



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 7 February 2018

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 7 February 2018

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Presiding Officers

TEMPORARY SPEAKERS

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 20 I nominate Sonia Kathleen Hornery as a Temporary Speaker in place of Anna Watson.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (10:11): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The bill amends the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to remove exemptions to sex discrimination laws in relation to the employment of pregnant women. As a result, it will be unlawful to discriminate against a pregnant woman by declining to employ her or by dismissing her if at the time she applied for the job or at the time she was interviewed the woman knew she was pregnant. In addition, the bill closes a loophole in the offence of having sexual intercourse with a 16- or 17-year-old under special care by clarifying and broadening the definition of "teacher" for the special care relationship of teacher and student.

The bill will update and improve the operation of the New South Wales justice system by improving the efficiency and operation of legislation affecting the courts and other Justice portfolio agencies. The bill makes minor amendments to a number of Acts in order to strengthen and streamline procedures for the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the New South Wales Crime Commission and the Land and Environment Court; to improve criminal procedure in relation to issuing court attendance notices for private prosecutions and making court orders to obtain particulars from persons who have been convicted of drug driving offences; to improve civil procedure by updating the presumed delivery time frame for posted articles to reflect new Australia Post delivery times; and to simplify and clarify court processes relating to succession law.

I will now outline each of the amendments. Clause 1 of the bill sets out the short title of the proposed Act. Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act on the date of assent, except for schedule 1.4 [3] and [4], schedule 1.5 [2] to [9], schedule 1.7 which amends the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act, schedule 1.8 which amends the Evidence Act 1995, and schedule 1.11 [3] and [4], which make amendments to the Succession Act 2006. These items will commence by proclamation so that affected agencies can prepare for implementation. Schedule 1 contains amending provisions which amend various Acts within the Justice portfolio. Schedule 1.1 of the bill repeals sections 25 (1A) and (2A) of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 in order to remove exemptions to sex discrimination laws which currently allow discrimination against pregnant women in the employment context. Section 25 (1) of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against applicants and employees on the grounds of sex. Sections 25 (1A) and (2A) currently provide exemptions to this general prohibition on sex discrimination.

These provisions allow employers to decline to employ a pregnant woman or to dismiss a pregnant woman if at the time she applied for the employment or at the time of the interview she knew she was pregnant. Sections 25 (1A) and (2A) were inserted into the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 in 1981 at the same time as provisions covering pregnancy discrimination were inserted into the Act. The 1981 amendments were intended to put beyond doubt that a woman who is discriminated against on the grounds of her pregnancy is discriminated against on the grounds of her sex. However, the exemption provisions are outdated and inconsistent with

community expectations. Schedule 1.1 will repeal sections 25 (1A) and (2A) of the Act in order to reflect modern standards and to bring sex discrimination laws in New South Wales into line with all other Australian jurisdictions.

Repealing these provisions will also address an inconsistency between women employed in the public and private sectors in New South Wales. Women facing sex discrimination in the private sector can make a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission under the Commonwealth's Sex Discrimination Act 1994. However, the Commonwealth Act does not apply to New South Wales public sector agencies. Therefore, women who have sought or obtained jobs in the New South Wales public sector while pregnant currently have no legal recourse if they are denied employment or are dismissed under section 25 (1A) or section 25 (2A). Repealing sections 25 (1A) and (2A) will protect pregnant women against sex discrimination in the workplace and contribute to fair access to employment for all in New South Wales. I acknowledge the advocacy of Dr Mehreen Faruqi in this area.

The bill makes a number of amendments to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013 to enhance access to justice in the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. The bill amends section 45 to permit NCAT to appoint a guardian ad litem or a separate representative for a child in proceedings where that child is not a party but where the proceedings directly or significantly affect them. The appointment of a guardian ad litem or separate representative in these circumstances is a matter of procedural fairness to ensure the child's best interests are considered.

The bill also amends schedule 3 to remove the requirement to seek leave to be legally represented for matters arising under the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993. Parties to proceedings in the Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division are not required to seek leave to be legally represented unless they are a party to a proceeding under the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act. There is no reason to treat these matters differently from all other matters arising in the administrative and equal opportunity division. The bill will remove this anomaly. The bill also amends schedule 6 to rectify an inconsistency where written reasons are automatically required for particular guardianship decisions made by three division members but not required if the same decision is made by only one member.

The bill makes several important amendments to the Crime Commission Act 2012. Schedule 1.3 [6] amends the Crime Commission Act 2012 to enable the commission to serve documents, such as a summons to give evidence, electronically. Under the current Act, the commission can only serve these documents in person, by post or by fax, which take longer and are less efficient than email. The commission's processes for receiving documents have also been amended by schedule 1.3 [1] to [3] to allow for electronic receipt. The requirement to "seal" documents on receipt has also been removed, as the majority of documents are received by the commission by email and electronic documents cannot be sealed.

Schedule 1.3 [4] and [5] amend the Crime Commission Act 2012 to allow the commission to waive the financial disclosure requirements for temporary staff who have been seconded from another government agency or from the NSW Police Force. Financial disclosure statements are an important safeguard for the commission to ensure that its staff members do not have conflicts of interest. However, these requirements are not always necessary for temporary officers or staff whose work is more remote from core operations. The commission will retain the power to order disclosure later if concerns about a conflict emerge.

Schedule 1.4 amends the Crimes Act 1900 to strengthen the offence of sexual intercourse with a 16- or 17-year-old under special care. The special care offence applies when a person who has a special care relationship with a 16- or 17-year-old—such as their teacher, foster parent, religious instructor or sports coach—has sexual intercourse with that child. The purpose of this offence is to protect children aged 16 and 17 against misuse of authority in particular relationships where there is a power imbalance between the parties. The offence is based on the presumption that a child aged 16 or 17 cannot freely consent to sexual intercourse where a special care relationship exists.

Section 73 provides an exhaustive list of special care relationships, including where the offender is a teacher and the victim is a student of the offender. The recent Court of Criminal Appeal decision in *R v PJ* highlighted a loophole in the way "teacher" is defined in the provision. The current drafting means that a person is only covered by the offence if they are the direct classroom teacher of the child at the time that the sexual intercourse takes place. Other teachers at the school are not covered. All teachers and others employed at a school who have students under their care or authority have a relationship of authority with all the students at the school, whether or not they directly teach a particular student.

School students are required to follow directions and instruction from school workers, not only directions from their day-to-day classroom teacher. This places school workers in a position of trust and authority, which can be misused to manipulate students or make them vulnerable to undue influence or pressure. In this context, consent from a 16- or 17-year-old student to sexual intercourse with a school worker may not be freely given and

the child may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation by school workers other than their direct classroom teacher. The amendment will address this issue by explicitly ensuring the offence covers other teachers at the school, as well as covering the principal and deputy principal.

In addition, the amendment expands the definition of "teacher" in section 73 to encompass any person employed at a school who has students under his or her care or authority at the school. This may cover people such as executive teaching staff, school counsellors and teacher's aides. The words "care or authority" are not intended to have any narrow, technical meaning but instead are intended to capture all situations where the ordinary meaning of either word is applicable. It will not be necessary for the person to have students under their care and under their authority. For example, a school worker who provides learning support and other services to students with disability has students under their care, although they may not be considered to supervise those students.

The amendment will protect students from exploitation within these relationships of authority and support all students to learn in a safe environment. The amendment will not expand the scope of the offence to school workers who do not have students under their authority or care. Examples may include a groundskeeper or office staff who perform purely administrative duties, such as an executive assistant to a principal. This recognises that a power imbalance is less likely between these workers and students. The court will be in a position to consider all of the circumstances on a case-by-case basis. This amendment has been urgently progressed by the New South Wales Government to close the loophole. Terms of reference will be provided to the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice regarding the special offence for their consideration of further amendments.

Private prosecutions may only be commenced under the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 if the person wanting to commence the prosecution issues a Court Attendance Notice which is signed by a registrar. If a registrar refuses to sign a Court Attendance Notice, the person can seek review of this decision. Currently, the question of whether a Court Attendance Notice should be signed and issued is to be determined by a magistrate if the offence is an indictable offence. This allows the issue to be determined by a magistrate in chambers. However, if the offence is a summary offence, it is to be determined by the court, which means it is heard in open court.

To remove this inconsistency item [1] of schedule 1.5 to the bill amends the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide that a magistrate rather than the Local Court is responsible for determining whether an application for a court attendance notice is to be signed and issued following a refusal by a registrar to sign the notice. The amendment ensures that the process for commencing private prosecutions is the same in respect of both indictable and summary offences. It also addresses the anomaly that the process for summary offences is more onerous than the process for indictable offences, which are more serious offences.

Items [3] and [4] of schedule 1.4, items [2] to [10] of schedule 1.5 and schedule 1.7 to the bill amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 and the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to allow four strictly indictable offences instead to be heard in the Local Court. Criminal cases in New South Wales are dealt with in the Local Court, the District Court or the Supreme Court depending on the type of offence. Offences categorised as summary offences are the least serious criminal matters in New South Wales and are dealt with in the Local Court, which has a maximum sentencing jurisdiction of two years imprisonment.

Indictable offences may be dealt with in the Local Court, except where an election is made for the matter to be heard in the District Court. Offences in this category are known as "Table Offences" because they are listed in two tables in schedule 1 to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. For Table 1 offences, an election may be made by either the prosecutor or the defendant. For Table 2 offences, which are less serious, an election may only be made by the prosecutor. Strictly indictable offences must be dealt with in the District Court or the Supreme Court. These courts have jury trials and larger sentencing jurisdictions than the Local Court.

The amendments in the bill move four strictly indictable offences to Table 1, enabling them to be heard in the Local Court. Those offences are: first, robbery simpliciter covered by section 94 of the Crimes Act 1900; second, pervert the course of justice covered by section 319 of the Crimes Act 1900; third, supply a prohibited drug but only where the quantity involved is more than the indictable quantity and less than the commercial quantity covered by section 25 (1) of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985; and, fourth, recklessly deal with proceeds of crime where the value involved is over \$5,000 covered by section 193B (3) of the Crimes Act 1900. The offence of recklessly deal with proceeds of crime will be included in Table 2 where the value involved is \$5,000 or less.

These offences were identified in a Department of Justice review as suitable for inclusion in the tables and are the second group of strictly indictable offences to be re-categorised as table offences. Four strictly indictable break and enter offences were moved to the tables in 2016, as recommended by the department's review. The amendments will benefit all participants in the criminal justice system by allowing less serious indictable offences to be dealt with more quickly and efficiently in the Local Court. They will particularly benefit victims

who may be traumatised by delays and witnesses who may have difficulty recalling their evidence if significant time has passed between the offence and the hearing. In addition, the amendments will enable innocent accused persons to be acquitted more quickly.

Importantly, no impact on sentences is anticipated. Statistics provided by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research indicate that for a majority of finalised charges for these offences, the sentences imposed were under the Local Court's sentencing limit. More serious cases will still be heard in the District Court following an election by the prosecution. The amendments will also contribute to alleviating the pressure on the justice system, including the District Court trial backlog. It is estimated the amendments will reduce the number of trial registrations in the District Court by approximately 101 new trial registrations per year. Schedule 1.6 to the bill updates a reference to section 73 of the Crimes Act 1900 in the Criminal Records Act 1991 as a consequential amendment. Schedule 1.8 to the bill amends the Evidence Act 1995 to make the presumed delivery time of postal articles consistent with Australia Post's updated delivery standards.

Section 160 of the Evidence Act 1995 currently provides a presumption that postal articles sent by prepaid post in Australia will be received four days after postage. Australia Post has updated its delivery standards, with the effect that postal articles may now take a maximum of seven days to arrive by post. The date that post is presumed to be received can be important in legal proceedings. Schedule 1.7 changes the presumed delivery time for postal articles under the Evidence Act from four to seven working days, in order to align with actual delivery times by Australia Post. Schedule 1.9 to the bill amends the Land and Environment Court Act 1979 to ensure that certain matters already within the jurisdiction of the Land and Environment Court are more appropriately prescribed as class 4 civil enforcement matters, and not class 3 miscellaneous matters, as is currently the case. This is a minor amendment that will ensure the court can apply the most appropriate practices and procedures to its jurisdiction.

Schedule 1.10 to the bill amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to enable a court to make an order for the NSW Police Force to take a person's identification particulars, such as fingerprints, where a drug-driving offence has been proven. A person who is charged by the NSW Police Force with a drug-driving offence is not typically arrested. Instead, the NSW Police Force usually issues a future court attendance notice. This means the NSW Police Force does not have the power to take the person's identification particulars. However, if a person is charged with certain drink-driving offences that are subsequently proved, a court may make an order for the person to present himself or herself at a police station and submit to the taking of identification particulars. This ensures the proper identification of people found guilty of drink-driving offences, which may become relevant for proving subsequent offences.

The amendment ensures similar treatment of persons who have committed drink-driving and drug-driving offences, by allowing courts to make orders for persons to submit to the NSW Police Force taking their identification particulars in relation to both types of offences. Schedule 1.11 to the bill makes a number of minor and technical amendments to the Succession Act 2006 in order to implement recommendations from the statutory review of the Act by the Department of Justice. Schedule 1.11 [2] simplifies the process for the Supreme Court's authorisation of wills in respect of persons who lack testamentary capacity under section 18 of the Act. Section 23 of the Act provides that a will authorised to be made or altered by a court order under section 18 is properly executed if it is in writing, signed by the registrar and sealed with the court's seal. Section 23 (2) currently provides that the registrar may sign a will only if the person in relation to whom the order was made is alive.

Schedule 1.11 [2] will allow the registrar to sign a will for the purposes of execution even after the death of the person in relation to whom the will was made. This is necessary because court ordered wills are often made in urgent circumstances and there is a risk that the person lacking testamentary capacity may die before the registrar signs the will. Schedule 1.11 [3] relates to the time limit for making family provision claims under the Act. Section 58 of the Act provides that an application for a family provision order must be made no later than 12 months after the date of the death of the deceased person, unless the court otherwise orders. Schedule 1.11 [3] will allow the Supreme Court to make an order extending the 12 month time limit for making a family provision claim if all parties to proceedings consent. This will avoid the need to take time to address this issue at the hearing of the substantive application for the family provision claim.

Schedule 1.11 [4] legislates a finding at common law that family provision orders cannot be made in relation to property outside New South Wales that belonged to a person domiciled outside New South Wales at the time of death. Schedules 1.11 [1] and [5] address minor drafting anomalies in the Succession Act. This bill will lead to a number of improvements and enhancements in the operation of New South Wales courts, law enforcement agencies, the civil justice system and the criminal justice system. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

VEXATIOUS PROCEEDINGS AMENDMENT (STATUTORY REVIEW) BILL 2017**Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 21 November 2017.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:34): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Vexatious Proceedings Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2017. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The object of the bill is to amend the Vexatious Proceedings Act—the principal Act—to implement recommendations that come from a statutory review of the Act. The review report is dated May 2017. Section 22 of the principal Act required the Attorney General to review the Act as soon as possible after five years from the date of assent of that piece of legislation. Assent was given on 1 December 2008; the review commenced in April 2014.

The following are the amendments implemented by the bill. The bill makes it clear that references to proceedings include civil proceedings before a tribunal and includes any interlocutory applications or proceedings or procedural applications incidental to, or connected with, such proceedings. Clarification is also provided that a court, in deciding whether or not to make a vexatious proceedings order, is to have regard to the effect that the relevant person's conduct had on earlier proceedings and not just to their intention. The court may also have regard to evidence of decisions or findings of fact of another Australian court or tribunal.

