice of the Government's own experts and the deliberate attempts to hide information from the public. Dr Faruqi says it is clear that the Premier and the transport Minister must be held accountable and finally forced

to answer to the public. They have arrogantly refused to justify their actions until now, but a special commissioner would have the power to demand an explanation.

It is clear that this censure motion is needed, and I acknowledge the member for Strathfield for moving it in this Parliament. We acknowledge that such motions are very serious, but it is clear that on 14 November when the transport Minister tweeted, "The people have spoken and we have listened", it was incorrect. The people had not spoken in favour of the name "Ferry McFerryface"; they had an alternative view. As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, this was a captain's pick and it was a failed pick. The arrogance of this Minister to allow members to debate this motion, to acknowledge that this was the case but to not stand up and say, "Actually, I'm sorry; I got it wrong. I thought it was going to be a funny joke; it fell flat on its face. My apologies", and not to have the confidence to say, "I'm sorry, I thought it was a funny joke; clearly I was wrong" and then move on is unacceptable to The Greens. That is why The Greens support this censure motion.

Ms Jodi McKay: I seek the right of reply.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! As per the motion, there is no right of reply.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (16:17): The suspension of standing orders enabled those opposite to share their time equally with crossbench members. To The Greens, I say: Namaste. To those opposite, I say: There is no right of reply. They have wasted enough time.

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

The House divided.

Ayes35
Noes54
Majority.....19

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Greenwich, Mr A
Hancock, Mrs S
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

NOES

Williams, Mr R

Williams, Mrs L

Wilson, Ms F

Motion negatived.*Motions Accorded Priority***PUBLIC SCHOOLS MAINTENANCE****Consideration**

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:23): The motion for which I seek priority calls on the House to support the New South Wales Government's record investment to upgrade and repair our State's schools. The House should give priority to this motion because this year we have seen returned to New South Wales public schools the greatest number of students to be enrolled in more 40 years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members who wish to have private conversations should leave the Chamber.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: This year we have seen enrolled in New South Wales public schools the greatest number of students in 40 years. There is a huge surge of students entering into the well-respected, well-run New South Wales public education system. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that every student who seeks a place in a government school will get that place and will receive a high-standard, professional and constructive education so that they can perform their role as citizens of New South Wales. More than \$3.6 million worth of maintenance was undertaken over the Christmas school holidays. The Government is providing more funding for maintenance for new and refurbished schools than has any previous New South Wales government.

Mr Stuart Ayres: There are 670 classrooms.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: Minister Ayres has reminded me that 670 classrooms have been provided by this Government. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is doing this without sending New South Wales into debt and without neglecting other areas of infrastructure, such as roads, rail and hospitals. Our responsible financial management gives us the capacity to do all of this.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I all the member for Parramatta to order for the first time.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: This is in contrast to the huge \$1 billion backlog of liabilities in public school maintenance that was left to us by the previous Labor Government. The liability would have been even worse if it had not been for Howard and Costello leaving money to the Federal Government that came to New South Wales through the Building the Education Revolution fund. The Labor Government in Canberra was good at spending the money but the Howard and Costello regime saved the money and set it aside.

As a result of that performance, the Federal Government of Australia was left in good shape and came to the rescue. If that had not happened, New South Wales public schools would have been even worse off when we took office in 2011. This Government takes its responsibilities seriously. We are committing more funds to new and upgraded public schools than any previous New South Wales Government. We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars addressing planned maintenance issues as well as unplanned and accidental issues that arise on an emergency basis. We are looking after the interests of school students in New South Wales.

WESTERN SYDNEY WASTE INCINERATOR PROPOSAL**Consideration**

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:27): My motion should be accorded priority because this issue is extremely important to the people of Western Sydney. I congratulate all those who have been involved in the strong community response to obtain more than 10,000 signatures to be presented to this House, as well as 10,000 signatures to be presented to the Legislative Council. The 20,000 signatures show the importance of this issue to the community. The community is rallying on this issue for a number of reasons. First, this incinerator is one of the world's largest incinerators to be built by a novice operator. This is the first time this operator is having a go at it. The proponent, which has been involved in Dial a Dump and a few little skip bins, now wants to build an incinerator that deals with one million tonnes of waste. He is trying to get people to come around to the idea by breaking the project into two stages. He talks about stage one but he does not talk about stage two.

It is also perplexing to the Western Sydney community that the proposal has failed on three occasions. The proponent has now put in a new, separate submission. The member for Mulgoa has written to constituents saying that this proposal should receive the highest level of scrutiny. I did not realise that the "highest level of scrutiny" means that the proponent is given information and is asked to resubmit, or that when the applicant stuffs up it is allowed to resubmit. How many times is this going to occur? The proponent's submission is based on a theoretical model with a change to inputs—a computer boffin entering different variables. The fact is that nothing has changed in the process or technology. The problem is real and this proposal is dangerous to our local constituents. As a group, we must stand together to stop this proposal.

This project should have been stopped by the assessors, given that the contractor employed by the proponent to sample the soil stated that it cannot rely on the proponent's records and that the proponent's submissions are out of context. Obviously, the very person who has been employed by the proponent to amend the submission wants to withdraw. I call on the member for Mulgoa and the member for Penrith to put people before politics and grant this motion priority. This is a chance for all members of this Parliament who represent Western Sydney electorates to stand shoulder to shoulder with our community members and vote to debate this matter. The people of Western Sydney deserve to have this matter debated in Parliament. It is time for all members to stand up and speak out in support of the community.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Riverstone be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes50
Noes36
Majority..... 14

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Provost, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Crouch, Mr A
Hancock, Mrs S

Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N

Motion agreed to.**PUBLIC SCHOOLS MAINTENANCE****Priority**

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:36): I move:

That this House supports the Government's record investment to upgrade and repair our State schools.

There was a \$1 billion planned maintenance schedule remaining when Labor left government, which was \$1 billion of work for the new Government to tackle. While in office Labor closed more than 90 schools, including Macquarie Boys High School, Beacon Hill High School, Maroubra High School and Redfern Public School. Labor talks a big game in education but its record does not reflect that talk. It does not have the means to match its words. Labor cannot manage money and will never deliver on its promises. This Government speaks of opening schools, refurbishing schools, building new schools and adding classrooms, while Labor spoke of closing schools. Labor made promises it could not keep and delayed infrastructure maintenance to the point where students were putting up with substandard facilities from one end of the State to the other.

This Government, in contrast, has delivered an extra 4,586 teachers. That is an enormous number. It is a massive injection of frontline services and consistent with this Government's actions across the board. Costs have been restricted at the back end in order to protect and enhance frontline services in education, health and policing. In education, it meant 4,586 extra teachers. In this year's budget the Government has committed to delivering more new schools and upgrades than Labor delivered in its last 11 years in office. To put it in context, Labor's last budget in 2010 announced \$243 million for new education capital funding, while this Government has announced \$2.2 billion. More than 50 new or relocated schools were announced and 16 have been delivered, including Cammeraygal High School, Anzac Park Public School, Fernhill School, Gosford Public School, Lake Cathie Public School, Oran Park Public School, and Spring Farm Public School. I have the privilege of representing the Riverstone electorate, where The Ponds School, Riverbank Public School, and The Ponds High School are included in that number.

Since its election, the Coalition Government has delivered 17 new or relocated schools and 41 major upgrades. Those schools include: Cabramatta High School; Hurstville Public School; Nepean High School; Denison College of Secondary Education, Bathurst High Campus; Georges River College Peakhurst Campus, Oatley; Collarenebri Central School; Mowbray Public School, Willoughby; Coolah Central School; Rutherford High School; Yeoval Central School; Wilton Public School; Narrabri Public School; Lucas Gardens School; Bowral Public School; Harbord Public School; Moree East Public School; Walgett Community College; Brewarrina Central School; Point Clare Public School; Bourke Street Public School, Newtown; and Bellevue Hill Public School. Upgrades have been delivered to 19 schools for specific purposes. I am particularly proud that the Government has focused its energy in this area.

That long list shows that we are not only talking—we are delivering. Those schools are located from one end of the State to the other. The previous Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, can be well satisfied with the commitment he delivered to meet the needs of isolated schools in the bush. Areas which had been neglected for decades have received attention under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government. We are investing a record-breaking \$747 million over the next four years to attack the planned maintenance schedule. We have slashed the State's planned maintenance list by more than \$200 million, or a quarter, in the past 18 months following our record maintenance blitz.

By the end of this year, all schools in New South Wales will have had maintenance works carried out as part of the blitz. In the coming months another \$100 million will be allocated towards further maintenance and the schools with the longest maintenance list will receive priority. That means our record investment has already nearly halved the liability left to us by Labor. A \$25 billion property portfolio of more than 2,200 schools will always require ongoing maintenance which will be added to the list. Planned maintenance does not include any maintenance that poses a safety risk to students or staff nor any items that are broken in a classroom. Those issues are addressed immediately by the school or the department. An enormous amount of spending occurred in Western Sydney over the summer holidays, including— [*Time expired.*]

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:41): Nobody has walked straight into an upper cut as the member for Riverstone just did since Muhammad Ali knocked down Sonny Liston in 1954. The member for Riverstone talked

about the \$1 billion maintenance backlog that was left by Labor. For the third time, I will table this document by the former Minister for Education, which stated on 26 April 2012:

After 16 years Labor left NSW schools with a \$156 million maintenance liability ...

The member for Riverstone should stop saying \$1 billion; it is \$156 million. If the member for Riverstone wants to talk about where the Government gets the other bits from, it is infrastructure. I thought the analogy of Sonny Liston and Muhammad Ali worked well because the member for Riverstone walked straight into an upper cut. I feel for the member for Riverstone because I have talked about hospital passes before and this is a hospital pass and a half. If the Government has not looked at school maintenance over the past three or four weeks then Government members need to visit their local schools because the word in the real world is that a lot more needs to be done. Members opposite have convinced themselves that they are doing a terrific job.

Mr Mark Coure: No wonder you are on the front bench.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Unlike you. This Government has committed to spend \$2.5 billion to rebuild stadiums. It has put stadiums in front of building the schools and hospitals that we need. That is what this Government stands for; it cannot say no. The number of demountables in schools is increasing, which is an increase on this Government's watch. Approximately one in 10 students are being taught in 5,000 demountable classrooms in schools. Some kids will go through their entire school life in a demountable classroom. Recently I was at Carlingford West Public School with the Leader of the Opposition and we watched 35 demountable classrooms being installed.

This Government should tell the students of Carlingford West Public School, which has increased by more than 50 per cent over the past three years to more than 1,300 enrolments, that they do not deserve money to be spent on their school for additional toilets. The problem is that members opposite have started to believe their own hype. It is all right for the member for Riverstone to say what he is doing but he should not get too carried away. The Government talks about how much money it is spending, but it should be remembered that this State is spending only 20 per cent of its budget on education. That might appear to be a pretty big figure but it is not when it is averaged out to other States which are spending 24 per cent of their budget on education.

Mr Mark Coure: How many schools did you close?

Mr JIHAD DIB: The member for Oatley likes to talk about Labor cutting services but this Government has closed more schools than it has built. The member for Oatley should listen to what I am saying as he might learn something. We are going through a heatwave and kids are sitting in classrooms in conditions in which they cannot learn. No-one would build a house in the western suburbs of Sydney without air conditioning but this Government is building a school without it. It uses as an excuse that the school will benefit from the breeze off the river. The Government is spending tens of millions of dollars to build schools without air conditioning.

This Government loves to talk about the good things it is doing, but kids are still sitting in demountables or they are in overcrowded classrooms. One-third of our schools are at or above capacity. Parents are sending their kids to schools in dangerous conditions and classes are overheating. Instead of spending money on education the Government is willing to spend \$2.5 billion on stadiums. Every Government member will have to account for that. They will have to tell their communities that they are prioritising stadiums over schools, kids and hospitals. It is all well and good for Government members to come into this Chamber—[Time expired.]

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:47): In the past 16 years all that Labor has done is cut services. We have seen cuts to teachers and cuts to schools. We have seen a billion-dollar planned maintenance—

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: There have not been any cuts to teachers.

Mr MARK COURE: Ninety schools closed under Labor's watch. Surplus land was sold under Labor, programs were slashed and there were more maintenance backlogs. Under Labor services were cut. Let us compare 16 years under Labor with seven years under a Liberal-Nationals Government. We have seen record spending of \$747 million over the next four years to reduce planned maintenance schedules that seem only to have accumulated under the Labor Government. We are clearing Labor's backlog.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. I am having trouble hearing the member for Oatley.