The bill also contains a provision that unless the vexatious order expressly states otherwise the order prohibits the making of interlocutory and procedural applications within civil proceedings but does not prevent someone from making applications or conducting criminal proceedings that have been brought against them, or from making bail applications. The court may also decline to consider a vexatious litigant's application for leave to institute proceedings otherwise prohibited by the order if the application is not materially different from an earlier unsuccessful application.

The bill also makes clear that if a court considers an application by someone subject to an order for leave to institute otherwise prohibited proceedings the court is not required to hold an oral hearing before dismissing the application. Finally, the bill also provides that unless otherwise expressly prohibited by the order granting leave, the granted leave extends to allow the person to make interlocutory or procedural applications within those proceedings. It is hard to find any cogent reason against any of these proposals. Vexatious litigant legislation is a necessary part of our legal system. It imposes severe sanctions upon those who bring proceedings repeatedly with no reasonable case. It is a necessary part of our structure but, as is appropriate for such a sanction, it is used sparingly.

The statutory review records that since 2008 with the introduction of the principal Act, the Supreme Court has made 23 vexatious proceedings orders and the Land and Environment Court has made two. Fourteen of the Supreme Court orders were at the request of the Attorney General, seven were applications by private individuals or organisations and two were own motions. The legislation arose from a national reform process and tried to balance a person's right of access to a court with the need to restrict and manage vexatious litigants. As the report of the statutory review put it:

The Act seeks to strike a balance between ensuring superior courts of record in New South Wales (NSW) have suitable powers to control vexatious litigants, while also preserving the fundamental right of citizens to approach the courts to seek justice in accordance with law, and to defend themselves in criminal proceedings.

The review made nine recommendations. It is of significance that submissions to the review were generally supportive of the Act. It is interesting to note that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] suggested to the review that it be allowed to issue vexatious proceedings orders for NCAT proceedings. Presently, only the Supreme Court and the Land and Environment Court can make these orders. Of course, the Supreme Court can make broad orders—that is, it is not restricted to Supreme Court proceedings. The review recommends against altering the present position. At this stage, I think that that is a sensible course. Granted the severity of the nature of these orders, a cautious approach for their use and to expanding the range of tribunals that can make such orders seems advisable. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:38): I speak to the Vexatious Proceedings Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2017. It is fundamental to a free society that its fountains of justice are free-flowing with transparently clear waters. However, at least in the area of civil proceedings, vexatious litigants can foul the waters of any independent and credible system of justice. A hallmark of our system of justice, which is renowned throughout the world for its fairness, is that all people great and small who come before it are treated equally as well as fairly. But that system of equal access to justice can be abused. As the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau put it, "All people are born free, but everywhere they are in chains."

In the context of this bill that means the abuse of the right to free and equal access to the court system. Vexatious proceedings are inimical to the right of access to justice and can lead to the oppression of others. There

is a delicate balance within the court system to maintain free access to court processes while, in exceptional and limited cases, restricting the access of some individuals based upon a history of abuse of process. In 2008 Parliament codified the manner in which courts were to resolve the issue of restricting access to those who would abuse the privilege as vexatious litigants. The bill before this House will refine the way in which that 2008 Act defines the balance between access and restricting access to the legal system for some individuals.

The State is fortunate to have an Attorney General who was a successful barrister and has attained the level of senior counsel. He has the knowledge to balance both the privilege and obligation in the area of vexatious litigants. In 2017 the Parliament received a report from the Legislation Review Committee regarding the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008. Extensive consultation occurred with all key legal stakeholders, including the Chief Justice of New South Wales, the Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court and the President of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The recommendations contained in the report have broad stakeholder support for inclusion in the bill before the House.

The bill is of great public importance. Whenever a vexatious litigant appears before a court they waste a valuable public resource, the court system and access to it. When the processes of the court are hampered by a vexatious litigant the resources are stretched and taxpayers foot the additional cost. Not only does it affect the court involved, but it wastes the resources of the opponents in the vexatious proceedings. An indirect impact is the delay experienced by other litigants who would otherwise be able to utilise the court time. There is a public interest in limiting access to civil justice for vexatious litigants.

This bill, and the legislation which proceeds it, contains a number of protections. Any vexatious litigant can apply to have the order varied or revoked. The orders only apply to civil proceedings; they do not apply to criminal proceedings or bail applications. These are very important protections. Schedule 1 [1] of the bill clarifies the meaning of "proceedings" in clause 4 of the Act. When determining whether to make a vexatious proceedings order against a particular litigant, an authorised court can consider both the civil and criminal proceedings that the litigant has previously instituted or conducted. This amendment allows consideration by the court of the litigant's history in civil and criminal proceedings.

The clause of the schedule that I refer to also clarifies that all interlocutory and procedural applications as well as final proceedings in any civil proceedings are contained within the definition of "proceedings". Schedule 1 [2] of the bill makes it clear that, when considering whether it is satisfied that a particular litigant has frequently instituted or conducted vexatious proceedings for the purpose of determining whether to make a vexatious proceedings order, an authorised court should consider the objective effect of the previous proceedings the litigant has instituted or conducted and not only the subjective intent of the litigant in those proceedings.

Schedule 1 [2] amends section 6 (d) of the Act, which, in its current form, has been identified by courts and other key stakeholders as being ambiguous and problematic. Schedule 1 [2] amends section 6 (d) in the way that "vexatious proceedings" is defined to include proceedings conducted in a way that "causes embarrassment" or that "causes unreasonable annoyance, delay or detriment, regardless of the subjective intention or motive". This is important because proving somebody's state of mind is always a difficult problem in any court proceedings. It is much easier to look at the objective effect and it is much more consistent with balancing the public interests involved in any application when declaring a person a vexatious litigant. Schedule 1 [4] of the bill clarifies the operation of vexatious proceeding orders in respect of which applications are prohibited. This will ensure that litigants subject to vexatious proceeding orders can still access courts for criminal proceedings or bail applications.

Another important aspect of the bill is that it makes it clear that, contrary to the effect of section 91 of the Evidence Act, when hearing an application to declare a litigant vexatious courts may have regard to all previous orders of other Australian courts and tribunals. The court hearing the application does not need to determine on the evidence of those earlier proceedings whether in fact the litigant was vexatious. They can rely on the effect of the previous orders that they have been found to be vexatious for the purposes of taking those previous proceedings into account. That is an important practical matter that is included in the bill. I commend the bill to the House and commend the Attorney General for his fine work.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (10:48): I speak on the Vexatious Proceedings Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2017. Good government is not about flashy reform or record spends on infrastructure—we do that. I note the transport Minister is here and he is doing a fantastic job. Good government is also about doing the little non-flashy things and getting them right. The bill before the House makes a number of amendments to promote the efficacy of the Vexatious Proceedings Act and certain provisions address operational issues.

The statutory review has been exhaustive from its announcement in 2014 to its final round of consideration in 2017. The Government has taken this matter seriously, and has conducted wide consultation to ensure that our court system works better. This legislation will implement all the recommendations from that statutory review. Vexatious proceedings are a costly process not only to the State, tying up our legal system with

costs estimated to be in the millions of dollars, but also to the many citizens and businesses in our State who can least afford it. When I was doing my law degree I spent some time as a court officer in the Local Court and District Court throughout south-western Sydney, particularly in Campbelltown, Liverpool, Picton and Camden, where I saw instances of justice being delayed. People had to wait a significant time due to the clogging up of our courts. This bill goes to the heart of unclogging our courts, getting people through the system and getting justice so that they can get on with their lives, and that is exactly what this Government wants to do.

The Act attempts to balance the freedoms of the individual to seek justice before the courts and provide the superior courts of New South Wales with the appropriate powers to control vexatious litigants whose only aim is to harass, intimidate and disenfranchise their victims. Many of these changes are common sense, be it removing conflicts in the Evidence Act 1995, reducing burdens on the court to declare a litigant vexatious and clarifying provisions that would otherwise deprive a vexatious litigant from responding to criminal proceedings, or making applications for bail. In short, this amending bill will improve the efficiency and efficacy of courts in our great State.

The member for Ku-ring-gai referred to a number of provisions in the bill, and it is important for me to address some of them. Schedule 1 [3] to the bill addresses operational issues within section 8 of the Act. Section 8 allows authorised courts to have regard to previous orders of other Australian courts and tribunals to determine if a litigant has instituted or conducted vexatious proceedings frequently. Currently, section 8 may not be able to operate as intended due to the concurrent application of section 91 of the Evidence Act 1995, which may operate with the effect that, when considering whether to make a vexatious proceedings order, an authorised court must revisit previous court and tribunal decisions and make their own determinations as to whether those proceedings were vexatious and contrary to the intended application of section 8.

Schedule 1 [3] to the bill amends section 8 (2) to clarify that, where an authorised court has regard to the past orders of other courts and tribunals, section 91 of the Evidence Act 1995 does not apply. This has the effect that evidence of a decision or a finding of fact of another Australian court or tribunal will not be inadmissible to prove that a litigant has commenced or conducted vexatious proceedings frequently. This amendment will help to promote the object of stimulating timely and efficient decision-making by authorised courts.

Schedules 1 [5] and [6] to the bill amend sections 9 and 14 of the Act to allow authorised courts to decline to consider an application to vary or set aside a vexatious proceedings order, or for leave to institute proceedings if the court is not satisfied that the application is materially different to an earlier, unsuccessful application. This will allow authorised courts to deal expeditiously with litigants subject to vexatious proceedings orders repetitively making unmeritorious applications to vary or set aside those orders or for leave to institute proceedings despite an extant order.

Schedule 1 [7] to the bill reduces potential burdens on authorised courts by addressing operational issues within section 15 (2) of the Act. Currently, section 15 (2) allows an authorised court to dismiss applications for leave made under section 14 of the Act if the applicant does not appear at the hearing for the application. This could be read to imply that a hearing must be held for every application for leave, whether or not the application must be dismissed for failing to comply with the conditions of section 15 (1). This is not the intended application of the section. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill clarifies that section 15 (2) does not require an authorised court to hold an oral hearing prior to dismissing a vexatious litigant's application for leave to institute proceedings under section 15 (1).

Schedule 1 [8] to the bill reduces potential burdens on authorised courts, and vexatious and other litigants by clarifying the operation of section 16 of the Act, which allows authorised courts to grant section 14 applications for leave to institute proceedings. Schedule 1 [8] amends section 16 to clarify that, unless otherwise specified, a grant of leave to institute proceedings is taken to include leave to make any interlocutory applications within those proceedings. I could address more aspects of the bill but I know that many members wish to speak on it. It is good public policy. Ultimately it will unclog the courts and give fairness to those people who need their cases heard in a timely manner. It will give certainty to the people on either side of the case to get on with their lives. Every citizen in New South Wales has the right to be heard and have their day in court. This bill goes a long way to achieving that for everybody. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (10:55): I support the Vexatious Proceedings Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2017. The object of the bill is to amend the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008 to give effect to recommendations arising from the statutory review of the Act. This is achieved, first, by making it clear that references to proceedings include civil proceedings, criminal proceedings and proceedings before a tribunal, and also include any interlocutory proceedings or applications, or procedural applications, taken in connection with or incidental to such proceedings; secondly, by making it clear that a court determining whether or not to make a vexatious proceedings order is to have regard to the effect that the conduct of the person who will be subject to the order had on earlier proceedings, and not just to the intention of the litigant, and may have

regard to evidence of decisions or findings of fact of another Australian court or tribunal—which ordinarily would be inadmissible; thirdly, by providing that, unless a vexatious proceedings order expressly states otherwise, the order prohibits the making of interlocutory and procedural applications within civil proceedings—as well as prohibiting the initiation of proceedings—but does not prevent a person from making applications, or conducting proceedings within criminal proceedings that have been brought against that person or from making bail applications.

Fourthly, by allowing a court to decline to consider a vexatious litigant's application to vary or set aside an existing vexatious proceedings order, or application for leave to institute proceedings otherwise prohibited by the order, if the applications are not materially different from an earlier, unsuccessful application; fifthly, by making it clear that a court considering an application by a person who is subject to a vexatious proceedings order for leave to institute proceedings that are otherwise prohibited by that order is not required to hold an oral hearing before dismissing the application; sixthly, by providing that, unless a grant of leave to institute proceedings that are otherwise prohibited by a vexatious proceedings order expressly states otherwise, the grant of leave extends to allow the person the subject of the order to make interlocutory or procedural applications within those proceedings.

The Attorney General noted that the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008 underwent a statutory review in 2017 and the introduction of the Vexatious Proceedings Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018 would implement all the recommendations from the review. In his second reading speech the Attorney General noted the review and development of the bill involved "extensive consultations with key legal stakeholders, including the Chief Justice of New South Wales, the Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court and the President of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal". The bill provides mechanisms for authorised officers of the court to manage litigants who abuse the court proceedings by pursuing vexatious legal proceedings repeatedly. Vexatious litigants are persons or parties who persistently take legal action against others without reasonable grounds or for improper purposes.

The Attorney General noted that the bill would strike "a balance between preserving personal rights to approach the court on civil and criminal matters on one hand and on the other hand, ensuring the courts have suitable powers to control litigants who may abuse the judicial system". The history of New South Wales courts contains numerous examples of people abusing the system for their own gain. This bill will improve the legislation to stop that from happening.

The bill makes amendments that will contribute to the Government's efforts to reduce the backlog of matters before the courts. Vexatious litigants persistently take legal action against others without reasonable grounds and for improper purposes. This undermines the efficacy of the justice system, unnecessarily delays or extends individual cases and adds to the general backlog of matters before New South Wales courts. Schedules 1 [1], 1 [2] and 1 [3] to the bill clarify the types of issues that a judge can consider when making a vexatious proceedings order against a party that frequently and persistently commences or pursues vexatious proceedings. These amendments will better enable courts to prevent unmeritorious claims from draining finite court time and resources, and promote efficient and timely access to the courts for the community as a whole.

Schedule 1 [5] amends the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008 to allow courts to decline to consider an application from a vexatious litigant to vary or set aside an existing vexatious proceedings order that has been issued against him or her. The court will only be able to decline to consider such an application if it is not satisfied that the application is materially different from an earlier application made by that litigant, and if that earlier application was unsuccessful. This amendment seeks to reduce strain on court resources that exists when courts are required to consider persistent and unmeritorious applications to vary or set aside vexatious proceedings orders.

Schedule 1 [6] amends the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008 to allow a court to decline to consider an application under section 14 of the Act. Under section 14, a person who is subject to a vexatious proceedings order may apply to a court for leave to institute proceedings that would otherwise be prohibited under the order. This amendment will allow courts to decline to consider such an application if they are not satisfied that the application is materially different from an earlier unsuccessful application made by that litigant. This ensures that courts are not expending undue time and resources dealing with vexatious applications. The bill ensures that judicial processes are not misused by a small minority of litigants to the detriment of others. The amendments in this bill will ultimately add to the Government's efforts to reduce the court backlog and ensure that court resources are not unduly expended on managing and deciding unmeritorious and vexatious claims.