Mr MARK COURE: For the benefit of all those listening to this debate or watching it on the worldwide web, \$841,000 was spent on projects at 10 schools in my electorate—Penshurst West, Peakhurst West, Peakhurst South, Lugarno, Hurstville South, Georges River College Campus and Peakhurst Campus. The member for Canterbury knows someone special who teaches there. Other maintenance projects that commenced over the school holidays—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: He's very special.

Mr MARK COURE: He is very special; he votes for me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Oatley will ignore interjections. Members will direct their comments through the Chair.

Mr MARK COURE: Other maintenance projects that commenced over the school holidays include Oatley Public School, Mortdale Public School and major upgrades at Narwee Public School. Our government has slashed the State's planned maintenance list by more than \$200 million in the past 18 months. It is not just maintenance; there are school upgrades. There is a school hall at Peakhurst campus—that same person I am sure teaches in that same school hall. There have been upgrades at Hurstville Public School. The list continues—and not just in my electorate. There will be new schools in the electorates of the member for Drummoyne and the member for Riverstone and upgrades to schools in the electorate of the member for Heathcote. We are getting on with the job of fixing the backlog created by those opposite.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Are you auditioning?

Mr MARK COURE: I am. We on this side of the House take education seriously, unlike those opposite. [*Time expired.*]

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:50): I oppose the motion moved by the member for Riverstone and the House should oppose it also, because whatever the claimed investment it has not been adequate to address the needs of schools in my electorate and elsewhere on the Central Coast. Whatever the claimed investment, the lived experience of my community is that investment occurs in the electorate of The Entrance and elsewhere on the Central Coast only after schools start to fail. Looking at the State as a whole, it is a matter of public record that since this Government was elected in 2011 the Liberal-Nationals have closed more schools than they have opened. That is the bottom line.

I will advance my argument by referring to a couple of the 16 public schools in my electorate. The Glenvale School is a special education school situated in The Entrance North. A couple of years ago the Government had a security fence built around the school. It quickly began to deteriorate. That is an example of the Government's planned maintenance work. The security fence continues to deteriorate, and I have complained about it a number of times. The Minister's response is that \$32,000 has been spent replacing 60 per cent of the school fence and the situation will continue to be monitored. I have sent photos to the Minister showing that the fence is rusted through completely. There are teenagers at that school who wander away. The fence is in a disastrous state and nothing was done to maintain it adequately when it was erected, and nothing has been done now that it has failed. It is not being fixed as quickly as it should be.

Mr Mark Coure: Have you been to the Minister yet? I bet you have not.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: I have his reply. He says that it will be looked at, and nothing has been done. I am happy to table that document. Lisarow High School has a problem with damp and drainage that was not addressed by the Government until the New South Wales Teachers Federation and I complained about it. I inspected the site. Books in the library and the storage room had mould on them. The drainage had not been maintained and the taps and downpipes were leaking. Basic maintenance had not been done at the school, and as a consequence school property was damaged and students and teachers suffered health problems that were addressed only after we raised the matter with the Teachers Federation. On the subject of investment, Tuggerah Public School just wants investment of intention: It wants the Crown land next to the school. It has been almost four years and the Minister has failed to secure that Crown land for the benefit of the school. That is the Government's idea of investment. [*Time expired.*]

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:53): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions to the debate made by members representing the electorates of Oatley, The Entrance and Lakemba. It was amazing to listen to the member for The Entrance. It does not matter what the numbers are, whatever is being spent he will not be happy.

Mr John Sidoti: Whatever.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: Whatever. The important thing is that we are spending record amounts—more than any other government in New South Wales history. That matters, but what matters more is why we are able to do it. It is because we can manage our finances and impose discipline on the way government works. We can spend money on all the infrastructure needs of New South Wales, not just on one project, one portfolio or one area of need at a time. We can spend record sums on hospitals, schools, transport projects and motorways because of this Government's great economic management. We can meet the needs of people across New South Wales because we have the economy and government finances in good shape. That is what this is about.

We are spending record amounts on education and committing more than ever to a project of new and upgraded schools because we are in a position to do it. The story of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is of a government that has looked after its finances, taken hard decisions to limit wastage and unproductive spending, and tightened its belt so that it can direct money to areas of need. That is happening across the board. As I said, it means we are limiting back-office functions and putting money into frontline services in every portfolio. People are benefitting from that approach, just as students will benefit from the largest injection of funds into school maintenance, and new and refurbished school infrastructure that our schools have ever received.

The Government is able to make this investment because it took a range of hard decisions to limit spending that was not meeting people's needs and invest instead in areas where it would. This is a great example of that. Members should support the Government's efforts to fund school maintenance, and provide new and refurbished schools and classrooms so that students streaming into schools across New South Wales will have the best educational opportunities we can provide.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes53
Noes35
Majority.....18

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Greenwich, Mr A
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G

Haylen, Ms J

PAIRS

Hancock, Mrs S

Lalich, Mr N

Motion agreed to.*Bills***TEACHING AND EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (EMPLOYMENT) BILL 2017****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 22 November 2017.**

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:04): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Teaching and Education Legislation Amendment (Employment) Bill 2017. Although the Opposition will support the bill, attention will be drawn to several matters. In summary, the bill will enable persons to be employed for three years on a temporary contract instead of the current one-year term in the teaching service or as part of school administrative and support; will require people who are employed as part of the teaching service to be accredited, which makes sense; will terminate the employment of persons employed in the teaching service whose accreditation has been revoked, about which the Opposition will comment later; will terminate persons in the teaching service or who are employed as school administrative and support staff and who have abandoned their employment, on which the Opposition will also comment; will enable determination of classes of schools by the Secretary of the Department of Education; and will clarify that requiring overseas students to pay fees to attend government schools is not considered in contravention of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

My contribution to this debate will focus on the engagement of teachers in temporary positions for extended periods. For the information of members who are not familiar with the manner in which schools operate, I will comment on staffing entitlements, which seem to confuse people. The number of students enrolled determines the staffing level for every school. That is referred to as the "entitlement". Above-establishment staff are employed using additional funding, such as Gonski funding. Schools also have leave backfill positions, which are used to replace staff on maternity leave, long service leave and so on. My understanding is that this bill does not address those positions; it addresses only above-establishment staff or staff on extended leave.

I am pleased that the bill contains entitlement-to-leave provisions. It also makes schools responsible for filling the extended period of leave and for ensuring that they have sufficient teachers. Stakeholders say that being able to increase a temporary contract is good for everyone. A teacher taking extended leave will know that a replacement teacher will be in their position for their entire absence. I will use the example of someone taking unpaid leave, which can be taken for three years. One of the good aspects of this bill is that a year 11 teacher who takes unpaid leave would be more comfortable knowing that the person replacing them will be able to take their class through year 11 as well as year 12. In addition, the teacher on leave will not be pressured into returning to work early. The most stressful time in year 12 is just before the Higher School Certificate exams. The teacher on leave wants to know that someone will be there to support their students.

This legislation will also be good for schools because the consistency it provides will allow them to produce better timetables, to engage in succession planning and so on. Schools do not plan for one year; they must plan for the next three years. This bill will also benefit temporary teachers. I have employed a number of temporary teachers over the years, and I have found that the most difficult issue for them is the lack of guaranteed employment. This legislation provides that guarantee if work is available. As a result, temporary teachers will be able to go to their bank manager with a letter from their principal indicating that their employment is guaranteed. This will allow them to apply for a mortgage, a car loan and so on. Rather than working from year to year, they will have some financial stability. It also means that teachers will be able to accrue recreation leave and sick leave. Of course, the most difficult time for temporary teachers is the five-week summer holiday period during which they are not paid.

If someone is on a temporary contract then may earn a little less on a daily basis but over the year they will earn the correct amount of money. This legislation will result in a more consistent approach. It also includes opportunities for professional development and for the teaching of senior classes. The Higher School Certificate is a two-year course, and principals do not want to give senior classes to teachers who may not be at that school for two years. These teachers will also be able to take on extracurricular roles, including becoming year advisers and house patrons. To me, that is the invisible advantage of this legislation. The Minister is not in the Chamber but I note that one of his staff is seated in the Speaker's Gallery. I have one question that I ask the Minister to respond to in his speech in reply, namely, does someone on a contract accrue maternity leave entitlements?

The Opposition supports this legislation primarily because it relates to above-establishment positions, not staffing entitlements or replaced permanent positions. For example, if the member for Drummoyne, who is listening intently to my contribution, was a teacher and then resigned from a school, that would technically leave a vacancy. That vacancy would then be filled on a permanent basis and not backfilled with a temporary contract. I made this clear to my colleagues and some of them will speak to this issue. It was also pleasing to hear that the ministry, the department and the NSW Teachers Federation are working together to make sure this is done correctly. The onus will be on the principal to state the reason behind the filling of a position, so there will be no casualisation of the workforce. The same principles will apply to school administrative and support staff. When members visit schools those are the first people we see. I note that the Speaker, who was a teacher, is in the Chamber. School administrative and support staff do a lot of work for much less remuneration than other school staff. I am sure the Speaker would agree that they do an amazing job.

I spoke earlier about the advantage of teachers being employed as temporary employees for up to three years. The best schools are those with staffing stability. In many schools casuals come on a day-to-day basis but the ability to have the same staff will help to create the best possible schools. Someone on a temporary contract will now be employed for up to three years. They will know their position is safe and they will be able to accrue leave and take on extracurricular activities. Indeed, they will be able to partake in every element of school life. The ultimate objective is for teachers to be employed in permanent positions and not necessarily at the whim of additional funding or a grant here or there or waiting for someone to take leave. It is well known that schools only have a certain level of entitlement. So long as those positions are filled on a permanent basis then I see no problem.

There are other considerations around the employment of someone with accreditation. I understand that we have now moved into the accreditation world. On 1 January, every teacher who had been teaching prior to 2004 received an email saying, "Happy New Year. You are now a proficient teacher. You are going to be getting something in the mail a bit later and then you will move into the proficient standard." This is important because this is a national teaching standard—it is an agreed framework that involved all of the States so that it would make sense nationally. This is another part that makes sense in the bill—if a person has to be an accredited teacher to be able to work in a school, it makes sense that they cannot be employed if they do not have accreditation. I see that as a logical step. I congratulate the drafters of the bill on that because it makes perfect sense.

There are a couple of issues around accreditation that I will mention now and will later raise with the Minister. Recently some concerns were raised that people did not receive what they were meant to receive. They were told they would receive their accreditation details or the welcome pack and login in the middle of January. That did not happen for everybody, which created a problem when it came to logging into professional development on the staff development day which every teacher takes part in—for public schools it was 29 January. Every teacher wanted to log in and log their hours, and they could not necessarily do so. We understand there is a lot to be done, but we need to be careful about making commitments that cannot be met or that we do not have the resources for. If teachers are expected to log in and log all of their hours, they must be correctly provided with their numbers. That is a comment I have made publicly, not so much as a criticism but to say it could be better. I have put that comment out there: If we want people to do things, let us give them everything they need to do those things.

I am sure this will come up for further discussion, and I do not know whether this is the best place for it, but everyone comes in at a "proficient" level. If a person was a principal for 20 years, they are still considered at a "proficient" level. If someone was a deputy principal, they are still at a proficient level. If a person is a classroom teacher, they are at a "proficient" level. These are people who have been teaching since prior to 2004. It is worth exploring the fact that it is like prior learning—if someone has been in a leadership position, surely for the NSW Education Standards Authority [NESA] that would potentially classify them as "highly accomplished" or a "lead teacher". It is not a major thing but it something that could be sorted out.

I know that the member for Kogarah agrees with me, and he is in the Chamber. His father was an outstanding principal of a school that is now in my electorate. I hear great things about him. I think I even saw his name on the wall there once. If only the member for Kogarah had followed in his footsteps and become a teacher as well—the teaching service needed someone like him who could take the cricket team, for example, because I heard he is very good at that.

Mr Chris Minns: I think I told you that.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I think he told everyone, and asked me to quote it. The bill also makes sense in terms of the suspension and termination of teachers that are no longer accredited. I have said repeatedly that there is a bit of this that does not make sense. I would trust that when it comes to this the Minister and his or her representative will make sure they pursue all avenues possible. In the case that somebody loses their accreditation, it is not always a simple, clear-cut thing. For example, the account from which the direct payment of \$100 a year is drawn could have closed or changed. Someone may have changed their key card details.

We need to make sure we do not just say, "These are the hard and fast rules," but that the rules make sense. I am confident that in the spirit of things that will be the way it will go. I cannot imagine that somebody will say, "Jihad Dib, your teaching accreditation expired on 3 January, so on 4 January you are cut." I do not imagine that would happen. I imagine someone would phone me and say, "You have not paid your bill," and I would say, "You wouldn't know it, but I have just got a new credit card." I trust that would be taken into account.