These amendments provide that when determining whether to make an order an authorised court may consider both the civil and the criminal proceedings, including interlocutory procedural applications, that the litigant has previously instituted or conducted and should consider the objective effect of proceedings the litigant has previously instituted or conducted rather than the effect the litigant subjectively intended to cause. The bill

makes amendments to reduce burdens on authorised courts by clarifying that section 91 of the Evidence Act 1995, which provides that evidence of the decision or finding of fact in a proceeding is not admissible to prove a fact in other proceedings, does not apply where an authorised court has regard to the past decisions and findings of fact of other courts and tribunals to determine whether a litigant has frequently instituted or conducted vexatious proceedings.

The bill clarifies that an authorised court may decline to consider an application by a vexatious litigant to vary or set aside an existing order or for leave to institute proceedings if the court is not satisfied that the application is materially different from an earlier unsuccessful application. The bill clarifies that an authorised court may dismiss an application by a vexatious litigant for leave to institute proceedings where the proceedings are vexatious or where there is no *prima facie* ground for the proceedings on the papers without holding an oral hearing. The bill clarifies that an order will not prohibit a person from responding to criminal proceedings brought against them or from making bail applications, unless expressly specified in the order. The bill confirms that a grant of leave for a vexatious litigant to institute proceedings will include leave to make certain interlocutory and other procedural applications in connection with those proceedings, unless the grant of leave specifies otherwise.

I turn now to the benefits of this reform. The Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008 protects the integrity of courts and prevents court resources from being wasted inappropriately. This amending bill will clarify the application of the Act's provisions for courts and litigants, address operational issues, promote efficient decision-making, and reduce the burden on authorised courts. The history of our courts and justice system is littered with many cases that have been brought by vexatious litigants. In their mind, I am sure, they use every trick to inflict maximum detriment upon those whom they wish to harm, but they also use the time of the courts, which inflicts a detriment upon all New South Wales taxpayers. This bill brings a balance to both litigants' and taxpayers' rights. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (11:05): I support the Vexatious Proceedings Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2017. My contribution to debate will address what constitutes vexatious proceedings and the amendments in the bill, and provide case examples of the manner in which vexatious proceedings are instituted as well as the impact they may have. Vexatious proceedings often take up inordinate court time. Any legal practitioner who has practised litigation in New South Wales will be aware of litigants who use inordinate court resources either to litigate one matter that is accompanied by multiple interlocutory components or a vast array of matters in all types of jurisdictions against all types of people.

My perception is that people often become entangled in the web of the courts system in circumstances in which potentially their involvement becomes pathological. In many respects the litigant needs help when becoming involved in the court system. In contrast to that, persons who become entrapped in that tangled web of litigation spend significant amounts and resources either defending themselves or being engaged in very spurious litigation. The courts must strike a balance between everyone having access to the court system, which was so correctly identified by the member for Ku-ring-gai, and the rights of people who are the subject of litigation to not become involved in court proceedings that have no merit or substance.

This legislation improves upon the manner in which vexatious proceedings are considered and the factors that a court may take into account in determining what constitutes vexatious proceedings. As the member for Liverpool and shadow Attorney General rightly said, the Supreme Court has had only 23 cases in which an order was made declaring someone to be a vexatious litigant and there were two cases in the Land and Environment Court. Vexatious litigation is a matter to which courts give significant attention. Courts are very loath to deprive someone of a right to appear in court and litigate what they perceive to be a rightful cause of litigation. However, according to this legislation, the test to be used by the courts in determining whether someone is a vexatious litigant is objective. It is not based on the subjective mind of a person bringing the litigation who believes they have a fair cause of action. It is an objective test based on the range of proceedings that have been instituted, where they have been instituted, the period over which they have been instituted, and potentially the number of interlocutory matters instituted.

I draw the attention of the House to a case involving Maria Fokas, who is the focus of a vexatious litigation claim. The claim against Ms Fokas has two components. She had commenced proceedings against a firm of dentists to whom she had gone for treatment. Within that cause of action—which commenced in October 2007 in the District Court—she brought 25 interlocutory applications, all of which were unsuccessful. On each occasion she brought a motion or other interlocutory application within the proceedings someone had to appear to defend it. Mr Temporary Speaker (Mr Lee Evans), you and I well know that the cost of having counsel or a solicitor appearing, even on an interlocutory matter, can be up to \$1,000 or \$1,500 for each appearance, even if the application is successful and a costs order is made. Defending those proceedings involves not only the court time but also the cost for the litigant, and more often than not the litigant does not have the resources to cover the costs order made against them.

In addition to that specific case in which numerous interlocutory applications were made by Ms Fokas, she was party to many other cases involving various entities, including multiple cases involving Kogarah Municipal Council and the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS]. One case involving FACS went to the High Court. Ms Fokas was also party to cases involving Kogarah RSL Club. Not only was the court entitled to take into account the various interlocutory proceedings within the scope of the case in which Ms Fokas was involved but it was prepared also to examine the numerous other actions she had brought against various entities. That is potentially a case study of the circumstances that should be examined by a court when making an order. In the celebrated case of *Attorney General v Wentworth*, involving Kate Wentworth—who brought numerous proceedings against a judge of the Supreme Court—Justice Roden outlined the test for establishing what are vexatious proceedings. He stated:

1. Proceedings are vexatious if they are instituted with the intention of annoying or embarrassing the person against whom they are brought.
2. They are vexatious if they are brought for collateral purposes, and not for the purpose of having the court adjudicate on the issues to which they give rise.
3. They are also properly to be regarded as vexatious if, irrespective of the motive of the litigant, they are so obviously untenable or manifestly groundless as to be utterly hopeless.
4. In order to fall within the terms of s 84:
 - (a) proceedings in categories 1 and 2 must also be instituted without reasonable ground (proceedings in category 3 necessarily satisfy that requirement);
 - (b) the proceedings must have been "habitually and persistently" instituted by the litigant. Importantly, this amending legislation tells us to not only look at the litigant's subjective state of mind in bringing proceedings but to also look at the objective facts surrounding the litigation. That is an objective test. The New South Wales Supreme Court keeps a register of persons who are the subject of vexatious orders and it is available for examination as to whether a person is a vexatious litigant. [*Extension of time*]

Another important amendment is that proceedings brought in other Australian jurisdictions can be taken into account in deciding, on the objective test, whether the proceedings being brought are vexatious. All these amendments, as the shadow Attorney General has conceded, are eminently sensible. This bill balances the rights of persons to come to a court and it also protects the rights of persons to be able to participate in litigation where they are either a defendant in the litigation, subject to the permission of the court, or facing criminal proceedings or bail applications. A person charged with a criminal offence should never be barred from defending themselves but in civil proceedings the protections for other persons must also be adequately protected.

Schedule 1 [8] ensures that when an application for leave is granted it also includes leave to make interlocutory applications. The litigant who is given permission to come back to a court and commence proceedings has to do so in a reasonable manner. Generally, the permission to commence proceedings will also involve whatever interlocutory steps are required to properly litigate the matter. This bill preserves and makes amendments to secure existing safeguards in the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008 to ensure that access to justice is appropriately secured for all litigants. It is not surprising that the Opposition supports this sensible legislation introduced by the Attorney General. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (11:18): In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Liverpool, Ku-ring-gai, Wollondilly, Myall Lakes and Epping for their contributions to debate on the Vexatious Proceedings Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2017. Before concluding, I will address one comment made by the member for Liverpool about the time taken to finalise the statutory review. I am committed to finalising outstanding statutory reviews as soon as practicable. Since becoming Attorney General, I have finalised seven statutory reviews of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006, sections 25A and 25B of the Crimes Act 1900, the Crimes and Other Legislation Amendment (Assault and Intoxication) Act 2014, the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, and the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, and a review of the vetting provisions in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 and other legislation, the Succession Act 2006, and the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008, which is being implemented by this bill.

Statutory reviews are an important mechanism for considering policy reform. Appropriate stakeholder consultation must be undertaken. Statutory reviews that achieve good policy outcomes will take time. The New South Wales Government is committed to getting these statutory reviews right to achieve the best policy outcomes for the people of New South Wales. The bill makes amendments to the Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008 to improve the operation of the Act and to help achieve the Act's objectives of promoting the efficacy and effectiveness of the New South Wales justice system.

The bill also removes uncertainty and ambiguity in the application of the Act's provisions, ensuring there is greater consistency in court decisions and certainty for parties to proceedings. The bill also clarifies the rights

of litigants subject to a vexatious proceedings order by ensuring that they can respond to criminal charges brought against them, make bail applications, and efficiently make leave applications in other proceedings. The bill will help ensure that the justice system in New South Wales remains accessible but is also efficient, effective and economical. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: 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 6 February 2018.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:21): The Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 aims to introduce measures that will identify systemic issues within our health system earlier. It is hoped this will promote faster resolution of these problems and allow health officials to communicate more quickly with patients and their families. However, the Labor Opposition has concerns about the Government legislating to exempt preliminary risk assessments from the Government Information (Public Access) [GIPA] Act 2009. We should seek to provide transparency and clarity around all mistakes that occur in our health system. Preliminary risk assessments will be carried out on reportable incidents or on incidents that may be the result of a serious systemic problem within our health system. This step will allow for earlier disclosure of problems and ensure that action is taken quickly to resolve those problems.

Assessments that reveal serious systemic problems should be accessible to the public. They should certainly be redacted to remove identifying information and personal data, but the substance of these problems should be accessible under freedom of information laws. Governments and bureaucrats should not be allowed to cover up systemic problems and they should properly inform the public as to what these issues are and what steps they are taking to resolve them. This is vital in a public health system which should be run for the betterment of everyone in our community.

The Baird and Berejiklian governments have repeatedly blocked freedom of information requests on reportable incidents and sentinel events within our health system. The Coalition Government has introduced a culture of secrecy and cover-ups into our health system, which should be resisted at every stage. The Labor Opposition will introduce amendments to this legislation in the other place to increase transparency measures within this bill. This is important because every day situations are being reported to members of Parliament in electorate offices that indicate there are systemic issues in the health system that are not being addressed.

For example, recently I was contacted by a constituent whose circumstances surely would have prompted a preliminary risk assessment under the proposed changes. In January 2017 Jonathan Beniston was injured in a soccer incident that caused him chest pain. He presented to the emergency department at Maitland Hospital where he underwent a chest X-ray. He was diagnosed with fractured ribs and given painkillers to relieve his pain. A few months after his discharge he began to develop a wheeze. He was concerned about this and was scheduled for an X-ray in May. Following this X-ray, Mr Beniston and his family were informed that he had lung cancer. His left lung was fully removed in June and he underwent a daily course of chemotherapy for six weeks. Jonathan and his wife Alexis visited his oncologist after his round of chemotherapy had finished and, after reviewing the various X-rays Jonathan had undergone, the oncologist informed them that the tumour on his lung had been visible in the X-ray that was taken in January.

All of us who have been touched by cancer would understand the importance of addressing an indication of cancer in any test taken. Whatever the reason for the test, if the results indicate there is cancer that could be caught early, that should be addressed. We understand that doctors, nurses and other health workers in our healthcare system are under pressure and that in this case the patient did not present with an issue that would have indicated lung cancer: After a physical interaction with a child, he was experiencing pain, which probably would not have indicated cancer straight off the bat. But when the scan was examined, the whole lung should have been looked at. If we are putting radiation into people's bodies, the X-rays should be examined properly. The other concerning thing is that Jonathan's wife told me that the diagnosis of which ribs were broken was incorrect, meaning this X-ray probably was given less than a cursory scan.

The upshot is that Jonathan's lung cancer could have been diagnosed five months earlier. Even though it was a coincidence that he underwent an X-ray in January for his broken ribs, his lung cancer should have been diagnosed or at least referred for further investigation at that time. Unforgivably, the tumour went undiscovered until he developed other symptoms. Jonathan and his family have been left wondering what would have happened if the tumour had been discovered in January, as it should have been. If the cancer had been diagnosed earlier, he might still have his left lung. Everyone knows early diagnosis and treatment of cancer is essential. In this case, there was a slim chance for Jonathan to be diagnosed early, and he was robbed of that chance. However, that is not how the issue relates specifically to this bill.

Jonathan and Alexis have sought answers from the Maitland Hospital and Hunter New England Health about what happened in their case. All they want to know is how this could have happened to them and what measures the Government, the health system and the hospital are taking to ensure it does not happen to anyone else. They are reasonable people: They are looking for an answer as to why this happened and what steps can be taken to ensure it does not happen again. It is a reasonable and considered approach from people who are undergoing an undeniably traumatic time in their lives. Unfortunately, the process they have had to undergo was extremely difficult—and that is a damning feature of the health system. They told me they felt as if they had been fobbed off. On several occasions they called Hunter New England Health and left a message, but those calls were never returned. Since November 2017 they have sought a meeting with Hunter New England Health. Unfortunately, it has taken more than three precious months for that meeting to occur. The conclusion of Ms Beniston's correspondence states:

My concerns are if I had not kept ringing and chasing the hospital, they would not have responded and its only today when I mentioned the Health Care Complaints Commission that they have actually set up a meeting. I am worried for members of the public who would have given up, and they were not being listened to, and I am worried about the procedures at Maitland Hospital. I am worried that rather than learning from their mistakes, they are trying to push them under the carpet. This is from a member of the public—one of all those we represent in this place. Officials in our health system are not communicating effectively with patients and their families when mistakes occur. The Minister claims that preliminary risk assessments introduced by this bill will allow health officials to make contact with patients earlier. I hope for the sake of families like the Benistons that this is the case. It is clear from my contact with my constituents—and I hear many other stories every day—that there is much more to be done about accountability, transparency and communication from the health department. This Government must do more to increase clear lines of communication with patients. The first step in increasing accountability is to allow preliminary risk assessments to be accessed under freedom of information laws.

I implore members opposite and members in the other House to support Labor's amendments to this bill. These amendments will increase much-needed transparency and public oversight in our health system. The issues raised by Johnathan and Alexis need to be addressed by the Minister. It is clear that we need to change the way our health officials interact with patients. At all times, patients who have had a poor experience with our health system deserve to have their questions answered and their concerns taken seriously. Systemic issues that are uncovered by preliminary risk assessments and a root cause analysis need to be resolved quickly by health officials. But the public deserves to know about these issues and understand what actions are being taken to resolve them.

The Labor Opposition supports this bill in principle, with a few notable exceptions. The Government should get on board and support Labor's commonsense amendments to ensure that transparency is increased within our health system. When this is discussed in the party rooms of those opposite I urge members to look back at cases within their own electorates of people who have been the victims of mistakes made by the health system and ask themselves what price is there on an apology to those people? What price is there on the ability of those people to understand that a mistake has been made but that systemic changes are afoot to prevent it happening again. People are reasonable and they deserve to know the truth about their health care at all times.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:32): I speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The bill is part of the Government's regular review of legislation and makes a range of sensible amendments to ensure that different health Acts remain up to date and relevant. We are fortunate to have high-quality facilities and expert, dedicated staff across our entire public health system. At the outset I thank those staff members for the work that they do. I particularly acknowledge the medical professionals at Royal North Shore Hospital who provide excellent services in the North Shore electorate.

I support all the changes in the bill, but today I will focus on the changes to the Health Administration Act relating to reviews of serious adverse events. Unfortunately, serious adverse events do occur in hospitals. Although we have a wonderful public health system with excellent, professional and caring staff, mistakes can and will happen. As other speakers have said in this debate, whilst these mistakes are rare they can sometimes have devastating consequences for patients and their families. It is therefore vital that we have a robust system in place to properly identify and review serious adverse events in order to understand how and why each event occurred and how to reduce the risk of similar events occurring in the future.