It is the same with the abandonment of a position. Sometimes members speak from experience. The member for Wyong, who is also a former principal, would know that a principal needs their staff at the school. Sometimes people take leave and forget to inform the principal and then do not come back. That is a problem, because it creates approval issues. I return to the first point I made: Schools want to fill a permanent position with a permanent person. If somebody is holding onto a position because they do not want to let it go—they think they have some sort of security—they are stopping that school community from moving forward.

If someone abandons their position, let us try to find them first and follow up every avenue we can. If that does not work, it does not work. The additional amendments regarding overseas students and their ability to qualify for school enrolment are understandable in this context. Schoolteachers are the best people. I say that having worked with them, having walked the walk with them and having seen the things that they do. I live it every day through my wife who is a teacher and reminds me what it is really like. Apparently our lives as members of Parliament is really easy!

Mr John Sidoti: She is a great teacher.

Mr JIHAD DIB: She is a great teacher. She is better than me. In everything that we do, we talk about education and providing opportunities to kids. If we want to have the best education system, there are a lot of things we need and one of those things is the best teachers. We need to make sure our teachers have everything in their power that can assist them to teach. If that means we increase their professional development, then we will increase their professional development. If it means that we give them security because that will keep them in the service then we will do that, because too many teachers leave the service and many of them leave because they cannot get a guarantee.

Teachers are funny people, but they are very special. Everybody seems to have a story about Eddie Woo and to have been his best friend. What an outstanding educator Eddie Woo is. I am one of those people who says that I am proud to know him and I am proud that he came from the teaching service. I am especially proud that he came from the public service. Eddie Woo has become a NSW Australian of the Year because he exemplifies everything that teaching is about. The point in his speech that most resonated with me is that teaching is a mission; it is not about just doing your job or walking away when the day ends. Sometimes, as happens with politicians, we judge the whole based on the actions of a few.

I will talk about the teachers I know: teachers who go to work on weekends, teachers who make sure they go to a game of footy for a kid because that kid does not have a father or mother, teachers who have breakfast in their room for children who cannot afford it, teachers who will ring up kids in the holidays to make sure they are alright because they know they are going through a hard time, teachers who will buy a uniform for a kid, teachers who will encourage a kid no matter what. That is what teachers are, and that is what makes great teachers. We have great teachers in every one of our sectors whether it is the public sector, the Catholic sector or the independent sector. We will do anything we can to make sure they do well. I have spoken at length and I will conclude by acknowledging and recognising teachers. They are the unsung heroes. They make our community stronger and we will do anything we can to support them. I commend the people who have put this bill together, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:22): I make a contribution in relation to the Teaching and Education Legislation Amendment (Employment) Bill 2017 and I am heartened to hear the comments of the member for Lakemba in support of the bill. This bill attempts to do a number of commonsense things which hopefully will make life a little easier for people in schools and a little easier for the teachers concerned. It will introduce much-needed contemporary employment practices for staff in New South Wales government schools. I understand that during consultation the Public Service Association identified that this bill could go further towards modernising the Act under which school administrative and support staff are employed. However, this bill is a first step in the right direction and recognises the need to provide school staff with greater employment security and students and families with greater certainty and continuity of educational support services.

The bill will extend the maximum time that temporary teachers and school administrative and support staff may be employed from 12 months to three years. As we have heard from the member for Lakemba, this will generally be the case regarding a position which has been backfilled because a teacher has gone on extended leave, or perhaps where additional funding has become available to a school to run a project with a lifespan of more than one year that could be best delivered over two or three years, and where the best way of making use of that

resource would be to find the right person to carry that project through. Obviously, from the point of view of people applying for such a position, it is much more attractive if there is certainty that their role will continue throughout the life of the project, giving them some stability in their employment.

Under current legislative arrangements, a student with a disability can be assisted by a different school learning support officer every year, which can be very destructive to student learning. Those support officers offer a valuable service in the school: They play a crucial role in supporting kids with particular learning needs. Again, it may serve the student or group of students the person works with and the school far better if that key person has some continuity of employment and some certainty that they will be able to fulfil their task and serve that particular student or student group over time—enabling them to invest in students and get to know and support them in a way that would not be possible if the students see a revolving door of staff members. The bill will allow one school learning support officer to be employed at a school for up to three years. This will enable a strong and supportive relationship to be built between the student and staff member and provide the ongoing support that the student needs to excel at school.

Some other amendments in the bill deal with abandoned employment—for example, when a person who has been a teacher finds another path in life but does not let go of the security that a guaranteed teaching position affords them and simply does not resign. In that instance it may be difficult for a school to establish that the teacher has in fact left their employment. There needs to be some clarity and certainty around that sort of situation. If appropriate attempts are made to identify the person and their story and it becomes clear that they have abandoned the position and have no intention of returning to it, it will be a straightforward process for the school to move on and appoint somebody substantively to that position. This will mean that students get the benefit of somebody who is employed permanently and teachers get the benefit of permanent employment.

Equally, it is common sense that, having introduced standards that require ongoing accreditation of teachers in public schools, those who do not have the necessary qualification—perhaps the qualification has been lost or it was not achieved within a set time—no longer have the right to teach. That requirement exists in the Teacher Accreditation Act but it needs to be in the Teaching Service Act also in order to ensure clarity around employment processes. Everybody knows what will happen and when, the school can move on and the person involved will not be caught in an unexpected situation. Each of those small but necessary amendments in the bill will make school life clearer and make school administration tasks simpler and more straightforward, which will benefit the students who are the focus of schools' work.

Finally, a couple of small amendments will allow the Secretary of the Department of Education to determine eligibility requirements not only for a category of schools but also, if necessary, for an individual school to enhance the opportunity to meet the particular needs that may arise from time to time for students who require placement in a particular school and to provide some clarity around protecting the system from possible anti-discrimination action when a fee is imposed on overseas students—students who are not Australian taxpayers and who are not contributing otherwise to the education system in Australia.

It has always been understood—and certainly the families understand it very well—that the families of overseas students are required to pay quite substantial fees equating to the cost that the taxpayer would normally meet for public education. That has been happening for many years without problems. But a recent case highlighted the need for some clarity in the Act to ensure that that right is protected and that everybody understands it and is on the same page. As I understand it, there is nothing controversial in either of those administrative changes; they are well understood by the stakeholders and are supported. I am pleased to hear that the Labor Opposition also supports the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:29): I contribute to debate on the Teaching and Education Legislation Amendment (Employment) Bill 2017. The bill seeks to amend the Teaching Service Act 1980, the Education (School Administrative and Support Staff) Act 1987 and the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 to make further provisions with respect to the employment of persons in the Teaching Service and the employment of school administrative and support staff in the Department of Education; to amend the Education Act 1990; and for other purposes.

First, I make reference to schedule 1, which amends the Teaching Service Act 1980. It increases the maximum period that teachers may be employed on a temporary basis from one year to three years. I support that provision. Those working entitlements will create stability and consistency within the classroom and lessen the chance of numerous teachers filling in for one appointment. This is particularly important when teachers take extended leave beyond a 12-month period, which is now more often the case.

As the mother of two children I know that they need stability in a classroom. Longer permanent appointments certainly create stability. Children learn much better when they have a good relationship with teachers and stability of teachers is important in ensuring that good relationship. However, I emphasise that the

bill should not be used as a mechanism to reduce the need to fill positions on a permanent basis, and the shadow Minister and member for Lakemba has already referred to this matter. In his second reading speech the Minister for Education stated that the bill modernises employment practices under which staff are employed in New South Wales government schools.

My concern relates to current employment trends showing that 330,000 people are underemployed in New South Wales. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, these people are not working the number of hours they want to work. Figures from the New South Wales Department of Education reveal the number of temporary teachers in New South Wales has increased by 40 per cent since 2010. Teachers are trained, certified workers and they need to be valued. However, quite often they are pushed out of their careers due to a lack of permanent, full-time positions. Figures from the NSW Education Standards Authority show that New South Wales has lost more than 3,000 teachers from its books since 2010 but more than 4,500 temporary teachers have been added to the State's teaching roster. There is clearly a need for permanent, full-time appointments.

I want to make sure—and all members should make sure—that quality teachers can find secure work. The indisputable fact is that the level of casual employment among teachers is increasing and at the same time the number of people looking for full-time employment is also increasing. It is shifting stress and insecurity onto teachers and is affecting their way of life. Data from the Australian Council for Educational Research has shown that the majority of teachers leave the profession within the first five years, adding to existing fears of a nationwide teacher shortage. Early career teachers are often used as short-term employees and they suffer from lack of certainty and professional support as they develop. I echo the issues raised by the shadow Minister about professional development.

Some in this place may argue that flexibility is the new normal but this flexibility should not be at the cost of stability. Quality teachers must be attracted to the profession and quality teachers must be retained within the profession. I turn now to section 77 and section 77A of the Teaching Service Act. I ask the Minister in reply to clarify the operation of this section. In particular, do the discretionary powers outlined in the bill already exist under the New South Wales Teacher Accreditation Act 2004? Teachers have raised two concerns with me about the bill that I would like the Minister to clarify. The first is that the power to dismiss a teacher who becomes an unauthorised person may already exist under section 93T of the Teaching Service Act.

Prior to the proposed amendment, section 93L allowed teachers to be suspended without pay while they had limited time to appeal to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The proposed amendment uses the Teacher Accreditation Act as a mechanism to provide the secretary with powers to terminate people's accreditation because their accreditation is revoked automatically immediately upon becoming a disqualified person. This is potentially a significant disadvantage to those whose appeals are upheld. The provisions in section 93W of the Teaching Service Act are not adequate protection for teachers in these circumstances. The second concern raised with me was that proposed section 77 (2) provides for suspension without pay for a teacher whose accreditation is suspended. Although the discretionary power to suspend a teacher currently exists under section 29 of the Teacher Accreditation Act, it may be concerning to teachers that this proposed section provides an additional reference to suspension without pay.

I ask that the Minister be clear that the implementation of the bill will be fair for teachers who are currently placed on alternate duties on full pay while allegations or concerns with accreditation are investigated. The concerns with accreditation have been raised by the shadow Minister already. In reference to sections 95, 96 and 100, the bill proposes to abolish the *Education Gazette*. Hopefully there will be an alternative way for the information contained in the gazette to be available to schools and communities. I ask that the Minister maintain a public record of the information contained within the gazette. Transparency within the public sector is critical, particularly when it comes to the education of our children.

While we are discussing the significant importance of teachers and teaching staff, I acknowledge the dedication, professionalism and commitment that our teachers provide to students in the education system, particularly in my electorate of Charlestown. This legislation deals with the public school system, and I acknowledge all the teachers and staff in public schools who do a great job in providing quality education for tomorrow's leaders. Each year the Federal member for Shortland Pat Conroy and I host a school leaders morning tea to congratulate the incoming school leaders from Cardiff High School, Whitebridge High School, Kotara High School, Warners Bay High School, Hunter Sports High School, St Pius X High School in Adamstown and St Mary's Catholic College in Gateshead. We talk with the new leaders about what leadership means to them. I am always impressed by their level of understanding, and by the passion these young people have for leadership and for giving back to their local school communities. I credit a large amount of that to their teachers and families.

I want our teachers and support staff to know that they are valued and supported by the Government and NSW Labor. We appreciate the difference they make to the lives of young people every day. I also thank the Teachers Federation for using its voice to advocate for the livelihood of our teachers. Finally, although I agree

with increasing the limitation of temporary contracts from one year to three years, I reiterate that the Minister must ensure that this bill will not be used as a mechanism to reduce filling positions on a permanent basis when a permanent position is available. With this in mind, I note that Labor will not oppose the bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:39): As other speakers have done, I acknowledge that the bill covers issues such as the changing of one-year temporary contracts to three-year contracts; the tightening of the requirement for people employed as part of the teaching service to be accredited teachers; the termination of employment for someone in the teaching service whose accreditation has been revoked; the termination of employment of teachers or school and administrative staff who have abandoned their employment and the ability of the secretary to determine different classes of schools; and the clarification that charging fees for overseas students to attend Government schools does not breach the Anti-Discrimination Act.

I particularly want to cover temporary contracts and teacher accreditation. This bill is definitely heading in the right direction in those areas. As a former principal—I was a principal for 23 years, I think—I certainly support these changes. These matters always caused me concern. Young teachers who could be given only one-year contracts could not be sure about what would happen at the end of the year. They would have to spend the Christmas period not knowing whether they would be re-employed the following year. Casual teachers on a temporary contract would find it difficult to apply for loans because they could not demonstrate long-term employment.

The improvement in funding that has resulted from the Gonski reforms means that schools can plan special programs over three-year periods. Generally, schools now operate on plans. Those plans were originally for one year, but that changed to three-year plans and, later, five-year plans. In talking to principals during the holiday period I discovered that they were very happy that, for the first time in a long time, they had reached the third year of a three-year plan without the system changing. That goes to show that with Gonski funding principals can think about the long term and set up programs that will have an influence over time. When principals make those plans they want to be able to select people who will have the best impact as part of those programs.

Being able to give teachers the certainty of a three-year contract will help principals attract better people into those positions. It will also enable young teachers to demonstrate how they can contribute to the school environment, which will help them to apply for permanent positions in the department. When teachers who are on one-year contracts apply for jobs they find it hard to demonstrate that they have been part of a school for a period of time. The change to the length of contracts is important. I think teachers and principals will support that change because it will allay a lot of the consternation at the end of the year. When I was a principal I always found it very difficult to say to temporary teachers, "Thanks for the work that you have done this year. You have been excellent, but I cannot tell you whether I will be able to employ you again next year." Because I could not give that guarantee I would often lose good teachers because they would move to another school, where they knew a position was available. That was not good for the school or the children, and it certainly was not good for the teacher involved.

The second area I will talk about is accreditation. As the shadow Minister said earlier in this debate, the bulk of the more experienced teachers will enter that new accreditation program this year. It has caused a great deal of consternation for a lot of people, including quite experienced teachers. When the system changed, people who had been doing a really good job and teaching at a very high standard—people who are very much appreciated by parents—suddenly found that their efficiency was to be judged by an outside person based on paperwork. That should not cause good teachers concern, but it does. I am aware of many good teachers who probably could have worked for another two, three or four years, who have chosen to retire rather than go through that system.

It will be a real shame and a brain drain on the profession if those experienced people are lost. I support the accreditation system and I think it is a step in the right direction to ensure high standards in education. But we also have to be aware that the accreditation process does not become so onerous that it drives good teachers out of the system. Unfortunately, that has occurred. Hopefully, as teachers become used to the system that will not be an issue. It is something we have to think about. One of my concerns is the new work involved for executive staff where they have to write onerous reports on teachers. Initially when reports were submitted the executive staff would support the teacher and say that the teacher is efficient and deserves accreditation, but someone would judge there was not enough information in the report and would send it back saying, "We disagree with you".

It was a difficult situation for the teacher who had to resubmit the work, as well as for the executive staff member because their judgement was brought into question. I caution that when implementing these processes the Government ensures they are practical for the purpose and not setting people up to fail. Teachers are good at teaching but they may not be good at selling themselves to others. Teachers tend to undervalue the work they do and the skills they possess, particularly those who have been teaching for a long time. I concur with previous speakers who have urged caution in terms of the section regarding termination of employment of people who have

had their accreditation revoked. I hope there is a proper appeal process and that the appeal process is not punitive or we risk experienced teachers leaving the system.

On the other side of the equation, I have worked with some terrible teachers and it has been a nightmare trying to get them out of the system. At one of the schools where I worked there was a year one teacher who I determined fairly quickly would not meet that one criteria I had for teachers, that is, would I be happy to have my child in that class? I informed staff of that criteria at the beginning of the year. In this case, I did not want my child in that teacher's class. The classroom was not a welcoming environment and it became obvious to me that that person did not like children. The parents knew it, the kids knew it and the rest of the staff knew it.

We tried professional development, counselling, peer teaching, and team teaching. Finally, the person chose to resign under their own steam. It was a difficult situation. I am pleased with the accreditation system. If people are not suited to the profession their performance can be managed for their own benefit. The person I spoke of did not like teaching. At one point I asked, "Why are you here?" They said, "It is a job." I said, "That is the wrong answer." That situation occurs only every now and then. In the 23 years I was in charge of schools only three people caused me concern. I support the bill. I hope the issues I have raised are taken into account. I support the extension of the temporary contracts.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:49): I make a brief contribution today on the Teaching and Education Legislation Amendment (Employment) Bill 2017. I do so as a teacher who worked for 25 years as a casual on rolling temporary contracts across Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury region in the years before I was elected to this place. It is this particular aspect of the bill that I wish to address. While I note that most of the measures in this bill are simple, practical ones, some changes are made to the manner in which casual teachers may be employed in schools in New South Wales.

Casual and temporary workers are a forgotten group in our public conversation about jobs, wages and employment. Governments often pat themselves on the back for reducing unemployment, but the hidden truth is that often the headline "unemployment rate" is disguising the fact that a huge section of our community is underemployed or not enjoying the benefit and security of permanent work to which they are entitled. This was brought into focus at a national level in recent weeks when the Fair Work Commission upheld the right of big business to refuse to offer their long-term casual employees the chance to convert to permanent part-time or full-time employment. The Australian Council of Trade Unions Secretary Sally McManus pointed out:

This decision shows how hopelessly broken our workplace laws are.

Likewise, examples exist in the State's public sector—in particular, teaching—where all too often the system is built on an assumed component of permanent casual workers. In the scheme of things, New South Wales should be an employer of choice. The public sector is the largest employer not only in this State but across the country. That means it must set the best possible example as an employer and it must signal to other employers the value it places on the continuation of its workers. It also means that there can be no further example of creeping casualisation in our public sector workforce. The Department of Education must make it as easy as possible for teachers who want permanent work to secure it.

As a proud member of the NSW Teachers Federation and an active member of the Blue Mountains Unions Council, I am aware of a number of examples of hardworking teaching colleagues who are on rolling temporary contracts in our schools who yearn for a permanent substantive teaching position. This is about feeling and being valued by the system. Permanent work is the unspoken missing piece of the puzzle in housing affordability, as has been mentioned already in this place. There is no point creating additional housing supply when a whole section of our society cannot take out a mortgage to buy a home. How can a family keep up with growing rents, save for a deposit or even qualify for a mortgage if the main source of income is a casual wage in a professional field for which they spent four to five years training at university?

Permanent employment is the unspoken missing piece of the puzzle in arresting the growing problem of economic inequality. How can a single parent set aside money for a rainy day to pay the car registration each year or replace broken white goods when they do not have a reliable income? This is the life I lived for 25 years as a casual teacher. Many of the casual teachers I came across lived similar lives. It is near impossible to keep your head above water when your pay fluctuates each fortnight or one faces many weeks with no income if the phone does not ring with another offer of a short-term appointment. This is what pushes households into high levels of credit card debt and financial hardship. We must remain hyper vigilant against creeping casualisation and we must push to make the security of permanent employment available for every worker who requires it, and it must start in the New South Wales public sector.

As a member of the NSW Teachers Federation, I acknowledge and recognise its work in fighting for better pay and conditions for my colleagues in the teaching profession, as well as its support and advocacy on behalf of temporary and casual teachers. While the temporary contract component of this amendment is a good

step forward and should be acknowledged, it is the precarious or insecure situation and the lived experience of many workers that must be acknowledged today. That is what we are here for.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:54): I support the Teaching and Education Legislation Amendment (Employment) Bill 2017. In the past fortnight my daughters have gone to school for the 2018 school year, as have many children of families in Western Sydney. I want to make sure they have the best possible education. This bill tightens the requirement for employed teachers to be accredited, automatically terminates teachers if they have accreditation revoked and automatically terminates teachers who abandon employment but fail to relinquish their positions. These measures are sensible, and along with my Labor colleagues I support them.

My concern, as a supporter of secure jobs and as a father of two daughters in school, is to make sure casual jobs do not replace permanent positions in relation to teaching staff. Another concern is that this bill allows persons to be employed on a temporary basis in the teaching service, or as school administrative and support staff in the Department of Education, for a period or periods of up to three years, rather than 12 months. This flexibility may make the job of school administrators easier, but it leads to a further casualisation of the New South Wales workforce overall.

Currently our schools have been let down by the State Government. Schools in Prospect are overcrowded. Five local schools are completely at student capacity, with eight others more than 85 per cent full. We also have an issue of over-capacity in teaching staff. Beresford Road Public School, Metella Road Public School, Pendle Hill Public School and Prairiewood High School are all at 100 per cent capacity in terms of student numbers, with no room for further growth. Girraween Public School, the worst example of overcrowding in the seat of Prospect, employs 52 teaching staff in 45 teaching spaces. This year it is overcrowded by 116 per cent in its student capacity.

This legislation would allow the education department to keep teachers and teacher aides in casual positions for longer, but it ignores the fact that more needs to be done to ensure there are enough teachers overall to provide a good education for our children. I am concerned by this move towards casualisation in our teaching workforce when we actually need more teachers, which Government members have acknowledged in many of their speeches and actions in this House, and also through public comments of the Minister for Education. We need more investment into our school system by this State Government.

The current solution by the Berejiklian Government is to add more demountable buildings into our schoolyards. I have seen that in Prospect on a number of occasions. Currently Girraween Public School has 28 demountables, Bossley Park High School has 19 demountables and Greystanes Public School has 16 demountables. In fact, there are 110 demountables in the electorate of Prospect alone. These demountable classrooms cannot be and are not a permanent solution to overcrowding in our schools. We need permanent infrastructure, support facilities and teaching staff to look after our children in our schools. The infrastructure we have is under-maintained.

Currently, Bossley Park High School, the worst example of maintenance backlog in the seat of Prospect, has a maintenance backlog of \$1,196,020. In its last budget this Government spent \$99,293 on maintenance at that school—that is, 8 per cent of the backlog. If the current attempt by this Government to maintain Bossley Park High School continues at this rate of funding, the backlog will not be gone until 2030. Widemere Public School in my electorate needs \$990,046 for maintenance backlog. In 2016-17, it received only \$39,818. Under this Government, Widemere Public School will not be up-to-date for another 25 years. Bossley Park Public School needs \$865,000 to fix its maintenance issues, yet it received only 5 per cent of that sum in the last budget. Finally, Greystanes High School needs \$600,000 to fix its maintenance backlog but only received \$60,000, one-tenth of the backlog.

This Government is spending \$2.5 billion on knockdowns and rebuilds of stadiums that are 17 years old rather than spending that money that is so desperately needed on our schools in Western Sydney. If this Government thinks these measures are sufficient to address the state of schools in the electorate of Prospect and around New South Wales, it is wrong. Western Sydney needs better schools. It needs upgraded schools. It does not need overcrowded classrooms and substandard demountables, and it does not need a maintenance backlog of more than \$768 million. It does not need \$2.5 billion of shiny stadiums that will do nothing for the education of our children in Western Sydney. We must continue to oppose the stadiums; we must continue to fight for our children to have a decent education.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:00): I support the Teaching and Education Legislation Amendment (Employment Bill) 2017. New South Wales government schools are internationally recognised for superb teachers, the quality of our education programs and the pathways our schools offer to a career or to further study, including at Australian and overseas institutions. However, today's legislative amendments are required to bring about the necessary contemporary employment practices for staff employed in our government schools. Our

school staff deserve better job security and the kids and parents deserve continuity of care and teaching delivery. I commend the Minister for Education, the Hon. Rob Stokes, and his office for progressing these sensible reforms.

By extending the maximum time for temporary employment for teachers and administrative and support staff from 12 months to three years we are reducing the administrative burden on principals in managing staffing and ensuring the continuity of teaching and care. I reflect on the schools and the roles of the teachers who serve the students in the electorate of North Shore. I spend a lot of time getting to know the different teachers, principals and students at North Shore schools. The constraints that principals have in trying to manage staff, rostering and long-term absences because of permanent employees who are not able to participate in their jobs at the time have been raised with me on a number of occasions. There are restrictions on retaining good teaching staff in the long term because they do not have the capacity to employ them for longer than 12 months as temporary teachers. I know of a number of wonderful teachers, including at Mosman Public School, who ended their tenure at their schools at the end of last year because they were moving on to permanent positions elsewhere. We do not want our students to lose the relationship they have developed with these high-quality teachers, and we do not want the schools to lose the commitment of these teachers and the relationships they have built over time.

The bill amends the legislation to increase the maximum period for when a teacher or school administrative and support staff [SASS] can be engaged as a temporary employee from one year to three years. It introduces an efficient and procedurally fair method for the department to terminate the employment in cases where permanent employees abandon their employment, which is currently missing. It specifies the minimum period of notice and maximum compensation that temporary teachers or SASS employees can receive when their temporary employment is terminated.

The bill also amends the Education Act to enable the secretary to determine the eligibility criteria for student enrolment in a particular government school and to make it clear that requiring overseas students to pay fees to attend government schools does not contravene the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. The Government thinks it is reasonable and fair that the parents of overseas students make a financial contribution to the system that provides their children the excellent education they receive. All Australian States, including New South Wales, currently have legislation allowing them to impose fees on overseas students attending government schools. In New South Wales overseas students who hold a permanent visa or a special category visa within the meaning of the Commonwealth Migration Act 1958 do not pay fees.