The current provisions of the Health Administration Act require hospitals to undertake a root cause analysis following a serious adverse event. A root cause analysis is not about apportioning blame; rather, it is a process of looking at systemic issues to determine what went wrong and how. The purpose of a root cause analysis is to ascertain why a serious adverse event occurred and to make recommendations to help reduce the risk of similar incidents occurring in the future. The root cause analysis provisions are a fundamental part of our strong public health system. The changes in the bill will help to improve the review process of serious adverse events.

The first change is the introduction of a requirement that public hospitals conduct a preliminary risk assessment following a serious adverse event prior to the serious adverse event review. The aim of the preliminary assessment is to undertake an initial review of the incident so that rapid action can be taken to address any immediate risks. As a root cause analysis can take up to 70 days to complete, a preliminary risk assessment will also improve earlier information sharing with patients and families. It is important to remember that this assessment is a preliminary assessment not a full-scale review. It is not intended and will not be able to replace the serious adverse event review. Rather, the preliminary assessment is about identifying immediate risks and actions, with a full-scale review to follow.

The second change is designed to allow for greater flexibility in how public hospitals review serious adverse events. Currently, the only reviews public hospitals can undertake are root cause analyses. A root cause analysis has a particular type of methodology that investigates and analyses serious incidents in order to identify the root causes and causal factors that contributed to the incident and recommend actions to help mitigate the risk of a similar incident occurring in the future. However, other types of reviews are used in other jurisdictions and a root cause analysis may not always be the most appropriate review. The bill will create some flexibility in allowing regulations to be made setting out other types of serious adverse event reviews that can be carried out.

The third main change relates to the report of the serious adverse event review. Currently under the Health Administration Act a root cause analysis team is appointed to determine why a serious incident occurred and to make any recommendations for changes or improvements. Under the NSW Health Incident Management Policy the report must be provided within 70 days. The report includes details about both the findings and any recommendations. However, combining the findings and recommendations into one report can result in delays in relevant information being given to patients and families. For example, although it may take only a month to determine what went wrong, patients or their families may have to wait another month for the recommendations to be finalised before they are told about the root causes of the incident.

In addition, requiring the reports to be prepared in this way means that root cause analysis team members are usually appointed for the entirety of the review. This fails to recognise that the people who are best placed to determine the causes of an incident are not necessarily the people who are best placed to make recommendations about preventing the incident from occurring in the future. I therefore support the changes in the bill that will split the findings and recommendations sections of the serious adverse event review. Under the bill, following the review, a serious adverse event review team must prepare a report setting out how the incident occurred, any factors that caused or contributed to the incident and any procedures, practices or systems that could be reviewed.

After considering these findings a recommendations report can then be made. The public hospital can appoint additional members to the review team for the purpose of preparing the recommendations report if necessary. This splitting of the findings and recommendations sections will help improve information sharing with patients and families and allows additional people, with different expertise, to be appointed to the review team to develop the recommendations. As stated, this bill is part of a regular review of legislation and makes sensible changes. I congratulate the Minister for Health, who is at the table, on progressing the bill. I support the changes to improve the review of serious events in the public health system and commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (11:37): I am pleased to make a contribution to debate on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 as this provides me with an opportunity to acquaint the House with some of the health challenges facing the Illawarra region. As the Minister indicated when introducing this bill last November, it is part of a regular review of legislation and proposes a number of amendments to a range of health Acts. I will spare the House a regurgitation of the provisions this bill seeks to amend, which are comprehensively covered in the accompanying explanatory notes. However, I raise some issues and concerns about the health system in the Illawarra. I realise that the Government loves to spruik its wares in the health area at every opportunity but for all its talk there are some serious shortcomings in the provision of hospital and health care in the Illawarra. These shortcomings must be addressed because over the past year the Government placed hospital and health care in the Illawarra on the shelf as it turned itself inside out over its proposition to privatise Shellharbour Hospital and the implications that would have had for Wollongong and Port Kembla hospitals.

Thankfully, the Government saw the error of its ways in its temptation to enter into a public-private partnership in the redevelopment of Shellharbour Hospital and dropped the proposal. This was due to a strong and unwavering community campaign in the Illawarra to oppose the Government's plans for privatisation. A fortnight

ago, the Government announced that it was also shelving plans for a public-private partnership for Maitland Hospital. I applaud the efforts of the Maitland community, strongly led by my Labor colleagues, particularly the member for Maitland. The shelving of the proposal to privatise Maitland Hospital was the last remaining nail in the coffin for the privatisation plans for hospitals across the State. It was a long time coming, but the wishes of the community were made strongly and powerfully.

I do not doubt that if the Government is re-elected in March 2019 every one of the proposals currently shelved will be put back on the table, most likely with a few more added that, like all the previous proposals, will focus on hospitals outside of Sydney. The Minister should comprehensibly state for the record that the Government's plans and proposals will never again see the light of day. If he fails to provide that categorical statement in the House we will know that if the Government is re-elected next March, those hospital privatisation plans will be dusted off and implemented. The consideration of privatisation proposals has diverted the attention and resources of the Ministry of Health from addressing the shortcomings in the hospital system. In a major teaching and referral hospital in my electorate, we have seen how much pressure this diversion of resources has placed on the dedicated doctors, nurses and auxiliary staff of Wollongong Hospital.

Last September, the *Illawarra Mercury* reported that Wollongong Hospital was at "breaking point". This point was made not by me, but by the staff who are working extraordinarily long hours at Wollongong Hospital. On 21 September 2017, the *Illawarra Mercury* reported a text message sent to staff stated, "Hospital at CRISIS point". Despite warnings from the Ministry of Health, the Government was caught flat-footed in its response to the flu season. Wollongong Hospital was flooded with sick patients forced to wait in an overcrowded emergency department. The text message sent clearly said that staff were urgently required. Nursing staff were asked to undertake double shifts and to do extra shifts at short notice. There were claims that patients were discharged too early against clinical advice to free up beds and were being pressed to access private hospitals. By any assessment, these text messages reveal a hospital system under extraordinary pressure.

When the circumstances were exposed publically, the Government's only concern appeared to be public relations. I repeat: The text messages did not come from me; the *Illawarra Mercury* reported that they were provided by nursing staff who were under pressure. I wrote to the Minister in September last year and requested that, in light of the revelations with regard to Wollongong Hospital's patient pressures, there should be an external, independent inquiry into the hospital's financial and personnel needs that makes detailed recommendations on how the issues could be addressed. Apart from an acknowledgement that my representations were received, I have received no further word from the Government, despite the Government commissioning a similar inquiry into Bega hospital in the Southern NSW Local Health District. The bottom line is that the Illawarra region has a growing population and the resources needed to meet the health requirements of that population are not being matched.

These serious matters need to be addressed because an aging population does not get any younger and its health needs do not miraculously subside. According to the Bureau of Health Information, there were more than 40,000 presentations at emergency departments [EDs] at hospitals throughout the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District in the June to September quarter last year—an 8 per cent increase on the same period in 2016. More than 17,500 people presented at an ED in the July–September period, almost 2,000 more than during the same period the previous year. The increases caused a blowout in waiting times, with only just over half of the patients—56.2 per cent—able to leave Wollongong's ED within the four-hour benchmark. All up, 1,581 procedures were performed, leaving more than 2,250 patients still awaiting operations at the end of September.

These statistics, provided by the independent Bureau of Health Information, clearly show a hospital system under enormous strain. It will be interesting to see the statistics for this quarter when they are released. On 6 December last year, I wrote to the Minister—my third representation in as many months—following the release of the Auditor-General's health cluster report, which found that the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District required \$7.3 million in financial assistance from the Ministry of Health for the year ending 30 June 2017.

The Auditor-General also noted that the debt of the health district was nearly \$7 million. In fact, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District experienced a budget blowout of nearly \$52 million in the last financial year. It is clear that the last two Auditor-General's reports on the New South Wales health system in relation to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District have found deficiencies in financial management. There is no question that the medical, nursing and ancillary staff provide dedicated and professional care to patients in all facilities in the region. However, they are under pressure, and I fear that the Government's muddled priorities and desire to focus on Sydney means that when health budget allocations are being made the growing needs of the Illawarra are not being listened to. Again, I do not consider this the fault of the staff, but it appears that there is some sort of systemic bias against the region when it comes to taking our health needs seriously.

I would also like to note that in today's *Illawarra Mercury*, an Illawarra pharmacist, the President of the Illawarra Pharmacist Association, has called for real time monitoring of codeine products with respect to the ban on over-the-counter codeine sales which has recently come into effect. The New South Wales Labor Opposition has put forward a compromise plan with respect to that. Included in that compromise plan is that request for real time monitoring of sales by pharmacists in chemist shops to track the frequency of sales to customers; cooperation with manufacturers to create smaller sized Australian packs of codeine-based prescription painkillers to curb misuse; dual education programs—one for patients alerting them to the dangers of codeine misuse, and the other for doctors alerting them to the signs of problems; and additional resources for State-based pain clinics helping patients manage chronic pain. I hope that that compromise plan is considered seriously.

The Opposition's main concern about this bill is with respect to the amendments it makes to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. The Government's amendments should not be used as an opportunity to hide from, or cover up, mistakes and serious incidents in our hospitals. In a health system which treats millions of patients each year for a range of acute illnesses and diseases—sometimes, and very tragically—errors and mistakes occur. However, we need to make sure that these errors and mistakes are not systematic or features of an ongoing clinical culture. Incidents, mistakes and errors must be examined in an open and transparent manner by the bureaucracy and by the bodies covering the clinical profession. Secrecy, hiding from the facts, or, worse, seeking to cover up mistakes, errors and incidents, make learning from them harder and endanger the confidence people must have in the health services and care provided by doctors, nurses and the bureaucracy which oversees the whole system. The Opposition does not support the restrictions sought by this bill's amendments to the Government Information (Public Access) Act. Amendments in this regard will be moved in the other place.

In concluding my contribution, I finish where I started—the health and hospital system in the Illawarra is under extraordinary pressure. The text messages to nursing staff reveal that Wollongong Hospital confirms this pressure. The difficulties faced by mothers using maternity services confirm this pressure. The pressures on our ambulance services and paramedics confirm this pressure. The regular referrals of patients to Sutherland Hospital and other hospitals confirm this pressure. The Minister's confirmation last year that there are no planned capital works at Port Kembla Hospital between now and 2019 confirms that pressure. The Auditor-General's reports confirm that the hospital system in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District is under financial pressure, relying on handouts. This is placing pressure on key services. We need to recall that the last completed investment in our public hospitals in the Illawarra region was by the previous Government—a Labor Government.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:48): My contribution to this second reading debate on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 will focus on the amendments to the Mental Health Act that allow the Mental Health Review Tribunal to hear reviews of the treatment regime of involuntary patients or authorise the use of electroconvulsive treatment [ECT] in the absence of the person involved in certain circumstances, if they refuse or are too unwell to attend. While the Mental Health Review Tribunal in some circumstances can already hear reviews, in practice it makes every attempt to include the person involved and will only proceed with the hearing if the person refuses. I understand the tribunal currently tries to contact each consumer individually by telephone. The bill would give additional leeway for the tribunal to hold hearings without the person involved being present. A hearing would be able to take place if a representative has been notified or, in the case of ECT, if reasonable steps have been taken to notify the person's carer.

Being, the peak body representing consumers of mental health treatment, is concerned that the bill allows an authorised medical officer to apply for a hearing in the absence of the person involved if they think the person is unwell and unable to attend. Being recognises that most health care providers consider the best interests of consumers, but there have been instances of abuse with restraint and seclusion practices. Being is also aware of situations in which health care providers have informed the Mental Health Review Tribunal that a person does not want to attend a hearing about their treatment. When the tribunal contacts that client on the telephone directly it is told they would be happy to attend. Such examples highlight the importance of the tribunal contacting a patient directly.

It is important for the tribunal to remain independent in its decision-making and not rely on reports from medical teams—it is why we have a tribunal. If a patient does not attend, the tribunal will base any decision predominantly on what treating practitioners report, and that is not the best approach. Only in rare situations should a patient be deemed too unwell to attend a hearing. In the past the tribunal has insisted upon the attendance of patients, including those with catatonia, to make an independent decision on their ability to consent and decide the best course of treatment. There are concerns that weight is given to what a carer considers appropriate without confirming that they represent the same views and opinions as the patient.

On occasion a carer's views of a patient's treatment may vary considerably from what the patient thinks. The bill represents a shift away from empowering mental health consumers towards a top down model where the

medical practitioner is considered the most knowledgeable about treatment for a person. This is an unnecessary restriction on consumers' human rights and does not reflect the direction in which mental health treatment should head. The recently released report by the State's Chief Psychiatrist and a panel of five mental health experts titled "Review of seclusion, restraint and observation of consumers with a mental illness in NSW Health facilities" demonstrated the trauma consumers can experience when they are not involved in decisions concerning their own mental health treatment.

Being reports that many people who appear before the Mental Health Review Tribunal feel their rights have been restricted already through involuntary patient orders or involuntary detention for electroconvulsive therapy [ECT]. The bill introduces changes that are contrary to the recovery principles in the National Standard for Mental Health Services and the document "A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: guide for practitioners and providers". Both sources promote the importance of choice and empowerment of people. Their care needs must be at the centre of their treatment over organisational priorities. Disempowerment is counterproductive to an individual's personal recovery. Being stresses that the removal of patients from involvement in decisions about their care devalues their opinions. They are then more likely to experience long-term trauma caused by the mental health care system.

Patients want to make decisions about their own care and predominantly will make the best decision for their recovery. I acknowledge that there are situations in which decisions about mental health treatment must be taken in the absence of a patient if that patient is unwell. I know that mental health law is complex and the ideal treatment situation is not always possible. Treatment focus should swing towards supported decision-making over exclusion. Consumers past and present have valid concerns that the bill will have negative impacts on patient recovery and those concerns must be considered. I support a model where every attempt is made to ensure all consumers are provided with the opportunity to attend Mental Health Review Tribunal hearings concerning their treatment.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:53): The second reading speech on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 occurred last year. The bill forms part of the ongoing review of health-related legislation such as the Health Administration Act and the Mental Health Act. I acknowledge the hard work of my colleagues the shadow Minister for Health, Walt Secord, and the shadow Minister for Mental Health, Tania Mihailuk. I thank all our health workers—our specialists, doctors, nurses, midwives, ambulance staff, ancillary staff, cleaners, physiotherapists and social workers—the many thousands of people who care for patients and do phenomenal work in the New South Wales hospital system. Labor has a number of proposed amendments to the bill. I urge the Government to look at Labor's amendments relating to investigations and the Government Information (Public Access) Act. I am glad that Minister Hazzard is in the Chamber. Our hospitals are under pressure, especially the emergency unit at Canterbury Hospital. Canterbury covers a wide area, which includes the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Concord hospital.

Canterbury Hospital does a good job, but it is under enormous pressure. Canterbury has a large multicultural community, some of which are new emerging communities. We must be able to reach our local migrant communities so that they understand preventable health issues. I am happy to talk more about this to the health Minister and Health officials because I cannot stress enough how important it is. The incidence of people presenting at Canterbury Hospital with gestational diabetes has increased. Our older migrant communities, many of whom do not speak or read English well, must be made aware of preventable health issues. We must reach those households to ensure that people have their check-ups. Taboos exist, particularly in women's health. We must do better. The statistics on our elder migrant communities are not good. By the time they have a check-up, it might be too late. I urge the Government to look at this issue.

Returning to the Government Information (Public Access) Act, New South Wales has had a number of reportable incidents. It has also had the most sentinel events in Australia. Failures and process deficiencies have resulted in serious harm or the death of a patient. I understand that the Government wants to remove transparency, making it impossible for the public to learn about the causes of those events. I urge the Government to not cover up the causes. It is important that the families of those patients and the public have access to that information. The Government should not be arrogant about this. We should not compromise our democratic process to access this information. Knowledge is important to inform ourselves how we can best improve. We do not want to go down the path of the public not knowing how a particular incident occurred.

Our shadow Minister is working on amendments and I urge the Government to look at those. Once again, I urge the Government to reconsider outlaying funding in this year's budget for upgrades to Canterbury Hospital. The Government's strategic plan 2013-18 is on the public record. It identifies the crucial priority needs for Canterbury Hospital. These are: the need to establish a dedicated aged-care and rehabilitation service, the importance of expanding the space and capacity of the emergency department and other clinic areas, the need to

revise maternity bed and service needs for Canterbury, the need to address Aboriginal health inequity and access issues, and the need to increase the capacity of the emergency department.

Many years ago the Government said that it would be a lot better at coordinating important services and bringing departments together, but the departments are not talking to each other. On the one hand, the planning department is going to unilaterally rezone properties along the Sydney to Bankstown corridor, which will potentially add more than 100,000 dwellings to our area over the next 10 to 15 years. On the other hand, the Greater Sydney Commission has its own plans for our area, which do not include Canterbury Hospital. The Government's metro plan, transport plan, planning strategies and 30 draft plans and the Greater Sydney Commission plan mention Canterbury Hospital only once or twice although it is a major hospital in the area. It seems as though the Government has not coordinated its planning.

First, I do not support overdevelopment. Secondly, the Government needs to follow its own strategic plan. The Canterbury Hospital emergency department must be expanded. We need to look at preventable health and the number of outpatient-inpatient clinics. We must have a conversation about the health priorities of and services for our aged in the area. I am happy to have that conversation. The Government cannot plonk a lot of development into the area that will exacerbate existing pressures on our hospital. When driving down Canterbury Road you can see how tough it is for our ambulance officers to access Canterbury Hospital. Canterbury is a key artery in the Sydney Basin and the inner west, St George and south-west areas of Sydney.

I think it is important to review Acts continually. With respect to the exemption regarding the Government Information (Public Access) Act, I urge the Government to be cautious and to speak to our shadow Minister. I am happy to have a discussion with the Government about my community and the strategic plan to upgrade Canterbury Hospital. The Leader of the Opposition has made a commitment that if the good people of New South Wales elect the Labor Party to government we will allocate \$9 million to expanding the emergency department at Canterbury Hospital. I urge the Government to come on board as it is a very important hospital and upgrade for our community. The Government should also consider some of the issues that I have raised, particularly concerning multicultural community health.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:03): I contribute to debate on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 and thank the shadow Minister for Mental Health, the member for Bankstown, for leading the Opposition's response to the bill in this House. I also acknowledge the hard work and efforts of our shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, in the other place. As the member for Bankstown outlined today, Labor is concerned about a number of provisions in the bill. I intend to focus on our most significant concern, which is around the continuation of the freedom of information, or Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, exemptions for documents relating to reportable incidents, or so-called "sentinel events", which are the most serious events in our public health system.

These sentinel events, which the Government does not want to become public, include adverse events that result in the death of or serious harm to a patient. They are often due to systemic hospital issues or procedural deficiencies. Sentinel events have included procedures involving the wrong patient or the wrong body part, resulting in death or major permanent loss of function. They also include instruments or other material being left inside a patient during surgery and requiring re-operation or further surgical procedures, as well as medication errors leading to a patient's death. The death of a mother due to pregnancy or childbirth is also classed as a sentinel event, as is the tragic loss of a baby during childbirth.

These tragic events are the types of cases that I handled when I worked as a medical negligence lawyer. Whilst the statistics, the bare facts and the headlines around these events are shocking, the impact on the families involved is difficult to put into words. People's lives are changed forever in the worst possible ways if they or their loved ones are caught up in a sentinel event. That is why the Government ought to do all it can to prevent sentinel events. Call me a sceptic, but I do not think covering them up is the answer. All members understand that the freedom of information, or Government Information (Public Access) Act, process allows for any personal details of the patients involved in these incidents to be redacted to protect their privacy and for the applications for information to be assessed on their merits. Instead, the Government has insisted that a curtain be pulled over this information and that no-one outside the health system get any insight into the most extreme failings in our health system.

Schedule 7 to the bill states "it is to be conclusively presumed that there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of information" relating to reportable incidents and/or sentinel events. The Government is stating in the legislation that the public's right to know this information will always be outweighed by the Government's desire to keep it hidden. This section of the bill exposes the farcical nature of our freedom of information laws, which allow the Government to exclude whole sections of government and government departments from their powers: There is freedom of information providing we say it is okay for people to see it. It is the same condescending "we know best" attitude all over again. Arguably, it is also an attempt to minimise

liability by not making the information available that would see people compensated for losses they have suffered—not that the losses suffered in major reportable incidents and sentinel events are ever capable of being compensated adequately.

I have represented people and families who have experienced those types of losses—the worst losses possible—and who have endured the most awful experiences that one could ever have in the health system. The difficulty in obtaining information that would see them obtain justice or even an apology is nothing short of reprehensible. The investigative reports into serious incidents covered by the bill are not Cabinet papers, there is no commercial-in-confidence reason to keep them hidden and there are no State secrets included in the reports. What is being kept hidden from the public by this legislation are reports about systemic and procedural failings within our health system. It was a former United States Supreme Court justice who stated, "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants; electric light the most efficient policeman." New South Wales is in need of that disinfectant.

These reports must be shown the light of day if our health system is to confront the difficult issues and the systemic causes of these most horrendous events. While sentinel events may appear to be unfortunate or isolated events, they are more often the outcome of broader systemic issues faced within the system. New South Wales hospitals have the highest number of sentinel events in Australia. In 2015-16 New South Wales recorded 34 sentinel events, compared with Victoria's 16, Queensland's 15, South Australia's 11, Western Australia's five and the Australian Capital Territory's one. I do not believe doctors in the Australian Capital Territory are 34 times better than doctors in New South Wales. I do not believe doctors in Victoria are twice as good at avoiding serious errors. What these figures reveal is that doctors in New South Wales are working in a health system where there are systemic issues that are giving rise to greater errors.

With this bill we are taking measures to hide those systemic errors and keep them away from public view. That makes me think about issues in the health system in my electorate and some of the serious failings that constituents have shared with me. In a tragic case, a young man had a burst appendix that was not diagnosed by local doctors. By the time the error was realised, the boy died in the ambulance on the way to hospital. It stuns me that a young, healthy teenager could die from a burst appendix in this day and age. In addition, full-time onsite X-ray services are just now being introduced at Tomaree hospital, which is the only hospital in my area. X-ray services were previously only available for limited hours, Monday to Friday, at a private operator off site. It was too bad if a person broke their leg or needed a chest X-ray in the middle of the night or on the weekend.

I am relieved that Tomaree hospital now has X-ray facilities, but I am still pushing for ultrasound imaging to be made available on site. It is a critical diagnostic tool that may have prevented the death of another young child who could not be diagnosed at the hospital due to the absence of such a facility. Admittedly, that tragedy came about because of difficulties in getting the child to John Hunter Hospital, but that was entirely foreseeable due to heavy traffic that prevents ambulances from travelling freely along Nelson Bay Road. We have some entirely foreseeable problems in our area that could give rise to major incidents that will impact families in the most horrendous ways. I invite the Minister for Health to visit Tomaree hospital and ask patients what they think about the \$2.5 billion that this Government is spending on Sydney stadiums when they have to take their children to John Hunter Hospital by ambulance or Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter because the most basic diagnostic tools are not available on site.

I am by no means criticising the amazingly hardworking nurses, doctors and ambulance officers in our health system, who do the best they can with the resources they have. They impress me no end, day in and day out—just as they impress the many people who rely on their services. I urge the Government and the Minister to listen to the pleas of the Opposition when discussing the amendments to the bill that the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, will raise in the upper House. I urge the Government to consider our amendments to remove the exemptions so that people who deserve to see the information can have access to it. Along with my colleagues, and on behalf of the Opposition, I urge the Government to support our amendments.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:13): I support the vast majority of measures contained in the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The bill deals with a number of public health issues by seeking to amend various Acts, being 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. It is not my intention to deal with all of the amendments individually. Some of them are not controversial and the Minister dealt with them comprehensively in his second reading speech.

I have been informed also by the contributions to this debate made by the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Tanya Davies, and the shadow Minister for Mental Health and member for Bankstown, Tania Mihailuk. Having indicated that I will not speak about all aspects of the bill, I will focus on issues relating to mental health provisions in the bill, particularly the application of

electroconvulsive therapy [ECT]. I also will briefly discuss amendments to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, known as GIPAA.

Mental health and wellbeing groups, in particular the New South Wales consumer advisory group known as Being, have indicated some opposition to proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act. Specifically, this amending bill provides that the Mental Health Review Tribunal will be able to conduct a review of an involuntary patient or hear an application for electroconvulsive therapy in the absence of the patient. That has caused concern in some quarters who insist that the person must be present for such a hearing or review. Some groups have told me that this provision amounts to a further and unnecessary restriction on the human rights of a person. I accept that conducting mental health reviews and inquiries are complex and at times difficult. Invariably, those procedures are traumatic for people who are confused or greatly depressed.

With the indulgence of the House, I indicate I speak from experience as a former psychiatric nurse at Morisset with responsibility for admissions and administering electroconvulsive therapy. Whenever the term "electroconvulsive therapy" is mentioned, people become quite concerned. The very thought of electroconvulsive therapy is confronting because of depictions in various types of media, including movies, and because people have heard terrible stories. But those depictions relate to the darker and earlier stages in the development of electroconvulsive therapy and similar therapies. Patients now receive a modified version of electroconvulsive therapy that is invariably safe and frequently is lifesaving treatment.

The physiological and neurological changes effected by the administration of electroconvulsive therapy are not fully understood, but they are certainly well documented and widely known. Although I do not advocate for electroconvulsive therapy or promote it, I certainly defend it and argue that it is a very important clinician's tool for assisting people with deep-rooted depression, in particular. Patients who undergo electroconvulsive therapy may be those suffering from psychotic depression, bipolar illness or very acute and very deep reactive depression. People speak of patients being in a state of catatonia. Not many members of this House would have experienced people in a deep catatonic state, but I have. I have seen the life-threatening situations in which those sufferers are placed and the concern of their families and loved ones. I also have seen the amazing changes resulting from the application of electroconvulsive therapy when no other treatment could have achieved the same result.

I strongly support the use of ECT and a reduction in the salacious discussions about it. It should be seen as simply another treatment that should be used only after due consideration. That is the question the Mental Health Tribunal should consider. Although these matters are complex, this bill addresses them appropriately. I have had discussions about these issues with the Minister's staff. During those discussions I suggested that, because people who undergo ECT do so over a long period and in accordance with an established regime, the Government might consider introducing a process similar to an advanced care directive. The introduction of such a process might allow these people to make a more formal decision about their treatment when they are lucid, and it could inform any subsequent interventions. That issue may have been considered but, if it has not, I ask the Government to do so. The Minister is correct in saying that some mental health patients are too unwell to attend a hearing, and they can also refuse to attend.

The bill does not unduly restrict a person's human rights, certainly not more than and perhaps less than other socially sanctioned interventions that are seen to be in the best long-term interests of an individual and therefore society. The bill also provides appropriate safeguards to ensure the safety and welfare of patients and to address their concerns. In addition, a patient's carer or representative would be made aware of any review. I understand the objections that have been raised, and I commend the intention and quality of the submission lodged by Being. However, the bill contains appropriate safeguards and will deliver a better result for patients and their loved ones, all of whom struggle with the effects of severe mental illness. I was pleased to have a discussion with the Minister for Mental Health's representative, who advised that Being believes there has been some softening of concern about those issues.

The Opposition raised concerns about the transparency of the changes to the legislation as they relate to the Government Information (Public Access) Act. Having not been afforded a briefing on the matter by the Government, it is not immediately evident to me that these changes will be detrimental, but I always err on the side of caution in such matters. Therefore, like others, I will be looking to the Minister to address those issues in his speech in reply. It is reasonable for the Government to support sensible amendments proposed in the other place, although I do not believe any amendments have been circulated. I certainly have not seen them. Despite my qualification with regard to the Government Information (Public Access) Act, I will be supporting the bill. I congratulate those who have been involved in the drafting of this legislation.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:22): The Opposition does not oppose many of the provisions in the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. However, those dealing with preliminary assessments and Government Information (Public Access) Act inquiries have serious shortcomings that the Opposition will seek

to address during debate in the other place. The bill contains new procedures for dealing with serious reportable incidents such as unexpected deaths, suicides and major preventable clinical and surgical errors in New South Wales local health districts.

If such a major event occurs under this legislation, organisations will be required to conduct a preliminary risk assessment to identify issues such as what went wrong, what could be improved, and what information should be provided to patients and families. We must be mindful that these preliminary risk assessments will be exempted from Government Information (Public Access) Act inquiries. I have serious concerns about the lack of disclosure in that regard. The Government is refusing to reveal details and information about major incidents in New South Wales hospitals and is redacting identifying information and personal data. The Government's default response is to bury any adverse event rather than to provide a tactful release of information about failings within the health system.

When a serious tragedy occurs in the New South Wales health system, and the event has only occurred because of deep problems within that system, it is called a "sentinel event". In New South Wales sentinel events occur at twice the rate of other States—for example, in 2015-16, there were 34 tragic, preventable incidents in New South Wales, 16 in Victoria and 16 in Queensland. Whilst it is important that new reporting procedures are introduced, it is more important to smash the culture of cover-ups in the New South Wales health and hospital system. To that end, we cannot support the restrictions on the freedom of information surrounding these assessments. As I said, in 2015-16 some 34 grievous errors occurred in the New South Wales health system—deaths or injuries caused by systemic issues with staffing, funding, and procedure—but any inquiry enabled by this legislation around these losses of human life, these failures of our medical system, will never be public knowledge. That is abhorrent—and perhaps that is why the health Minister skated over mentioning these changes in his second reading speech.

This bill will create more measures in the New South Wales health system that will be immune to public scrutiny. The Berejiklian Government is addicted to cover-ups within our health system. In September 2016 I addressed this Chamber about two deaths in the maternity ward at Fairfield Hospital. Those deaths were caused by a negligent understaffing of that ward: The under-resourcing of Fairfield Hospital by this Government led to those two tragic deaths. I addressed the Chamber at that time because the New South Wales Government had not released details of those tragic incidents, and it still has not released them. Two years have passed since those incidents in December 2015 and I still cannot stand here and accurately state whether those two deaths were of mothers or newborn infants. The people of New South Wales deserve better than to beg for details of tragedies in our hospitals.