Further, the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education can exempt an overseas student from any requirement to pay a fee so that a flexible and sympathetic approach can be taken to cases of individual hardship or special circumstances. Over the financial years 2009-10 to 2014-15, \$355 million has been collected from the enrolment of overseas students in New South Wales government schools. The second proposed amendment to the Education Act ensures that the department does not breach the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 by requiring overseas students to pay fees to attend New South Wales government schools.

A number of years ago similar concerns were raised regarding a decision made by the then Department of Transport to not provide overseas university students with transport concessions. Those concerns were addressed by the passing of the Transport Administration Amendment (Travel Concession) Act 2006. To avoid any doubt, and to protect the revenue stream of the Department of Education, we are proposing to amend section 31A of the Education Act to clarify that imposing fees on overseas students does not breach the Anti-Discrimination Act. I support this legislation. In particular, the measures to ensure longer employment of temporary teachers are important for students in my electorate and across the State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (18:05): In reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the Teaching and Education Legislation Amendment (Employment) Bill 2017, including shadow Minister for Education the member for Lakemba, the member for Charlestown, former school principal the member for Wyong, former teacher the member for Blue Mountains and, from a higher education perspective, the member for Prospect. I also thank my colleagues: former senior teacher the member for Riverstone; and the member for North Shore, who is in the Chamber. I particularly acknowledge her advocacy for greater infrastructure investment into schools in her community. I acknowledge she has been very vocal on the matter.

This bill will introduce contemporary employment practices into the legislation under which staff are employed in New South Wales government schools. In particular, the bill will extend for up to three years the time for which both teachers and school administrative and support staff may be employed as temporary employees. The bill will also clarify the existing power of the Secretary of the Department of Education in relation to the classification of government schools. Further, the bill will ensure that the longstanding practice of charging fees for overseas students enrolled in New South Wales government schools is consistent with State anti-discrimination law.

These are important amendments to ensure that school staff remain focused on the learning needs of their students. In particular, they will allow greater certainty for students—especially those who need additional support in the classroom. The bill makes some minor consequential amendments to discontinue the publication of the *Education Gazette* and remove the requirement to publish details of members of the teaching service when they retire. The bill represents a step towards modernising employment practices for staff who work in government schools. Improvement is a continual process—which is a message central to the practice of teaching—and the Government will be monitoring these reforms as they are implemented throughout the current school year.

I will now turn to particular questions, observations and comments raised in the debate and respond to them as convention dictates. I first note the question by the member for Lakemba relating to the leave entitlements of temporary teachers. Temporary teachers are generally entitled to the same leave entitlements as permanent staff under the award. I am advised that in relation to maternity leave, temporary teachers will be entitled to apply for and be granted maternity leave during the period of their temporary employment, which is up to three years. The contract period will be up to three years whether or not leave is taken. If leave is taken it will form part of the term of the contract. In other words, the same maternity leave provisions will be available to staff engaged on temporary contracts.

I also note the concerns of the member for Charlestown suggesting that the bill will be a cover for the department to employ more temporary teachers and not fill permanent positions. That is simply not the case and I am pleased to take this opportunity to clarify that point. The department employed in excess of 1,700 permanent teachers for the start of the 2018 school year, which represents a significant increase in the number of permanent teachers employed in New South Wales government schools. Nevertheless, as part of contemporary employment practices and to provide flexibility, for which many great teachers as well as schools have been asking, the Government updated employment conditions to provide additional flexibility and opportunity. I note that the Opposition does not oppose that aspect of the bill.

It is important to address in my reply the suspension and termination of employment of teachers who may lose their accreditation. Teacher accreditation is a critical element of the framework for ensuring that only qualified persons work as teachers in New South Wales. The State Government sets very high standards for teachers who work in government schools and takes pride in having some of the highest standards for teacher training of any jurisdiction in the Commonwealth. It is important to the Government that only the most appropriately and superlatively qualified professionals teach in New South Wales government schools. Accreditation is a function of the professional regulator, which is the NSW Education Standards Authority. Holding accreditation is an essential term of any teacher's contract of employment in a New South Wales government school. The Government considers accreditation to be so important that, under the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004, both the school and the teacher commit a criminal offence if a school permits a teacher who is not accredited to work in that school.

In the circumstance of a teacher having lost his or her accreditation, a replacement teacher must be found and the replacement teacher of course will be paid. In those circumstances it is reasonable for the department to retain a discretion to maintain employment of a teacher who is under temporary disqualification or who, by virtue of losing accreditation, cannot lawfully work in a classroom. That commonsense measure will ensure that the highest standards apply to teachers in schools throughout New South Wales. My personal experience indicates that teachers are responsible professionals, who know that accreditation is critical for their role and who, as professionals, acknowledge that the role of accreditation is incredibly important. Teachers understand that accreditation is part of the duty of being a professional.

In conclusion, I thank all those who contributed to the preparation of this bill. I note the pedagogical experience of those who contributed to its formulation and their passion for great teaching in New South Wales schools. I state for the record my gratitude to every teacher who has commenced classroom teaching this week—both new teachers and teachers who are continuing in their profession. During the past fortnight, approximately 1.2 million children returned to schools across New South Wales. In New South Wales public schools, students are guided by almost 66,000 teachers, who do an extraordinary job. It is a great pleasure for me to support this bill, which provides more flexibility and more modern employment conditions for the wonderful professionals who work as teachers in New South Wales schools. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr ROB STOKES: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 23 November 2017.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:14): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I make it clear that the Opposition does not oppose this bill, which is part of ongoing reviews of health-related legislation and makes amendments to several Acts that deal with health services in New South Wales. The bill seeks to amend the Health Administration Act 1982, the Health Services Act 1997, the Human Tissue Act 1983, the Mental Health Act 2007, the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990, the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, and the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 [GIPA].

As I said, the Opposition does not oppose this bill. However, Opposition members in the Legislative Council will move amendments designed to block the Government's moves to exempt preliminary assessments from the GIPA process. I make it clear that the Opposition welcomes any measure that will assist health boards, management and skilled professionals, and staff in the health sector in fulfilling their duties. The proposed amendments relate to the Government's extending freedom of information provisions to the newly created preliminary assessments of major clinical errors, incidents and unexpected deaths in the health system.

The Government is proposing to establish new procedures under the Health Services Act for the handling of root cause analysis [RCA] reviews of reportable incidents that are serious and systemic, and that occur within New South Wales local health districts and other health services organisations overseen by NSW Health. RCA reviews analyse major incidents or sentinel events such as the tragedy that occurred in Bankstown 18 months ago when two newborns were gassed. It is critical to note that New South Wales hospitals have had the most sentinel events in Australia, resulting in death or serious harm to patients. In 2015-16, New South Wales had 34 sentinel events compared to 16 events in Victoria, 15 in Queensland, 11 in South Australia, five in Western Australia, and one in the Australian Capital Territory.

Sentinel events include procedures carried out on the wrong patient or the wrong body part resulting in death or major permanent loss of function; retained instruments or other material after surgery that result in further surgical procedures; medication error leading to patient death; and maternal death associated with pregnancy or birth. Under the bill, an RCA or another type of review prescribed by the regulations can be carried out following a reportable incident. A new preliminary risk assessment will be required following a reportable incident, which should allow for earlier identification of risk factors, and improved open disclosure processes for patients and their families.

The Opposition supports increased transparency and communication with grieving or affected families. Like the current privileged status of root cause analyses, the preliminary risk assessment will not be able to be used in legal proceedings, but it will be able to be disclosed for the purpose of providing open disclosure. The Government states that the new preliminary risk assessment and the work undertaken before the release of the final RCA will be privileged and exempt from the GIPA. In his second reading speech the Minister for Health stated that the bill provides for greater flexibility in the type of serious adverse event reviews undertaken. The findings and recommendations that form part of the review report will be separated, which will allow the findings to be delivered earlier to promote timely open disclosure to patients and families. It will also allow an organisation to put relevant changes to the review team to develop and to improve proposed recommendations designed to avoid a repeat of the incident.

I reiterate the Opposition's concerns about a pattern that appears to have developed under the Baird and Berejiklian governments to block consistently and avoid GIPA freedom of information requests on reportable incidents. I ask that in his speech in reply the Minister clarify whether the workings of the RCA Review Committee preliminary assessment will be exposed to the GIPA process. Indeed, there is much public expectation that any such review be open and transparent in disclosing any relevant information and details surrounding a particular major incident. Naturally, all identifying information or personal data could be redacted. The Minister must explain why he would want to preside over a process that lacks accountability or in any way appears to cover up systemic errors or mistakes in extending the GIPA exemption process to cover the preliminary assessment. I repeat: We support the new preliminary assessment, but we do not support the restriction of freedom of information and the expansion of the culture of cover-up this Government appears to indulge in. I foreshadow also that amendments will be moved in the Legislative Council to allow for better transparency.

I now turn, as the shadow Minister for Mental Health, to the amendments to the Mental Health Act to enable the Mental Health Review Tribunal [MHRT] to hear reviews and electro convulsive therapy [ECT]

inquiries in the absence of a patient or person in certain circumstances—if the patient or person refuses to attend or is too unwell to attend. It was reported in the 2016/17 Mental Health Review Tribunal annual report that there were 2,725 involuntary patient reviews relating to 2,153 individual patients under section 37 of the Act; there were seven reviews of persons detained following a breach of a community treatment order [CTO] under section 63 of the Act; and there were 712 hearings involving ECT, seven where the tribunal reviewed a voluntary patient's capacity and 719 applications to administer ECT to an involuntary patient. These hearings related to 450 individual patients.

I thank the Minister for Health, the Minister for Mental Health and their staff for their assistance in providing a number of briefings to the shadow Minister for Health and me on issues about which we sought clarification. The provisions in the bill allow a hearing to proceed in the absence of a patient where the patient is too unwell or refuses to attend but this will not apply to mental health inquiries, which is the first review of a patient following his or her detention. I note that these changes are being instigated as part of the tribunal's review of its functions and proceedings. Some stakeholders have raised a number of concerns with me. It is critical that safeguards are in place. I understand this debate will be adjourned this evening, but before this bill is dealt with in the Legislative Council it is important that mental health stakeholders who represent patients at the tribunal are comfortable with these amendments. Currently the legislation clearly states that a patient must be present.

Some concerns have been raised by the tribunal that a number of cases have to be adjourned due to a patient being unwilling or too unwell to attend a hearing. I understand why it may be critical to proceed with these hearings in their absence because it may pertain to reviewing a particular treatment order and any delay or adjournment may, in effect, be detrimental to these patients. Before a hearing can proceed in the absence of a patient—these are the safeguards that have been provided to me and I will put them on record—the authorised medical officer must apply to have the review held in the absence of the patient because the patient is too unwell or refuses to attend the hearing, the tribunal must be satisfied that the patient is too unwell or refuses to attend, and the tribunal 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. In addition, the patient's legal representative can still attend the hearing.

Before deciding to hear the review in the absence of the patient, the tribunal must have considered the views, if known, of the patient, the representative of the patient and the carers of the patient. If there are any other safeguards that the Minister for Mental Health or the Minister for Health can place on record, I encourage them to do so. It is critical that that is put on record now, given that there may be some concerns among stakeholders. Changes are also proposed to require carers to be informed of upcoming hearings. I welcome this change in particular. The family or carers are indeed critical stakeholders and must be informed of such proceedings. I understand the tribunal anticipates that the new provisions would apply to less than 10 per cent of cases. This will apply to a very small number of cases but it is critical and I ask the Minister to address it in his reply.

I suggest to the tribunal that there may be a way of reflecting some data in future or reviewing these amendments after 12 months to ensure that they have in no way deprived any individual of their civil liberties. Perhaps the Minister could make clear that the tribunal should be reviewing this on a 12-monthly basis. I proceed to a number of proposed changes to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act. It is proposed that the Act will require regular reviews by the Mental Health Review Tribunal of persons other than forensic patients who are subject to community treatment orders and who are detained in correctional centres and will provide for the apprehension of forensic patients and correctional patients who breach conditions of leave from mental health facilities.

The changes to section 61 of the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act relating to community treatment orders are not applicable to forensic patients. Rather, the provisions relate to persons in a correctional centre who require a community treatment order. Schedule 5 [5] permits an authorised medical officer of a mental health facility to apprehend a person or direct that a person be apprehended if the person fails to return to the facility at the end of a period of leave of absence or fails to comply with a condition to which that grant of leave was subject. Persons including police officers are authorised to apprehend the person and in the case of a police officer may enter premises to do so.

The amendment proposes to allow a forensic patient who has not returned from their community or temporary leave to be apprehended by a police officer. I welcome this amendment. I raised this issue in April 2017 when it became evident that a number of forensic patients were, for example, breaching their conditions of leave. Requiring the tribunal to make an order perhaps on the weekend, after hours or at very short notice is quite burdensome and there may be some risk to community safety if there is any delay. This amendment is supported by the New South Wales Opposition. It was reported in the 2015-16 annual report that 26 forensic patients breached their conditions. I also note that in 2016-17 the tribunal conducted 78 reviews of forensic patients following their apprehension due to an alleged breach of a condition of leave or release.

Various stakeholders within the health sector have called for many other miscellaneous changes, including renaming the Ambulance Services Advisory Council to the Ambulance Services Advisory Board, requiring the Health Secretary instead of the Health Minister to appoint persons to the Ambulance Service Advisory Board, providing that the employment of a NSW Health service senior executive may not be terminated without the concurrence of the Health Secretary, and amending the Government Sector Employment Act to allow the Health Secretary to terminate the employment of a Health executive for unsatisfactory performance. In this last case, I have been advised that the Public Sector Commissioner was consulted.

This bill proposes to amend the Human Tissue Act to enable persons, other than medical practitioners, who have been appointed by the Health Secretary to remove tissues from the body of a deceased person. The regulations will create a comprehensive list of those people who are allowed to do that. The proposed changes which would allow a non-medical practitioner to remove skin tissue will align New South Wales with other States, such as Queensland and Victoria. As the Minister for Health laid out in his second reading speech, some people are concerned about delays in removing skin tissue for transplantation purposes.

I reiterate that we will not oppose the bill in the Legislative Assembly but we will move amendments in the Legislative Council to block the Government's moves to exempt the preliminary assessments into major clinical errors and instances and unexpected deaths in the health system. We support those assessments. It is critical that the Government is not permitted to block the Government Information (Public Access) Act process. It is critical that patients, their families and the broader community have full trust in the health system. We must encourage that trust with a transparent, open and accountable system. That is why we foreshadow the amendments in the other House.

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (18:32): The Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 is an important bill that makes a range of changes to various health Acts, including the Mental Health Act and the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act. I will speak to these elements of the bill. The Mental Health Act establishes a regime for the voluntary and involuntary treatment of persons with a mental illness. In relation to involuntary treatment, the Act requires that involuntary detention and treatment is used only where a patient poses a serious risk to themselves or the public and where it is the least restrictive option available.

The Act also ensures that the involuntary detention of persons is subject to the review and oversight of the independent and semi-judicial Mental Health Review Tribunal. After a patient is initially detained in a mental health facility, the tribunal must conduct a mental health inquiry to determine whether the person should be detained as an involuntary patient. The Act requires the tribunal to conduct regular reviews of involuntary patients. If the tribunal finds that a patient should not be detained, it can order their release. The tribunal is also involved in hearing applications in relation to electroconvulsive therapy [ECT]. Despite common misconceptions in the public domain, evidence overwhelmingly shows that ECT can be a highly effective treatment for people with medication-resistant depression. Treating clinicians and carers have described this treatment to me as lifesaving.

When a treating team considers that a detained patient requires ECT, the treatment can only be given if the tribunal agrees after holding a hearing into the matter. Hearings of the tribunal are important as they provide independent oversight and review of detained patients. Patient involvement is important as it allows the tribunal to see and hear the patient before making its determination, particularly decisions relating to the granting of leave. The Mental Health Act currently requires patients to attend a hearing either in person or via audiovisual link. However, there are times when a patient is too physically or mentally unwell to properly attend a hearing. For example, melancholic depression can lead to patients suffering from catatonia and/or refusing to eat and drink. ECT can be a quick, safe and effective treatment in those cases.

There are times when such patients may be unable to properly attend a hearing, and requiring the patient's attendance at a hearing can be distressing and counterproductive. Currently, without their attendance, the ECT hearing cannot proceed and the only option would be to adjourn the matter and delay much-needed treatment. Sometimes a patient will also refuse to attend a hearing, which can be due to the patient's illness. For example, if the patient is suffering from paranoia the patient may refuse to participate in the tribunal process. Requiring attendance can be counterproductive in such cases and adjourning the hearing can mean a delay in the tribunal independently reviewing the patient's detention, which may not be to the benefit of the patient. As such, I support amendments to the Act that will allow a tribunal hearing to proceed in cases where a patient is too unwell to attend a hearing or where the patient refuses to attend.

The amendments will allow tribunal hearings, other than a mental health inquiry—which is the first review of an initially detained patient—to proceed in the absence of the patient, but only in exceptional circumstances and where appropriate safeguards are in place. These include instances where the patient is too unwell to attend or refuses to attend the hearing; the tribunal is satisfied that the patient will be unlikely to be well enough to attend within a reasonable period; the patient's representative has been notified of the review or, in the

case of an ECT hearing, reasonable steps have been taken to notify the representative; the tribunal has considered the views, if known, of the patient, their representative and carers; and the tribunal is of the opinion that the carrying out of the hearing in the absence of the patient is desirable for the safety or welfare of the patient.

Importantly, the bill also amends the Act to make clear that a patient's legal representative can attend a hearing even in the absence of the patient. It also makes changes to require carers to be notified of upcoming hearings. The changes will not apply to a mental health inquiry, which is the first independent review of a patient after the patient has been detained. It is important that mental health inquiries are held in the presence of a patient. The amendments strike an appropriate balance between recognising the importance of patients' attendance at tribunal hearings while also recognising that, unfortunately, there will be times when patients cannot, or will not, attend a hearing.

Let me be clear: This is a high threshold. Unless all of the criteria I have outlined are met, a hearing cannot proceed in the absence of the patient. If we do not allow the tribunal in very limited circumstances and with appropriate safeguards to hold a hearing in the absence of the patient, unintended consequences may result. For example, without the amendments, if a patient is too unwell or refuses to attend the hearing, it could result in the patient being detained in a mental health facility without any independent review by the tribunal as the tribunal hearing will simply be adjourned. Or, in the case of ECT, if a hearing cannot proceed then ECT will not be able to be given to the patient, which can be detrimental to a patient's health. A delay in treatment is not in the best interests of patients.

Careful consideration has been given to this issue to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the importance of patient participation in hearings, the need to ensure appropriate independent oversight of persons detained under the Mental Health Act, and not causing inappropriate delays to necessary treatment. In addition, the Ministry of Health has consulted with the tribunal, which has indicated that it will develop practice directions in relation to the new powers and that it will consult with consumer groups in developing the practice directions to guide the practical application of the amendments. The amendments to the Mental Health Act set the right balance. The amendments in the bill to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act are also supported.

Importantly, the bill will allow a forensic patient who fails to return from leave to be apprehended by an authorised medical officer without requiring an order for apprehension by the tribunal. A forensic patient is a person who has been found not guilty of an offence by reason of mental illness, or a person who is unfit to be tried and who has been detained following a special hearing. Forensic patients are reviewed every six months by the tribunal, which can make orders for the patient's care, treatment, detention, leave and release.

If a forensic patient is granted leave and fails to return from leave at the appointed time or fails to comply with a condition of the leave, currently before the patient is apprehended an order for apprehension must be issued by the tribunal. Such a requirement can cause unnecessary delays and can be contrasted with civil involuntary patients who are granted leave under the Mental Health Act. Under section 48 of the Mental Health Act if a civil involuntary patient fails to return from leave or breaches a condition of his or her leave, the patient can be apprehended without requiring an order of the tribunal. The bill will bring the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act into line with section 48 of the Mental Health Act. This amendment will assist in ensuring that the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act is more responsive to patient and public safety. The changes in the bill relating to mental health legislation are important and welcome. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Private Members' Statements

SUGAR TAX

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:41): Tonight I speak about an important economic consideration that in recent weeks has gained considerable press from the Australian Medical Association: the introduction of a sugar tax. I state at the outset that I am opposed to a sugar tax. I do not believe that such a tax would reduce what has become widely known in this country and this State, particularly in certain parts of the State, as the obesity epidemic. If we have an obesity problem—and I understand we do—why would we not impose a sugar tax when our country has been successful in cracking down on tobacco-related diseases through such reforms on tobacco sales as plain packaging, advertising bans, increasing levies and many others?

The reality is that sugar is not tobacco. There is no safe level of tobacco consumption. In fact, having been a health and educational professional for some time, having worked in this sector and having had the opportunity to do research in this area, particularly around the activity levels of young women and why they may or may not undertake certain exercise, I found the obesity issue to be extremely complex. Obesity is not restricted simply to the consumption of sugary drinks, although they play a role. We do not want to fall into the trap of taxing one component of the obesity problem while ignoring everything else.

For example, new developments are popping up in Sydney and across regional areas with little or no backyard space, little or no public space, few or no cycleways and few or no passive recreation opportunities—that is, few or no opportunities for people to undertake recreational and physical activities in a non-formal way. When one considers a sugar tax, one must also ask: Why are we not also considering a tax on salt? As a child I had nephrotic syndrome, a kidney disease, and my parents had to strictly regulate the amount of salt I was allowed to consume. Nutritionists and public health professionals tell us now that our consumption of salt is extremely high. To tax a sugary soft drink while at the same time not placing a tax burden on a plate of salty chips with a cup of coffee seems a little odd. We may be targeting the wrong issue and only one component of obesity.

Let me make this clear: Obesity has a range of different solutions in which the Government can play a role. I acknowledge that this Government, like former governments, has played a role at State, Federal and local levels to try to reduce the problem. As policymakers we all have a responsibility to do more. I hope we continue to see reforms in our school canteens to make them a lot healthier than when I was at school or was teaching at schools. We also need to look at reducing the amount of soft drinks available through vending machines in public spaces. It should not be so easy for people to consume soft drink. But we need to look more broadly than that: We need to look at new developments and estates and we need to make sure that our schools are open beyond 3.00 p.m. We need to allow people to use the school grounds to participate in physical activity after the school is formally closed.

We need to look at a broad range of things because in this day of outrage it is easy to say, "Let us blame one thing and that will fix a whole lot of problems." The Blacktown community and other communities in Western Sydney are often targeted for having high rates of obesity. We do not want to get into blaming individuals; we want to start supporting communities to make better health choices, whether it is through our planning, school reforms or what we do with our public spaces. All those things have a role to play. Labor does not support a move to a sugar-based tax.

SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (18:46): Two fantastic infrastructure projects are currently underway in my electorate that, once complete, will result in significant improvements for local residents and visitors. In the past year alone, the Berejiklian Government has committed nearly \$2 million towards improving accessibility, amenity and safety at two key locations—Chris Creek at Sussex Inlet and Moona Moona Creek in Vincentia. Chris Creek at Sussex Inlet is a popular swimming and recreational area that is visited by large numbers of people over the summer period. Thanks to a \$937,691 investment—almost \$1 million—under the New South Wales Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund, this location will soon undergo vital works that will breathe life into the picturesque location. At present, Chris Creek Bridge is a bottleneck point, with many local walking tracks meeting at and then crossing over the waterway. The bridge is also the main link for nearby residents going to the Sussex Inlet commercial centre or to the well-patronised public reserves on the creek's banks. The existing bridge's verge for pedestrian access is only 30 centimetres wide and certainly does not allow two-way pedestrian flow.

Furthermore, the Sussex Inlet community has a high percentage of older residents, with 50 per cent older than 60 years of age. A large retirement village is also located near the creek. Many of the retirement village residents use mobility aids and are forced to use the traffic lanes to cross the bridge due to the insufficient width of the existing verge. Similarly, children and those with prams or bikes are also affected and unable to cross safely. The bridge becomes extremely dangerous during the busy summer months as a result of the restricted line of sight into the distance, which is caused by the crest over the bridge and the narrow pedestrian verge, which forces people to use the road. The proposed works will see construction of a separate shared-user bridge adjacent to the existing bridge on River Road. The new bridge will be 125 metres long and 30 metres wide, significantly improving pedestrian flow and safety, particularly for the young and elderly.

Pathways will also be installed at each end of the new pedestrian bridge, connecting the structure to existing paths. This will result in not only a safer crossing but also a continuous pedestrian and cyclist network that will increase use of the area's pathways and allow older community members to maintain their independence for longer. Meanwhile, the works also include construction of new purpose-built amenities to replace the temporary facilities installed each summer. The structure will house two unisex accessible cubicles and pathway linkages. This will increase convenience for all those who frequent the reserves. It will also encourage more locals and tourists to enjoy the outdoor environment. As it is halfway to town, it will be a much-needed facility for elderly residents. Overall, the new amenities and bridge will encourage a more inclusive, connected and active community. I am thrilled to have secured this project for my community.