This bill actively contributes to this Government's ability to cover up preventable, unexpected deaths that occur on its watch. It is public knowledge that these deaths were discussed at full meetings of the South Western Sydney Local Health District Board on at least three occasions, including 15 February and 21 March, but the age and identity of these victims of negligence has been concealed—that is a travesty. Whilst the deaths that have occurred on the watch of this New South Wales Liberal Government remain under wraps, the shocking and criminal underinvestment in our hospital system is on public display. For example, in the last three State budgets Fairfield Hospital has not received any capital building funding, despite being ranked in March last year as the worst place in New South Wales to have a baby.

Fairfield Hospital has 220 beds and 882 staff, including approximately 520 nurses. It serves a catchment area of 32,000 people. Each year staff perform 7,000 surgical procedures and deliver 1,800 babies. It deals with 34,000 emergency department presentations, which is a significant number for such a small hospital. It also deals with more than 200,000 outpatient presentations, but more than 1,776 people are on the waitlist for elective surgery and 40.9 per cent of emergency department arrivals need to wait four hours to be seen. I respect the staff at Fairfield Hospital. They are hardworking, professional and competent individuals; it is not their fault that the Government has under-resourced this hospital. The Berejiklian Government's wilful and shameful actions are putting our most vulnerable community members at risk. This bill will do nothing to allow the public, including this Parliament, to accurately gauge the cause of problems in our hospital system. New South Wales families have a right to know the truth. The Government must stop its cover-ups.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (12:29): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2017—those members representing the electorates of Bankstown, Maitland, North Shore, Wollongong, Sydney, Canterbury, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie and Prospect. I also thank my colleague the Minister for Mental Health, Tanya Davies, for her considered contribution to the debate.

Before I address the bill, I acknowledge the contribution of the incredible staff that make up our amazing health system across New South Wales. On behalf of the Government and I am sure the Parliament, I place on record our thanks to the nurses, midwives, doctors, ancillary health staff, health administrators, paramedics,

volunteers, maintenance staff, cleaning staff, groundspeople, members of the health infrastructure, each of our local health district board members and the staff who work within the local health districts. Our health system, which is large, has approximately 135,000 full-time equivalent staff—a system at which the rest of the world and each State and Territory looks because of the standards placed by this Government and by members of that health system. I thank them for their contribution.

Some of the comments that have been made by Opposition members are just plain wrong. I will address them in due course. I state at the outset that the New South Wales Government is fully committed to transparency and to ensuring that events that occur in our hospitals that require disclosure are in fact disclosed in a way that does not prejudice individual staff until those matters have been determined. In regard to the sentinel events issue, the earnest but somewhat erroneous views of the Labor Party are apparently borne of ignorance. The sentinel events that occur in New South Wales—they occur in every health system—are publicly released each year by the Productivity Commission.

The bill makes various amendments to a number of health Acts. The bill will amend the Health Administration Act to improve the process for reviewing serious adverse events in the public health system. Under the proposed changes, public health organisations will be required to conduct a preliminary risk assessment following a reportable incident. Regulations will be able to be made allowing types of serious adverse events reviews other than root cause analyses to be undertaken. Furthermore, the findings and recommendations sections of serious adverse event review reports will be separated. This will allow the findings report to be finalised in a more timely manner which will help to promote earlier open disclosure and also enable additional people with relevant expertise to be appointed to the review team to consider any appropriate recommendations.

It is important that serious adverse incidents are appropriately reviewed so that the organisation can find out what went wrong and why in order to mitigate the risk of a similar incident occurring in the future. These changes will assist in improving the review of serious incidents in the public health system. Opposition members raised the issue of preliminary assessments and Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPA] requests. The overall process, including the preliminary assessment, will continue to be protected and will not be subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act. This is entirely appropriate and in line with the current restrictions applying to root cause analysis. I remind Opposition members who appear not to understand the significance of this provision that when the Labor Government passed the Government Information (Public Access) Act in 2009 it contained exclusions from root cause analysis provisions. I emphasise that that exclusion was put in place under Labor; it was not put in place by the Coalition Government.

The amendments in this bill specifically relating to the Government Information (Public Access) Act have been the subject of great consultation. A number of rounds of consultation were undertaken in local health districts and the Ministry of Health. Issues raised in early consultation were considered in further consultation. Today I spoke with the Nurses and Midwives Association and it confirmed that it was appropriately involved in the consultation, that it involved a range of other groups, and that it is particularly concerned with Labor's interpretation of certain provisions in the bill. The Nurses and Midwives Association understands what the Government is trying to achieve and it understands the balance that must be struck to ensure we get to the bottom of and resolve any problems.

We consulted not only with unions but also with a range of other organisations, including medical practitioners involved in the delivery of services in hospitals. The Australian Medical Association [AMA] and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation of NSW [ASMOF] were consulted. We consulted a range of people at the front line who understand this issue. Having been involved in these processes in the past 12 months I understand how challenging and difficult such consultation can be. I understand why those who have not been involved at the front line might have a different interpretation of this legislation but I think it has been driven by people with good intent who do not fully understand the processes and outcomes. Opposition members must rethink their amendments as they are contrary to the outcome of this long and detailed consultation process.

The protections in this bill will help to ensure that staff can freely and openly participate in the review process. That is a crucial aspect not only of what this bill seeks to achieve but also of what the Nurses and Midwives Association and others involved in the consultation understand and focused on when drafting this bill. Furthermore, I note that preliminary assessments are just that—preliminary. A preliminary assessment is not intended to be a full review; it is only a tool to assist and direct how further investigations, including any by the serious adverse event review team, should be directed. Preliminary assessments will also help to identify any immediate measures that need to be taken to mitigate risk. That latter aspect is particularly significant. While due process should occur and while each of these cases must be examined in great detail to ensure that as much as is humanly possible the health system responds to adverse events, we recognise that that process can take some time. It is crucial that there be some opportunities for the system itself to respond more quickly if necessary. That, again, necessitates the amendments that the Government is making to the GIPA Act.

The preliminary assessment may highlight areas that the serious adverse event review team will focus on, but should not in any way be considered a final report. In fact, the serious adverse event review team may find during its full review that some of the issues of concern raised by the preliminary assessment are unconnected to the cause of the serious incident. Again, that highlights the need for the appropriate and balanced approach that the Government is taking in consultation with the unions, the staff, the medical officers and all of those involved at the front line, who understand the intricacies of the system.

While the bill will allow an organisation to disclose relevant information from the preliminary assessment to patients and families, it would be detrimental to allow the preliminary assessment to be publicly disclosed when it is not, and is not intended to be, a final report. However, the final serious adverse event report will be able to be disclosed, as is currently the case with root cause analysis reports. I stress again that that was the approach that the Labor Government took in 2009 and it is the approach that the Government is now taking, although we are taking further steps to ensure that the process works better, faster and to the benefit of the families of the patient involved in the incident.

As I said earlier, the new provisions have been subject to extensive consultation with almost everybody who should have been consulted, and that is the hallmark of this Government. I thank the staff involved in the local health districts and the Ministry of Health for the work they did in ensuring that consultation was undertaken across all the relevant parties, including the unions, the Australian Medical Association, the medical defence organisations and everybody they could think of who would be capable of having a professional view on this issue, a view that will help not only the organisation but also the patients they serve.

One key theme that arose during the consultations was the need to ensure that the existing protections that apply to root cause analysis apply to those preliminary assessments. That was a common theme and it was a theme that was pushed very hard by those at the front line for the reasons I have explained—that is, that the preliminary assessments should be privileged and should not be subject to the GIPA Act. I assure the House that NSW Health provides safe and effective health services to a population of more than seven million residents here in New South Wales.

Critical incidents that result in patient harm are very rare and account for less than 2 per cent of all incidents reported. Obviously, the system and the Government—and, I am sure, the Opposition—would like there to be no incidents, but the health system is people-centred and where people are involved there will always be incidents from time to time. The best that any government, any central agency or the Ministry of Health can do is to try to ensure that, as far as humanly possible, we put in place the protocols and procedures that minimise adverse incidents but also that we learn from such incidents when they occur and ensure that it informs future protocols and procedures.

I also point out that while activity in New South Wales hospitals is increasing, the number of clinical incidents that result in patient harm has not significantly increased. We heard the energetic attacks on the health system by members of the Labor Party here today, but it is appropriate to reflect on the fact that these clinical incidents, relative to what occurred under the former Labor Government, are, indeed, fewer. We have had substantial population increases and, proportionately, these sentinel events have decreased.

Sentinel events are particularly serious events in hospitals that involve procedures involving the wrong patient or body part resulting in death or major permanent loss of function, suspected suicide of a patient in an inpatient unit, retained instruments or other material after surgery requiring reoperation or further surgical procedures, medication error leading to the death of a patient reasonably believed to be due to incorrect administration of drugs, intravascular gas embolism resulting in death or neurological damage, haemolytic blood transfusion reaction resulting from ABO incompatibility, maternal death or serious morbidity associated with labour or delivery or an infant discharged to the wrong family. Those are the sorts of sentinel events that are to be avoided if at all possible and the Ministry of Health and the local health districts throughout New South Wales are doing everything possible to ensure that those events do not occur.

As I indicated, thankfully sentinel events are extremely rare in New South Wales hospitals. In fact, New South Wales has had a substantial reduction in such events—down to 34 in 2015-16. That is not good enough but it is far fewer than what occurred some years ago when the system was treating far fewer patients because New South Wales had significantly fewer residents. Labor members may not be aware that in the final year of the Labor Government in New South Wales, with significantly fewer numbers of people going through the health system, the New South Wales public health system had 44 sentinel events.

We need to keep in perspective that our doctors, nurses, ancillary staff and everyone involved in the health system work very hard to achieve the best for our patients, but sometimes these events occur and Labor members should not walk in here during a substantive debate about reforms to the health system and assert that things are far worse now under the Coalition Government when the truth of the matter is that all the doctors,

nurses and medical staff on the front line are working hard to improve the delivery of services to patients. Indeed, it would appear from the statistics that they are in fact doing just that, which is something we should all celebrate and be proud of rather than Labor members coming in here and running down the system.

New South Wales hospitals are committed to providing safe, reliable care. Each and every staff member in our hospitals is committed to providing safe and reliable care. More than 1,000 patients a day have surgical procedures in our public hospitals and the rate of serious harm is low. New South Wales public hospitals have a strong culture of identifying risks to patient safety and reporting incidents so improvements can be made. Root cause analysis investigations are an important part of reporting incidents and are identifying areas for improvement. This bill will amend the Health Services Act to rename the Ambulance Service Advisory Council as the Ambulance Service Advisory Board and set clear membership qualifications. Changes to the Health Services Act will also clarify the role of the Health Secretary as the system manager for the entire public health system. The changes to the Mental Health Act will allow in limited but appropriate cases for the Mental Health Review Tribunal to proceed with the hearing in the absence of the patient where the patient is too unwell or refuses to attend the hearing.

Various important safeguards have been included in the bill. A hearing other than the initial mental health inquiry will be able to proceed in the absence of the patient only if, first, the authorised medical officer makes an application for the hearing to be held in the absence of the patient because the patient refuses to attend or is too unwell to attend the hearing; secondly, the tribunal is satisfied that the patient is too unwell or refuses to attend the hearing and is unlikely to be well enough to attend within a reasonable period; thirdly, the tribunal is satisfied that any representative of the patient has been notified of the review or, in the case of an electroconvulsive treatment [ECT] hearing, reasonable steps have been taken to notify the representative; fourthly, the tribunal has considered the views, if known, of the patient, the representative of the patient, the designated carer and principal care provider of the patient; and, finally, the tribunal must be of the opinion that carrying out the review in the absence of the patient would be desirable for the safety or welfare of the patient.

Further, the bill will require authorised medical practitioners to take all reasonable steps to notify the designated carer and principal care provider of upcoming hearings before the tribunal. This will help ensure that carers are aware of tribunal hearings and can attend or make submissions to the hearing. In addition, the bill amends section 154 to make clear that a patient's right to representation apply even if the patient does not attend the hearing. It is expected that these new provisions will apply in only a small number of cases, estimated by the tribunal to be less than 10 per cent of cases. However, I do understand the concerns raised by various members about how the provisions will operate. I thank those members for their contributions. It is important that we understand the need to ensure that patients with mental health issues are given all the due safeguards as we try to address their medical needs, which hopefully will help them function in the community.

Although I am satisfied with the safeguards in the bill, I am pleased that the Ministry of Health has had discussions with the tribunal, which has indicated that it will develop practice directions in relation to the proposed powers under the Mental Health Act. The tribunal will consult with consumer groups in developing the practice directions. I note the member for Bankstown's suggestion that the tribunal consider reviewing relevant data in 12 months. I assure the House that this data will be collected and published through the annual reporting process. Finally, the changes to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act will ensure that if a forensic patient fails to return from leave, the patient can be apprehended without waiting for an order for apprehension from the tribunal. This change will help minimise delays in apprehending forensic patients who fail to return from leave and help protect the public. It will also help protect the patient from themselves, because if the patient fails to return from leave there could be issues that put the patient at risk.

These minor, but important, changes will assist in ensuring that health legislation continues to be up to date and relevant. I thank all who took part in the consultations across the local health districts and the Ministry of Health. I thank union staff for their contributions. It is satisfying to introduce legislation that was the subject of such extensive consultation and to know that staff from the Ministry of Health and other parts of the health system in New South Wales have been consulted and had their views heard. I thank Gemma Broderick, the Ministry of Health legal officer who is here with me today, for her contribution to the presentation of this bill to the House. I welcome Leonora Tyers, who is the newest member of the legal section of the ministry, and thank her for her presence and involvement. I thank my Chief of Staff, Leonie Lamont, and the rest of my staff for their ongoing support in ensuring this legislation was worthy of the consideration of the House. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

*Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2017-2018**

Debate resumed from 16 November 2017.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:55): I will continue with the remarks I was making on 16 November last year in this take-note debate. I ran out of time as I when speaking about some of the wonderful initiatives of this Government, particularly for all modes of transport in New South Wales. Hopefully, the House will award me an extension of time—perhaps until 1.15 p.m.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: That's a long time.

Mr MARK COURE: It is a long time; there is a lot to talk about. If the member for Newcastle is lucky he might get a special mention when I talk about Newcastle Light Rail. Sydney has a population of five million, and that is projected to grow to more than eight million by 2056. By looking at transport through this lens the Government has developed a long-term vision to deliver the infrastructure New South Wales needs. New South Wales is benefiting from this Government's record commitment to infrastructure of more than \$72 billion over the next four years. This commitment was solidified in the 2017-18 budget, which allocated \$8.5 billion to build and improve road, maritime and freight infrastructure; and \$12.1 billion for public transport infrastructure and services. I am sure members on both sides of the House are aware that the Government has an unprecedented pipeline of major infrastructure projects—not just in Sydney but across New South Wales. Those projects include the Sydney Metro; WestConnex; NorthConnex; and light rail for Sydney, Parramatta and Newcastle; together with the Pacific Highway upgrades.

In the short time that is allocated to me I will expand on some of these projects that the Government is undertaking. For the member for Newcastle particularly I will talk about the major benefits of light rail in his electorate. I will get to that last. The Sydney Metro is one of the most exciting initiatives. It is Australia's biggest public transport project. For many years it will change the way Sydney people travel. The Sydney Metro will have a capacity of more than 40,000 customers per hour, which is similar to other metro systems around the world. By comparison, Sydney's current suburban rail network can reliably carry 24,000 people per hour per line, which represents a major increase in the ability to move people throughout our city each and every hour.