The second project at Moona Moona Creek involves a series of improvements to further enhance the Round the Bay Walk. The Round the Bay Walk consists of a number of existing walking and shared-path routes around Jervis Bay and forms an iconic tourist attraction for the South Coast. The sections of the walk already

completed have been incredibly popular among tourists, locals and the local tourism industry. In 2015, \$50,000 was awarded to begin planning for the project and the full \$14 million was allocated in 2017.

The funding will allow the walk to become a complete and continuous shared-user path, the addition of a pathway in the Callala Headland Reserve, way-finding signage, and the construction of a separate pedestrian bridge across Moona Moona Creek. Like the Chris Creek crossing, Moona Moona Creek Bridge is a bottleneck point in the Round the Bay Walk. The path narrows substantially to cross over the creek, allowing only one-way pedestrian flow, with cyclists required to dismount before crossing. For a long time it has been a concern for me and for the community, and we have campaigned to see the bridge upgraded to improve accessibility, patronage and, most importantly, safety. The securing of the full amount needed to construct the new bridge has allowed for the project's timeline to be brought forward from three years to just one. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure became well aware of this vital local project following my lobbying, and I thank him for prioritising this project to the benefit of the South Coast community. I also thank him for visiting the site last year, and I look forward to welcoming him in the near future to inspect the new bridge once it is complete.

The \$2 million has been invested in the South Coast for vital infrastructure projects which it appears Shoalhaven City Council has been unable to fund. The council has a long list of responsibilities for these kinds of projects but this is an example of the State Government investing wisely in electorates which are busy in the tourist season. I know that the Tweed electorate—the electorate of Temporary Speaker Provest—is also busy during the tourist season. The member for Tweed knows that these are two wonderful projects. I thank the Berejiklian Government, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and all those community members who worked so hard to bring these projects to fruition.

OXLEY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (18:51): All members of this place who represent regional areas appreciate that local community organisations are an integral, essential part of regional electorates. This is no more the case than in my electorate of Oxley, with its four wonderful valleys. Local organisations form the glue which keeps communities together. The action of people working together to improve assets, facilities and services results in such good value from our Community Building Partnership grants. By investing in these partnership programs the Government is able to achieve far more than it could achieve by investing in any one agency alone.

The Community Building Partnership program achieves much. Every year local groups are better able to service our small towns and regional centres by providing better equipped facilities, upgraded infrastructure and improvements to energy consumption—and the list goes on. In Oxley in the latest funding rollout we have welcomed funds for some amazing local projects including for maintenance and painting of the Thora Community Hall in the Bellinger Valley—a wonderful historic hall where everybody gathers for community functions.

The Government is giving the Bellinger Youth Orchestra money to develop the capacity of regional community youth orchestras. Other funding is going to the Byabarra Tennis and Sports Club for the upgrade of the court surface. I met the club president, Eric Cork, and his wife recently. The many club members have amazing tournaments at night on a weekly basis. They have a really good time keeping fit and healthy. Their activities engage young members of the community. I am particularly delighted that an 11-year-old boy there shows enormous skill and ability.

The Kempsey Police and Community Youth Centre [PCYC] has been given funding to upgrade a dedicated area for after school care. It will get new windows, flooring and furniture to create a more comfortable space for children in winter and summer. The PCYC centre manager, Leonie Kennedy, continues to help the children of South Kempsey. I ran into members of the Macleay Valley Eagles Australian Football League Club at the Kempsey Riverside Markets on the weekend. That club needs lighting at the South Kempsey Oval so that the Australian Football League [AFL] and cricket clubs can extend their training and playing hours. I send a big shout-out to them for the amazing work that they are doing with the young men and women of the valley to improve their sporting abilities. We certainly have incredible AFL, rugby league and soccer players within the Oxley electorate.

The picturesque Nambucca Heads Island Golf Club has been given funding for repairs to the club access bridge. Being located on an island in the Nambucca River it is more than a little important to the club and all its patrons that they have good, reliable access at all tide levels. The Marine Rescue NSW base at Nambucca Heads has been given funding for the internal fit-out of a new training facility so that the members who keep the bar safe and boaties can be trained in best practice seafaring.

The Comboyne Community Association has received funding for the restoration of the famous Hurrell House. The Hurrell family is still farming in the district and the Hurrell House provides a wonderful sense of

history and occasion. This funding, along with the support of the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, has enabled the restoration of an old homestead of one of the pioneer families in the district. It is a wonderful achievement. Volunteers there have been doing the work, donating an extraordinary number of hours.

I thank the historical museum and the cultural centre. They are just some of the projects participating this year in the Community Building Partnership program in the electorate of Oxley. It is a good investment to assist community organisations to improve showgrounds, sporting facilities and cultural facilities for local people. I return to the point that if left to a government agency it would cost four, five, six or seven times the amount. The community is providing value for money. The good souls of the community provide the labour and the energy for each project. I commend all the volunteer organisations. The Mid North Coast is a community-focused region and I thank each organisation for its work to make our communities greater.

DARLING RIVER MANAGEMENT

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (18:55): The Darling River is in crisis—just 11 months from running dry. I recently travelled to the Far West with the member for Rockdale to see for myself the wilful damage that is being done. We stood on the bank of the Menindee Lakes surrounded by workers cottages and rusting sail boats, and tried to spy the water in the basin—it was a kilometre out. We could barely see it. Much to the despair of the local people, the Menindee Lakes have been released twice in the past five years, an unheard of event in the history of this oasis in the desert. Imagine praying for a drought to break and for the mighty Menindee to fill so you can have the quiet enjoyment of sailing with your grandchildren, fishing or swimming. Your prayers are answered and it miraculously fills, but then your Government deliberately drains it. It is as if Government policy is aimed at expunging Menindee from the map.

It was heartbreaking to speak to locals who, last Christmas, put boats on the water of this oasis while at the same time wondering if they would ever do so again. Uncle Badger Bates told us it is a similar story in Wilcannia. The Barkindji people have been using the river for 80,000 years to fish and swim, but are now faced with a tiny trickle flowing past the town. These proud people call the Darling River the Barka. The water level is so low that swimming could cause serious skin disease or risk exposure to blue-green algae. Their continuous connection to the mighty Darling River could be lost. We then travelled down the Darling River to Tolarno Station to visit with Kat and Rob McBride. We wanted to see for ourselves how low the water level is in the Lower Darling. We discovered that it is 15 feet below the banks, and in some places you can walk across it. Kat McBride from Tolarno Station is present in the gallery and willing to speak directly to any Government member who will listen to her and her family's plight regarding the Darling River.

Mismanagement of the Darling River has placed in jeopardy the sheep industry of Tolarno Station, the citrus industry of Pooncarie and the table grapes industry in Wilcannia. This region feeds between 40 and 60 million people each year. The trickle that is the Darling River, the heartbreak of the Barkindji people in Wilcannia and the draining of the Menindee Lakes is caused by one thing: policy decisions by this Government. We cannot lay the blame for this mess on our sunburnt country. It is as if a group of people have come together and conspired to destroy the culture, economy, livelihood and future of literally thousands of people who have the unfortunate disadvantage of living downstream on the Darling.

This horrible situation was compounded today when a 10,000-signature petition against the pipeline from the Murray River to Broken Hill was brought 1,200 kilometres to Sydney, at the expense of those individuals, in an effort to speak directly to the Premier. But they were denied access to her or any of her senior ministers. I say to The Nationals and their donors: This is not your personal river; it belongs to the people of Australia. It is not sustainable or right for some people to take up to 60 per cent of the flow from a low-flow river and place that water in giant inland dams. It must stop. The Menindee Lakes are a cultural and environmental oasis that has provided feed, water and recreation for more than 100 years and must not be shut down.

It is time the Darling River was treated from top to bottom as a river, with no special deals for those up north and no more ignoring the interests of those down south. If the river dries up and salinity sets in it will ensure no-one uses it for agriculture, industry or anything else. I would love to see a royal commission examining Barnaby Joyce's decisions on Tandou Farm and get to the bottom of the member for Barwon's actions as Minister for Natural Resources, Lands and Water. When it comes to river management we must start calling out The Nationals for what they are—vandals. They are destroying Australia's rural heritage. If this Government continues with the pipeline and closes down the lower Darling River, then its reputation will live in infamy because the people of the Far West region of New South Wales will never forget it.

NSW POLICE FORCE RESOURCES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:00): Last October I spoke in this place on what I had identified to be a narrowing of the already thin blue line of the NSW Police Force. I was critical of the Minister for Police,

the member for Dubbo, when he announced the re-engineering of the Police Force. I called it for what it was. "Re-engineering" is a fancy term that is being used instead of saying that cuts are being made to meet an insufficient budget. Unfortunately, the Australian Productivity Commission's report vindicates what I was saying. It identifies that New South Wales has the lowest expenditure on policing services per person and the worst police-to-population ratio of all the States.

Also identified in the report is that New South Wales has the lowest staff-to-population ratio of all the States and Territories for non-operational support staff. The report is evidence of this Government's neglect. While the Minister stated today that he has the support of the Police Association of NSW to re-engineer the Police Force, he failed to mention a circulated letter authored by Scott Weber, President of the Police Association NSW, dated 25 January 2018, which is titled "Lowest police funding in Australia puts NSW at risk." The content of the letter is highly critical of this Government. Mr Weber referred to the Australian Productivity Commission's report and stated:

This is a clear indication of the NSW Government's failure to invest in policing resources.

The Government has neglected the community and our police by failing to adequately fund an essential service to meet a rapidly growing population. Instead of adequately budgeting for the growth of the Police Force, the Minister for Police chose to axe pivotal positions that provide frontline police with vital leadership and support. Sadly, this Government has its priorities wrong. The sale of this State's assets has resulted in New South Wales becoming the wealthiest State in Australia, but instead of spending money on essential services such as police, it chooses to spend billions of dollars on demolishing and rebuilding sports stadiums. The report of the Australian Productivity Commission provides unflattering evidence that the public should be made aware of.

Police response times in New South Wales are greater than in many other States and Territories. Ultimately, if the police front line is not bolstered to address the urgent calls of a growing community, then response times will continue to worsen because there is only so much police can do. Many calls to police are urgent and can mean the difference between life and death. When the whistle blows at the end of a game being held at one of the new shiny stadiums, it will be game over and the loser can return to play another day. For those waiting on police to save them, it is not a game; it could be over for real. I predict that the already overworked police will be required to do more with less. Police are people, not robots, and they will be at far greater risk of burnout under the Minister's belt-tightening, which he calls "re-engineering".

Nobody has more respect for the NSW Police Force than I have. I served as a police officer in the NSW Police Force for 22 years before being elected to Parliament as the member for Orange. It is my deep and everlasting respect that compels me to act as champion for my friends and former colleagues. The Orange branch of the Police Association of NSW identified a deficit and has evaluated the need for a minimum of four additional first response police officers to meet the current workload, which will continue to increase over time. The Minister's re-engineering has failed to deliver any adequate increase to first-response police in Orange. Contrary to what the Minister for Police said in this place earlier today, re-engineering has already commenced in Orange. The boundaries of responsibility have been redrawn, and both sworn and unsworn staff have been redeployed or transferred.

The Minister for Police has continually stated that the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force is an initiative of the current Commissioner of Police, Michael Fuller, APM. He has been misleading the public because the Minister stated in this place on 25 August 2016 that he and then Police Commissioner, Andrew Scipione, had announced that the NSW Police Force will be re-engineered. The Minister's announcement predates the former commissioner's retirement and the appointment of Commissioner Fuller by a considerable period. It is incumbent on this Government to provide additional funding urgently to significantly expand the front line of the NSW Police Force and not just maintain current staffing levels by replacing losses through natural attrition. Failure to do so would be a detriment to community safety and for the too few police, who endeavour to protect us all. Shoulder to shoulder with them, I stand for the safety of my community and the welfare of the NSW Police Force. Who and what does the Minister stand for?

RECREATION SPORTS AND AQUATICS CLUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:04): I bring to the attention of the House and acknowledge the exemplary work of the Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club [RSAC]. The RSAC is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation that provides sport, recreation, social activities and opportunities for people with a disability. Although based in Bankstown, its weekly and monthly programs extend to Canterbury, Strathfield and Fairfield districts, as well as covering my electorate in the St George area.

I recognise the Executive Officer of the RSAC, Jennifer Bombardieri, who founded the organisation more than three decades ago in 1986. Since then, it has grown from being a simple operation run out of her home to a registered charity organisation with a team of volunteers. The RSAC has thrived from its humble beginnings

due to Jennifer's dedication and commitment to improving the lives of individuals living with a disability. Today, programs include sports training and competitions, school holiday programs, monthly kids Saturday outings, regular discos, dance classes, drama, family camps and many other special events.