This standalone, twenty-first century rail system will include 31 metro stations extending over more than 65 kilometres of network. Together with signalling and infrastructure upgrades across the existing Sydney rail network, the Sydney Metro will increase the capacity of train services entering the Sydney central business district from 120 per hour to 200 per hour by 2024. That is an increase of 60 per cent capacity across the network to meet the growing demands of commuters travelling in and out of the city each hour. More than 30 million customer trips per year are expected within seven years of the Sydney Metro opening. Construction of stage one of the Sydney Metro Northwest is well under way. To date, more than one million tonnes of concrete have been used in the construction. The project is on time and on budget.

The Sydney Metro Northwest's twin 15-kilometre railway tunnels between Bella Vista and Epping are Australia's longest railway tunnels and were safely completed 10 months ahead of schedule. A record amount of concrete and steel was required to line the twin tunnels. The entire deck of Sydney Metro's four-kilometre skytrain between Bella Vista and Rouse Hill is locked in place high in the air, sitting on 120 concrete pillars. Here is a fun fact for House: In total, 80,000 tonnes of concrete were used for the skytrain deck. That is equivalent to 81 Olympic swimming pools of concrete. I am proud to herald the marvels of this engineering project.

Part of the Sydney Metro project is the iconic 270-metre cable-stayed rail bridge on Windsor Road, Rouse Hill. This is Australia's first concrete cable-stayed rail bridge built on a curve. It demonstrates the innovative use of concrete and steel. Stage two of the Sydney Metro City and Southwest extends the metro rail from the end of the Sydney Metro Northwest at Chatswood, under Sydney Harbour and through to new central business district stations and south-west to Bankstown. It will deliver twin rail tunnels supported by tonnes of concrete stretching 15.5 kilometres from Chatswood to Sydney, with a section more than 50 metres below the surface of Sydney Harbour.

There are seven new railway stations: Barangaroo, Central, Pitt Street, Martin Place, Victoria Cross at North Sydney, Crows Nest and Waterloo. Eleven stations on the Bankstown line will be upgraded. The Sydney

to Bankstown metro upgrade will open a world of opportunities for the Bankstown region—which is good news for the member for Bankstown. It will include direct, fast access to North Sydney and Macquarie University. It will open the door to better connections for jobs and education. The Chatswood to Sydenham project has received planning approval. [*Extension of time*]

The Chatswood to Sydenham component of the project will support 6,200 jobs at the peak of construction. The planning approvals process for the Sydenham to Bankstown project is under way. Construction of the new twin metro rail tunnels will now begin under Sydney Harbour and in the heart of the central business district [CBD] after a major tunnelling contract was awarded in the middle of last year. The announcement of the \$2.8 billion contract means that work will start immediately to get the first of the five tunnel-boring machines in the ground. It is anticipated that work on the tunnel will begin by the end of 2018.

In November 2016 the New South Wales Government announced the Sydney Metro West, which is a new metro rail line between Parramatta and the CBD. The new metro will move up to 40,000 people per hour between the Sydney CBD and Parramatta in each direction, effectively doubling the current rail capacity. This is great news for those living in Parramatta and Western Sydney who wish to travel from home to work in the city and back again to their family and friends. The Sydney Metro West will service at least four key centres and precincts that have been identified as growth priorities in the district plans of the Greater Sydney Commission. These include Greater Parramatta, Sydney Olympic Park, the Bays Precinct and Sydney CBD. The Sydney Metro West is an addition to the rail network. It will create opportunities and improve service patterns on existing rail networks such as the T1 Western line. Concrete and steel is needed to build the Sydney Metro West and it will create many thousands of new jobs in Sydney alone.

Light rail projects are undertaken not only in Sydney but also in Parramatta and in Newcastle. We are working hard to deliver innovative public transport options for New South Wales. For example, light rail will play a central role in the future of transport in New South Wales. I have said many times that light rail is a connector between many modes of transport. The Parramatta Light Rail is one of our major infrastructure projects. It will change the region and connect the community with great places so that people can explore what the region has to offer. The Parramatta North Urban Transformation Program will link the Parramatta CBD, the train station to Westmead health precinct, the new Western Sydney Stadium, Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, and the Western Sydney University campuses at Parramatta, Rydalmere and Westmead.

The light rail project is being delivered in stages to ensure the infrastructure that is needed to support the current growth of Greater Parramatta and Western Sydney is in place and operating as soon as possible to support the thousands of new homes being built and jobs being created. An extension to Epping is also possible. I am advised that work on the final business case for the Parramatta Light Rail project is near completion and will be submitted for approval shortly. The environmental impact statement was exhibited late last year. It builds on the extensive community and stakeholder engagement with the project team that has taken place since early 2016.

The CBD and South East Light Rail is a new light rail network for Sydney that is currently under construction. It is great news for those who have ventured onto George Street and to many other parts of the city to see the light rail in progress. Once complete, the \$2.1 billion project will improve transport access, support urban renewal and change Sydney's CBD. It is a high-capacity, reliable and sustainable mode of public transport that will ease the pressure on Sydney's roads by reducing the city's reliance on buses. Construction is continuing along the 12-kilometre route, with approximately 8.5 kilometres of track laid so far. To date, the project has used more than 23,000 tonnes of concrete, including 9,748 tonnes—43 per cent—of recycled materials, which exceeds all targets.

Almost every block of George Street is being renewed and upgraded, with more than \$4 billion of private investment along George and Alfred streets providing a clear endorsement of this project. I am pleased to report that the CBD and South East Light Rail project remains on budget and on track for operation in early 2019. But it does not stop there. I note the member for Newcastle is in the Chamber. This Government is investing more than \$500 million in Newcastle through Revitalising Newcastle projects to bring new life to the city.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): Order! Members on both sides of the Chamber will come to order.

Mr MARK COURE: Most members would say "thank you". If \$500 million were provided to my electorate I would say "thank you". The Newcastle revitalisation program will receive \$500 million.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): Order! The member for Newcastle has been very restrained up until now. I advise him to continue that restraint.

[*Interruption*]

Mr MARK COURE: I think that word is unparliamentary.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time.

Mr MARK COURE: I have seen on Facebook photographs of the member for Newcastle inspecting the site of the light rail system. Infrastructure work is not limited to Sydney. Regional contractors are helping the Government with the important tasks in Newcastle, and light rail is a key pillar to this program. Six new light rail vehicles are on order, major construction is set to start early this year, and services are set to roll out in early 2019. The light rail will connect key precincts in the city centre between the new multi-modal interchange at Wickham in Newcastle's west end and Pacific Park in the east end, which is just 200 metres from the iconic Newcastle Beach. This is great news for the residents of Newcastle, for those who travel to and from Newcastle, and for those who live, work and study in Newcastle.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): Order! The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr MARK COURE: Most members would say "thank you". Newcastle West was chosen for the interchange due to the potential of the interchange to trigger further development and economic growth in what has been identified as the city's future central business district. I am pleased to advise that the Newcastle interchange is on track to be completed early this year, if it is not already completed. The Government has many road projects in New South Wales underway. I will talk about WestConnex—which will provoke members of the Opposition, particularly the member for Strathfield. WestConnex supports 10,000 jobs, both direct and indirect, during its construction. So far, more than 27,500 tonnes of concrete have been used to provide a long, overdue underground link between the M4 and the M5.

By directing heavy traffic from surface roads into underground tunnels, local streets will be returned to the community—particularly in the electorate of the member for Heffron—and more than 18 hectares of open space will be created for local communities. That is great news for everyone, particularly for the members on the opposite side of the Chamber who represent the electorates of Heffron, Newtown and Summer Hill, and the list goes on. As a result of WestConnex, by 2031 greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by more than 610,000 tonnes a year and Sydney will be moving again, with motorists saving a combined 100,000 hours each day through reduced traffic congestion and 45,000 fewer motor vehicles and 10,000 fewer trucks a day on Parramatta Road. Unique to WestConnex is the innovative financing model being used to deliver this project. This involves an initial contribution from the New South Wales and Australian governments and the private sector, with tolling revenue providing the remaining funding for the project. I want to speak about NorthConnex but I have run out of time. I will continue my contribution to this take-note debate at a later date. [*Time expired.*]

Debate interrupted.

Community Recognition Statements

WINGHAM ROTARY CLUB YOUTH OF THE YEAR DYLAN HAMILTON

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:15): I inform the house of Dylan Hamilton who was awarded the Wingham Rotary Club 2018 Youth of the Year award at an Australia Day ceremony. Dylan, aged 22, went to school in Wingham before working at Wingham Frames and Trusses. He then completed work experience with Marlee-based building company Altez before starting his apprenticeship. In 2017 he was named the Hunter Housing Apprentice of the Year and he will represent the Hunter region at the HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards later this year. The attributes that Rotary looks for in Youth of the Year include attitude to work, maturity, overall progress throughout their apprenticeship, personal presentation and communication skills. On behalf of the Myall Lakes community, I wish Dylan Hamilton great success for the future.

TRIBUTE TO PETER VEENSTRA, OAM

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:16): I recognise Mr Peter Veenstra, OAM, of Orange. Peter has a strong passion for rugby, as is evidenced by his rich contribution to Central West Rugby Union through 31 years of voluntary service. Peter's pivotal role as secretary and chief executive officer has proven to be a significant asset to the enduring sporting culture enjoyed by Orange and the Central West. Notably, Peter has provided continued support and leadership to and development of junior rugby throughout the Central West. One of Peter's achievements was his success in organising for the Springboks to play at Wade Park in Orange in 1992. Peter has served as a board member of NSW Country Rugby Union and NSW Rugby Union and as a member of numerous advisory committees for Rugby Australia. He is a true role model, embodying virtues of compassion, commitment and dedication to his community through sport, education and welfare. Last year Peter was rightfully honoured

with the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his selfless dedication and long service to our community. Well done, Peter.

TRIBUTE TO MS ANGIE NUTT

NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (13:17): I congratulate Ms Angie Nutt on 50 years of successful trading in Lismore's central business district. Angie is the owner of Angelica's Fashion in Lismore, which served its last customer on Wednesday 31 January 2018. Angie is retiring at the age of 90 years. The shop has survived many floods in Lismore, including the most recent flood in March 2017 when Angie cleared out the store and did not lose any stock. I congratulate and thank Angie for all her hard work and dedication over the years and wish her all the very best in her retirement.

I also congratulate the North Coast National Agricultural and Industrial Society and ACON on receiving funding under the 2018 NSW Seniors Festival grants program. The show society has received funding to conduct its Seniors Expo. Seniors in the Lismore electorate will celebrate, learn new skills and build friendships at local NSW Seniors Festival events in April this year.

MAITLAND CANCER APPEAL COMMITTEE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:18): I congratulate the tremendous efforts of a group of retired women in Maitland who manage the Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee. To date, they have collectively raised more than \$1 million towards various cancer research programs and initiatives in the Hunter region. In February they donated \$100,000 to Dr Nikola Bowden of the University of Newcastle to support her work in ovarian cancer research. Previous recipients of their fundraisers have included TROG Cancer Research and pancreatic cancer research. I commend the tireless efforts of these women. They collect the majority of their fundraising dollars through their hard work at a local op shop. In addition to fundraising, the committee operates a free linen service specifically for palliative care patients who are being cared for at home. The monies raised remain in the Hunter and support Hunter cancer research projects. The committee is a prime example of what is possible when the community comes together for a cause. Maitland and the Hunter remain grateful for their committed efforts. We thank you.

CHRISTOPHER AND IRENE MCMILLAN SEVENTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:19): I congratulate Christopher and Irene McMillan on 70 years of marriage. Chris was in the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War. After the war he ran his own barber shop in Albury for 55 years before he retired at the age of 80. Irene was a telephonist and a fine lace wedding cake decorator, sending her cakes all over Australia and the world. Chris and Irene were married in Walla Walla on 1 December 1947 and had four sons. Chris still lives in the house he built in 1948 for his new bride. Irene is now in the care of Lutheran Aged Care in West Albury, but every afternoon Chris puts on his jacket and tie to visit his sweetheart and bring her flowers or perhaps some chocolate or a piece of cake. This is a wonderful milestone. I congratulate them on 70 years of wedded bliss.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE BUSHFIRE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:20): On Saturday 13 January a large and destructive bushfire ripped through bushland in Port Stephens, starting near Masonite Road. It quickly moved east towards Williamtown along Cabbage Tree Road. It then moved north towards the airport and the Williamtown Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] base until the wind changed and it turned toward Raymond Terrace, then Campvale and Medowie. Fortunately, no lives or properties were lost; however, that was only due to the incredible and unrelenting work of local fire crews who fought for four long days to bring the fire under control.

More than 200 personnel from the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the RAAF airport fire service assisted in protecting our community. Alongside my neighbours, I watched the Rural Fire Service DC-10 water bomber *Nancy Bird* do its run time and again to support the crews on the ground. I once again praise the brave firefighters for their work, along with the NSW Police Force, Port Stephens Council and Hunter Water officers who assisted in the effort. My community is incredibly grateful to them all, and so am I.

BATHURST DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBER ALAN MCRAE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (13:21): I acknowledge NSW Government Community Service Award recipient Alan McRae for his hard work and dedication. Alan has been avidly documenting the history of the Bathurst area for the past 30 years and has been a member of the Bathurst District Historical Society since the early 1980s. He has a collection that includes papers

from 1848 to 1948, more than 2,000 advertisements and 85,000 photos, and which takes up his lounge room, garage and half of his walkway. A community service award is one of the highest honours that can be bestowed upon a person. I acknowledge Alan for his contribution to Bathurst by collecting and preserving information so it can tell the history of our area for generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER JAMES COLLINS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (13:22): On 24 February 2018 Father James Collins will celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of his ordination as a minister of the Anglican Church. Father James grew up in rural Western Australia and trained as a music teacher. Following study at Perth Theological Hall at Murdoch University he was ordained in 1987. He has been at St Paul's Anglican Church in Burwood since 2011 and we are grateful for his ministry and support of our community over the past seven years. A man of deep faith, a great reader, walker and connector, Father James lives his ministry with love as the foundation stone. I regularly see him on his morning walk around Burwood and know that he is working tirelessly for those without, those who are doing it tough and those living at the margins. The Parish Pantry, the Homelessness Hub, the Mobile Medical Clinic and other outreach services are made possible through his leadership and capacity to enable people to be their best selves. I extend my best wishes and heartfelt thanks to him. My community celebrates his calling every day.

HORNSBY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT JULIE GRIFFIN

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:23): I acknowledge Julie Griffin, a very special lady from Westleigh. Julie is an amazing woman who has dedicated her life to giving back to the Hornsby community. Julie has been an active member of the Soroptimist International Hornsby group since 1986. Over that time she has held various committee positions within the organisation, including president. She has also been involved in the organisation at a State and international level. A passion for ending domestic violence led Julie to join the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Domestic Violence Network and serve on the board of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter.

Julie is the brains behind the Walk the Talk march against domestic violence in our community. I have attended the walk for many years and wholeheartedly support Julie's hard work in campaigning to end domestic violence. Julie was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia on Australia Day, an honour which is thoroughly deserved. The people of Hornsby are incredibly proud of her work and achievements. On behalf of the many thousands of people across New South Wales and the country who have been the beneficiaries of Julie's work to end domestic violence, I say a sincere thank you.