The RSAC has assisted thousands of children, their families and their carers with programs that run on a weekly basis and throughout school holidays. Jennifer's work, which strives to enhance the social and physical wellbeing of individuals with a disability, reflects values that we all hold dear. The RSAC's mission is to be a leading-edge provider of services promoting quality of life and inclusion to people with disabilities and their carers and families. Jennifer's heart for helping people excel in life is reflected in the organisation's core objectives. Ensuring all people are given equal opportunities in life is something this Government has always stood for. It is inspiring to see individuals, organisations and governments working together to ensure this is our reality.

I also recognise the Honorary President of the RSAC, Bob Beer, for his determination to outline the mission of the club. The club is held in high regard throughout the community and this is reflected in Bob's recognition as the Canterbury Bankstown City 2017 Volunteer of the Year. Additionally, Jennifer was awarded the 2017 University of Western Sydney Woman of the West for community works. With a team like this, the RSAC is going from strength to strength and onwards and upwards as it continues to reach more people with its programs and positively impact more families across Sydney. However, it is not just the executive team that has ensured that the vision of the RSAC continues to flourish. Countless volunteers are responsible for the realisation of its vision, and the generosity of supporters and sponsors has ensured the organisation can operate to the capacity that we see today.

Mary Sheppard is one of many dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to support the organisation. In November 2017, I had the privilege of acknowledging Mary at the seventh annual St George Community Awards by awarding her with a certificate in the Senior Volunteer Achievement Award category. Mary has been a member and participant of the RSAC for more than 20 years. She regularly participates in tenpin bowling and drama programs within the club. During these years, Mary has made hundreds of jars of jams, chutneys and pickles for the RSAC, spending many hours at fetes, barbecues, wine tastings and other functions, where she hosts tastings and runs stalls to sell her products. Mary donates every single dollar raised through the selling of many of these items to charity. Mary's generosity and spirited outlook on life is what we celebrate at the St George Community Awards event, which I host every year.

I count it a great honour to recognise this noteworthy organisation in Parliament. In May 2017, I had the privilege of attending the RSAC's first major fundraising event alongside the Minister for Sport, the Hon. Stuart Ayres. The support and network of individuals, groups and sponsors were admirable. I extend my gratitude to RSAC for the invitation to such a significant fundraising event. The club's reputation in the community and within the government sector is impressive and well respected. On behalf of all members on both sides of the House, I wish the club all the best in providing services, programs and support networks that are accessible to all individuals no matter their physical or mental capabilities. I thank each and every volunteer.

NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:10): I speak on an issue that is pertinent to my electorate and I ask the Minister for the Environment how she thinks she has done in her first year in the Environment portfolio. I note that in her first 12 months the Minister botched the rollout of the container deposit scheme, with Newcastle, the second biggest city in the State, receiving only one reverse vending machine after the initial rollout—a machine that is not disability friendly—refused to ban single-use plastic bags, leaving New South Wales as the only State or Territory that has failed to take action in this area; ignored Newcastle's heavy metal contamination issue that is present in many city suburbs; and, of most concern, failed to progress coastal management reforms, with the suburb of Stockton now washing away on the Minister's watch.

The coastal erosion issue at Stockton is not new. I have been raising the matter with the Government for many years. This year part of Newcastle's beloved Stockton Beach has again become a dangerous space where no-one can tread. A fence has been erected where a decades-old rubbish tip was exposed. This tip contained hydrocarbons and friable asbestos that was left blowing in the wind. The ferocious surf has now left a childcare centre's future in doubt, as it teeters on the edge of the ocean. It must be asked: Would the Minister allow this to occur in her electorate of Vacluse—or would it be fixed in a heartbeat? When I wrote to Minister Upton asking her to come to Stockton to see the damage that has been wreaked upon our beach, she ignored the request—much like she ignored my previous request to visit to address the heavy metal contamination issue.

I also requested that the Minister meet with residents from Fullerton Cove to discuss the expansion of the red zone contamination. She did come eventually—although she did not notify me of her visit—but only met with a handful of residents behind closed doors. I need to know whether the Minister is aware that her portfolio takes in the entire State of New South Wales, as opposed to just anything within Sydney's boundaries or even just

outside Vacluse and her city office. Last year I asked the Minister to include Stockton on the coastal erosion "hot spot" list. She denied this, advising that "hot spots" are defined as areas where five or more houses and/or a public road are in a current or immediate coastal hazard area. I asked her this when a surf club, a cafe, a caravan park, a childcare centre and an old tip were under threat. What more does it take for an area to be considered a coastal erosion site in need of funding than when a childcare centre is falling into the sea?

The former Minister, Minister Stokes, was responsive to my request to visit and discussed the issue with local residents and associated stakeholders. I thanked him for that. The shadow Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, was also very responsive. She came to Stockton as soon as she could—only last week—to survey the damage. However, with Minister Upton it is a completely different story. In response to media reports, the Minister said that NSW Coastal Panel chair Professor Bruce Thom will instead visit Stockton this month. The Minister has ignored residents' requests for her to visit and is sending the Coastal Panel chair in her place. The Government also formed a NSW Coastal Council in 2016 to deliver strategic advice to the Government. As of mid-2017, no-one had been appointed to the Coastal Council.

In November the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, the Central Coast and the Hunter, Mr Scot MacDonald, announced that the group had been officially formed. But now, in early 2018, it is understood that the council has still not met. The Government has formed not one but two groups to address coastal management, yet there are no results or responses to the issue. This Government has its priorities so wide of the mark it could not be more out of touch with the public. I ask the Minister: If this situation were occurring in her electorate of Vacluse would she be missing in action?

With the Government prioritising spending \$2.5 billion on knocking down and rebuilding stadiums in Sydney over protecting coastal communities like Stockton, it is clear just how out of touch this Liberal Government has become. We need a solution now. I urge the Minister to ask Office of Environment and Heritage staff to sit down with Newcastle City Council representatives to work urgently to develop a plan to address this emergency. I also call on the Minister to waive the State Government waste levy for the removal of hazardous waste from the beach. On behalf of residents, I implore the Minister to come to Stockton to witness the environmental emergency that is unfolding on its shores and take action now.

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:15): Australia is a very successful multicultural nation, which we celebrated on the Central Coast on Australia Day this year. Australia Day on 26 January is a time to come together and celebrate the collective successes of our nation, culture, diversity and unique strengths. It was an absolute pleasure to spend the long weekend with many hundreds of people at community celebrations and events across my electorate of Terrigal, including the early morning flag raising ceremony run by the Wagstaffe to Killcare Community Association. I thank master of ceremonies Graeme Blundell; Zena Ross and Lucy Musgrave, who gave a fantastic acknowledgement of country; 2018 Pretty Beach Public School captains Harry Wyer and Neilla Bradstreet, who raised the flags; Ken Tough, who gave a phenomenal poetry recital; local artist Terry Baker, who was the guest speaker; and the fantastic singers from Coast Opera Australia, who beautifully sang several songs including *I Am Australian*. A free community breakfast followed the flag raising ceremony, courtesy of an anonymous but very generous benefactor.

Other events held over the long weekend included a community barbecue at Copacabana and a Jazz Picnic at Wagstaffe featuring the Central Coast's own U-Bouddi Big Band. I thank Central Coast Council, which hosted events at The Entrance and on the Woy Woy waterfront. The huge turnout at each of these Australia Day events shows that the vast majority of my constituents and indeed people across the country support celebrating Australia Day on 26 January. That is why it is so disappointing that Labor councillors on Central Coast Council have been campaigning for almost six months for the date of Australia Day to be changed.

Of the many people I regularly speak to in my Terrigal electorate, the vast majority have expressed to me their disappointment and shock at how Labor is ceaselessly pursuing this unnecessary change. Indeed, as far back as August last year, before any councillors were elected, Central Coast Labor representatives have been on the record stirring up controversy and suggesting that Australia Day could be moved to 1 January. Given that Australia Day is a day of unity for our entire country, it is extremely disappointing that a small group of vocal left-wing activists are spending their time undermining our national day and campaigning to change the date. It is only the Liberal Party that remains committed to celebrating Australia Day on 26 January each year. Indeed, my Liberal colleagues the Federal member for Robertson, Lucy Wicks, the Hon. Taylor Martin from the other place and our four local Liberal councillors have been standing with the overwhelming majority of people who support Australia Day.

Whilst Labor and The Greens continue to talk about campaigns to change the date of Australia Day, my Liberal colleagues and I remain 100 per cent supportive of our community celebrating the day on 26 January.

Nothing better demonstrates our country's unity and multicultural success than citizenship ceremonies. On Australia Day I had the pleasure of attending the Central Coast Council citizenship ceremony, where more than 140 people became Australian citizens. It was an honour to welcome new citizens emigrating from Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, France, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand, Slovakia, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States and Zimbabwe.

I will now briefly pay tribute to the 2018 Australia Day Award winners who were recognised for outstanding contributions to the community. I congratulate Youth of the Year Crystal Russom, Community Volunteer of the Year Paul Johnson, and Environmental Award recipient Norman Harris. I also congratulate Arts, Culture and Entertainment Award recipients John Oates and Darryl Davis, Business Connecting Communities Award recipient Richelle Ellis, Community Service and Activity Award recipient Leasha Craig, and Sportsperson of the Year Jemma Smith.

Finally, I congratulate Central Coast Citizen of the Year Kate Broadhurst. Kate has been involved with surf lifesaving as a competitor and ironwoman for more than 25 years and has now turned her attention to developing the Sharks Nippers program. Sharks Nippers provides surf lifesaving support for children with additional and special needs and allows them to gradually transition into mainstream Nippers programs. This is a fantastic initiative and I thank Kate for her sustained commitment to helping people in our community. The recognition she has received is well deserved. Australia Day is all about celebrating the great things. Whether it is recognising people like Kate Broadhurst and the work she does, welcoming new citizens to our country, or gathering together with family and friends, I am very proud to stand with our community in support of Australia Day on 26 January.

AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (19:22): Our nation is blessed with bountiful stories. Each and every one of our stories is unique and written against the backdrop of our diverse backgrounds and manifold experiences. Our stories are built upon the knowledge of our ancestors—knowledge that has been passed down over 60,000 years from ancient Australians as well as the knowledge of those who arrived recently. On Australia Day, we come together on 26 January each year to share our stories, to celebrate our distinct diversity, and to recognise the contribution every Australian has made to our dynamic and contemporary nation.

This Australia Day I was honoured to attend with our local service personnel and veterans as well as the Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch members a planting of flags at the final resting place of service men and women at the Castlebrook Memorial Park. We remembered our fallen protectors who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the things we hold dearest about Australia today: land, a fair go, democracy, and the freedom to pursue greatness at every opportunity we are afforded. I joined my parliamentary and council colleagues Alex Hawke, Mark Taylor, and Andrew Jefferies for the traditional City of Parramatta Council Citizenship Ceremony at the Third Settlement Reserve, which is one of the oldest European sites in Australia. I continued my Australia Day celebrations at the Bella Vista Farm, where I congratulated Zoe Graham for being named the 2018 Hills Shire Citizen of the Year, Azita Abdollahian for receiving the Mayoral Commendation for Citizen of the Year Award, and the untiring crusaders Carol Baker Dersch and Noreen Tait for being named Senior Citizens of the Year.

Notably, in the district of Baulkham Hills in my electorate, people who have taken action to create a nation of which all past, present and future Australians can be proud, were recognised by being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. I congratulate Ms Elizabeth Fleming for her countless years of volunteering and community service through social welfare organisations; Ms Theresa McGuiness for her invaluable service to education; Mr David Sansoni for his outstanding contribution to the Baulkham Hills community, in addition to his involvement with the choir at St Paul's Anglican Church Castle Hill; and Ms Philippa Lovely for her many years of tremendous and unceasing volunteer work for a range of not-for-profit organisations and social initiatives.

It would be remiss of me not to also congratulate the courageous community stalwart in Hills State Emergency Service [SES], local controller Evelyn Lester, who deservedly received the Emergency Services Medal for her 15 years of devoted service. I thank Evelyn for the leadership she provides the Hills SES during times of crisis. Australia Day is truly a day to cheer and express delight about the honour that we are all afforded as Australians. Australia Day encourages us to accept each other's differences and strive towards the strong sense of mateship for which our nation is renowned. Australia Day provides us with an opportunity to rejoice and celebrate our rich heritage and offer our respects to ancient Australians who held our beautiful country for millennia before early settlement. We will always have our spirit of optimism and that unbreakable camaraderie between friends whom, as Australians, we call mates.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:23 until
Wednesday 7 February 2018 at 10:00.**