SHELLHARBOUR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR DAVID WILLIAMSON

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:24): I draw the attention of the House to the work of Mr David Williamson—or "Scooter Dave", as he is known in Shellharbour. Every morning for the past 12 months, Mr Williamson has woken up at the crack of dawn and driven his mobility scooter from his home in Barrack Heights to Windang Bridge to clean up litter that has been left behind by careless people. He has become an icon in our local community. Last month Mr Williamson was named Shellharbour's Citizen of the Year for 2018. I thank Mr Williamson for his tireless efforts and commitment to our local environment. Shellharbour is a safer, friendlier and cleaner place in which to live because of his work. On behalf of the Illawarra community I say congratulations and thank you to Scooter Dave.

COMMUNITY LIFESAVERS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:25): Today I recognise the lifesaving efforts of a number of residents in my electorate. At 8.30 a.m. on 5 January, Wayne Southwell collapsed on Shelly Beach after a regular swim with friends. His heart stopped for 30 minutes. If not for the heroic actions of Brian Williams of Seaforth, Chris Groves and Venetia Barrett of Manly, Alan Bradley, Sarah Adlington, Tracey Hare-Boyd and her son, Trae Hare-Boyd of Balgowlah, Declan Wyton, Grace Lockhart of Seaforth, Nerissa Llana, Emma Smith and Bronte Schultz of Manly, it is fair to say that Mr Southwell would not be with us today. On behalf of a grateful family and community, I thank each and every one of them for their quick thinking and cool heads in saving Wayne's life.

TRIBUTE TO NARELLE MORRIS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:25): Over Christmas, the Merrylands community lost one of its best, Narelle Morris. For more than a decade Narelle supported those most in need through Holroyd Community Aid. For more than 40 years—which include the past 14 years with Narelle at the helm—the Holroyd Community Aid has provided support through emergency relief, energy accounts payment assistance vouchers, et cetera, and its op shop. Narelle was a tiny woman with a huge heart. She made time for anyone and befriended everyone. Her empathy was matched by strength in being a great judge of character and ensuring that people did not take

advantage of her good nature. A tireless fighter, Narelle ensured that the organisation kept its doors open when Holroyd Community Aid ceased to provide emergency relief. In recognition of that special effort, Narelle was awarded Local Woman of the Year in 2016. She also had been the primary carer for her partner, Warren, as he faced health issues in recent years. Narelle's wicked sense of humour, strong sense of justice and unfailing commitment to sticking up for the underdog will be sorely missed by all those who knew her.

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:26): I acknowledge the recipients of Australia Day citizenship awards in Mosman. I congratulate the Mosman Citizen of the Year recipients, Vicki Condon, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the youth mentoring organisation Raise Foundation; community advocate, William Tuck; and Mosman High School student Melissa Thompson, who is the 2018 Young Citizen of the Year. Vicki Condon built from the ground up a movement to support and nurture young Australians with a portfolio of 80 mentoring programs. What started as a local Mosman-based organisation is now a large not-for-profit organisation with more than 50 casual staff.

William Tuck spent many years advocating for Mosman to retain its independence and has worked to support a number of local community groups, including fundraising for the Mosman Home Gardeners Club's seventieth anniversary. Mosman High School student, Melissa Thompson, has been named the 2018 Young Citizen of the Year. For the past four years Melissa has been a member of the school representative council and has been selected as school captain. She also has been involved in fundraising activities. Congratulations to all the Mosman citizens of the year.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES QUEEN'S BATON RELAY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:27): On Saturday 3 February, the Queen's Baton Relay came to the Central Coast in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games, which will be held on the Gold Coast. Among the 17 Central Coast residents who helped to carry the baton was Sarah Evans of Hamlyn Terrace and Kallan Strong of Wadalba. Sarah is a mother of two who last year blew us all away when she completed a 12-hour swim at the Mingara Recreation Club to raise money for the Save Sight Institute. Kallan is a champion tenpin bowler on the Central Coast. Aged only 16, he already has bowled a perfect 300 game and continues to impress with great competition results. Kallan has autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and currently is training for the 2018 national disability bowling championship in June. The Central Coast community is grateful and proud to have those two stars represent us at the baton relay. I look forward with great interest to seeing what they achieve in the future.

BOWRAL HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:28): I congratulate students Sophie Hall and Joel McAloon from my alma mater, Bowral High School, who have been selected as school captains for 2018. It is always a great privilege as well as a sign of the respect in which students are held by their peers when chosen for such an honour. I know both Sophie and Joel will be thrilled by this opportunity. I am told that competition for the roles was particularly fierce and that the quality of candidates was particularly high—which of course is the norm at Bowral High School! The school also named its new vice-captains for 2018, Joshua Vinczeffi and Ema Kobayakawa. I also congratulate the 2017 school captains, Ellie Jordan and Robert Jutrisa, and vice-captains, Camille Benson and Peter Sullivan. They have done a fantastic job and receive the good wishes of their fellow students and school staff as they head out into the world for work and study.

NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (13:29): I congratulate the Australia Day Award recipients in Newcastle in the categories of Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year and Community Group of the Year. The 2018 Citizen of the Year is Mark Hughes, the retired former Newcastle Knights star and brain cancer survivor, who was recognised for the work of his charity the Mark Hughes Foundation. Well done, Mark. The 2018 Young Citizen of the Year is University of Newcastle student Irini Kassis. In February 2017, Irini represented Australia at the London International Model UN, where she led the UN Equity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women committee. Congratulations, Irini. The 2018 Community Group of the Year is NOVA for Women and Children. NOVA supports women who are at risk of homelessness to remain safely in their homes, helps house women who are homeless or in crisis and provides support to maintain safe accommodation. NOVA is an outstanding local organisation and I congratulate it on receiving this award.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE NATIONAL FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:30): I acknowledge Port Macquarie Women's Futsal players' success at the National Futsal Championship. Shannon Day, Sophie Jones, Maddison Stockham, Britt

Hargreaves and Jess Hayes are celebrating after a heart-stopping 3:2 victory over Victoria at the national championships in Sydney. Shannon Day's left-footed strike in golden goal extra time secured far north New South Wales the win after earlier leading 2:0. That capped off a remarkable tournament that saw the team win all 11 matches, including the semi-final and final. Coach Mick Day was impressed by the amazing defensive effort, claiming Britt Hargreaves to be one of the best keepers in the country. Day added that it was a compliment to the girls because it was the only title they had not won. Congratulations to Shannon, Sophie, Maddison, Britt and Jess on their amazing success.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:31): I acknowledge, congratulate and thank the recipients of the 2018 Wollongong Australia Day awards. This year some fantastic individuals, teams and organisations were recognised. They are individuals and groups who help make Wollongong an even better place to live through the contribution they make. This year's recipients included: Senior Citizens of the Year, David North and Dr Annette Beauflis; Young Citizen of the Year, Ebony Austin; Innovation Award recipients, the University of Wollongong Motorsport Team; Arts and Cultural Award recipient, Eric Dunan; and the Sports Achievement Award went to the open men's George Bass surf boat marathon crew from Bulli Surf Life Saving Club.

Special recognition was given to headspace Wollongong Youth Reference Group and the Wollongong Homeless Hub, which are two great organisations. In a fitting tribute to someone who has given a considerable amount of her time over many years, contributing to Legacy, Illawarra International Women's Day committee and helping to establish the local Orange Sky Laundry van—a contribution that has helped to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for charity—this year the fantastic Vicki Tiegs was named Wollongong Citizen of the Year.

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (13:32): It is with great pleasure that I share with the House the achievements of the Griffith branch of the Riding for the Disabled Association [RDA]. The association recently celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. The members used the occasion to recognise the contribution of founding members Ron Walter, Jess Horder and Sophie Bowen. Since 1987, this dedicated association has changed the lives of people with disabilities in Griffith and surrounding areas. It has achieved this by providing access to safe and specially equipped horses to people with disabilities under the guidance of qualified coaches. The service operates three mornings a week and now has four coaches and a trainee coach on hand. Quality horses are accepted as donations, with the association only too happy to give the right horses a loving home. I thank members of the Griffith RDA for their commitment to the local community. They have enriched the lives of countless disabled people and their families.

HEFFRON ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT PAMELA RICHARDSON

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:33): I congratulate Ms Pamela Richardson of Mascot on her receipt of the Medal of the Order of Australia "for service to veterans and their families, and to the community of Mascot". Pam is a lifelong local, a Mascot hero, and a personal friend of more than 30 years. She is the sort of person who knits a community together and makes it a better place to live. Last year, I jumped at the chance to support Pam's nomination to the order. As I told the Governor-General, she is the first female president of Mascot RSL Sub-branch, she was the Heffron Woman of the Year in 2014, and she volunteers for countless charitable organisations, including St Vincent de Paul, Bayside Meals on Wheels, the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps, the NSW State Emergency Service Randwick Unit, her beloved St Therese Catholic Church, and our local public schools. Pam gives her all to these organisations. I congratulate Pam on her well-earned appointment to the Order of Australia.

BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:34): This morning I had the honour of officially opening the Australian Under 20 and Ivor Burge basketball championships, which are being held on the Central Coast over the next five days. In these two basketball competitions 27 teams from across Australia, and even a team from Japan, will play a total of 92 games. The Australian Under 20 and Ivor Burge basketball competitions have a distinguished history, stretching across many decades. In the next few days I look forward to witnessing even more history being made when I am able to attend some of the games. It was fantastic to be with the 200 participants and many hundreds of onlookers at this morning's official opening. I wish all players the best of luck. I am sure they will conduct themselves well, both on and off the court. Finally, I acknowledge the staff and local players at the Gosford City Basketball and Sports Stadium, including Matthew Skinner and Ian "Moose" Robilliard, for their hard work to ensure this competition is a huge success.

AUSTRALIA DAY WALKATHON

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:35): I congratulate the Australian Tamil Chamber of Commerce [ATCC] on its 2018 Australia Day Walkathon. For the past three years the ATCC has held an early morning Australia Day Walkathon from Toongabbie to Pendle. What a fantastic way to start Australia Day. The aim is to promote a healthy lifestyle and to raise funds for a cause. This year \$1,058 was raised for Diabetes NSW and ACT, last year \$1,500 was raised for the Heart Foundation, and in 2016 some \$5,000 was raised for Cancer Council NSW. I congratulate the organisers of this wonderful event, including Thiru Arumugam, Vindran Venkatachalam, Anita John and Lawrence Paulraj, on their fantastic work on behalf of a local Western Sydney community.

PONGAL FESTIVAL

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (13:35): My parliamentary colleagues and I look forward to attending the Tamil Arts and Culture Association celebration of the Pongal Festival 2018 at Parliament House. Pongal is a harvest festival dedicated to the sun. It is one of the most important celebrations in the Tamil calendar. It will be great to join my parliamentary colleagues in welcoming the Tamil Arts and Culture Association to the New South Wales Parliament. I also thank the organisers and helpers of the event. I know that everyone in attendance will contribute to a memorable evening. In particular, I congratulate Anagan Babu on his leadership.

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT JOZEFA SOBSKI

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:36): I extend my congratulations to the inspirational Jozefa Sobski who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. Jozefa was recognised for her work over many years in advancing the health, education and rights of thousands of women and girls across New South Wales. I am also proud of the work she has done in our community, including advancing the learning of language, her contribution to TAFE and standing up and advocating for our multicultural communities. She really is an inspiration to young women. I wish Jozefa all the best.

FND HOPE AUSTRALIA

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:37): Functional neurological disorder [FND] is a condition that was recently brought to my attention by Dr Kate Gill, president of FND Hope Australia and a constituent in my electorate. I understand from Dr Gill that FND was previously known as "conversion disorder"—a term used to describe a variety of disabling and distressing neurological symptoms such as severe muscle weakness, paralysis, seizures, involuntary movements, blackouts, speech and sensory problems. As the disorder is not properly recognised in Australia, except in Queensland, Dr Gill aims to raise its awareness to international levels. I wish Dr Gill well in her endeavours to raise awareness of FND in Australia, to advance relevant research, support affected individuals, and to have appropriate health treatment and care available for those who suffer from the condition.

INVASION DAY FAIR

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (13:38): I congratulate this year's Invasion Day Fair at Clarkes Beach in Byron Bay. Hundreds of people gathered to pay their respects to the Aboriginal people and the traditional custodians of the Byron Bay region, the Arakwal people. I joined Arakwal elder Delta Kay and members of our Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to engage with Aboriginal culture and history in a spirit of reconciliation and recognition of the terrible injustices of colonisation. Well done to the community organisers who supported the day.

REGENTVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:39): Over the past few weeks hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren returned for a new year of educational learning and adventure. Amongst those attending school this year is five-year-old Megan Boros. Megan will be the fifth member of the Boros household to attend Regentville Public School. Her four older brothers also started their school journey at this school. While Megan experienced the milestone of starting school this year, Regentville Public School is also experiencing a milestone this year: its 150th birthday. Another milestone for many families, as it is with the Boros family, is that this year is the year when the youngest child of a family commences school. As Megan Boros' father Anthony said, "It will feel a little bit emotional, as Megan is our last child to start school." I acknowledge the mixed emotions shared by parents, carers and students at the start of a new educational year and extend to little Megan and all other new school starters my very best for an inquisitive, fun and adventurous learning journey. I also wish a happy 150th birthday to Regentville Public School this year.

TRIBUTE TO WINNIE DUNN

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (13:40): I ask members of the House to join me in commending an exceptional young woman who is making a great contribution to the future of our community. Ms Winnie Dunn is a Tongan Australian proud of her heritage and of her hometown of Mount Druitt. A recent graduate of Western Sydney University, Ms Dunn has demonstrated her ability to be one of our great future leaders through her dedication to the organisation of Sweatshop. Ms Dunn has devoted much of her time to furthering the recognition of diversity as a positive societal characteristic. She continues to be a remarkable role model to those marginalised, with her main message being that the best story you can tell is your own. I thank Ms Dunn for her consistent hard work in the area of expanding diverse literature. I eagerly look forward to her future accomplishments.

WHEAT GROWERS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:41): I recognise Wallendbeen grain growers Michael and Natalie Wilkinson, who were announced the 2017 Agricultural Societies Council Suncorp Bank Championship field wheat and durum wheat competition State winners. Michael and Natalie lease and manage a property called Netherby for Stockinbingal Pastoral Co. The Wilkinsons won the competition, scoring 201 points for their Condo wheat. Second to the Wilkinsons in the southern region were Charlie and Rebecca Bragg of Landgrove, Cootamundra on 185 points using Condo. Third were Peter and Shannon Corbett of Springhill, Old Junee on 179 points using Gregory. This win by the Wilkinsons means Wallendbeen wheat growers continue to be among the State's best, with district farmers winning the State title seven times since 2000.

PENRITH ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (13:42): I congratulate the 2018 Penrith Australia Day award recipients who were recognised at the Australia Day Awards dinner at Penrith City Council on 23 January. I congratulate the North St Marys Matters team and Team Colyton on taking out the Penrith Community Group Award for their tremendous work with local residents to improve our local communities. I also congratulate OZWAC on winning the Penrith Community Organisation Award for its longstanding achievements in medical research philanthropy. I extend huge congratulations to Nicole Bridges, David Hancock, Myra Rodgers and Jim Riley for receiving local appreciation awards. They are all proud ambassadors of our community and have been rightly recognised. Of course the biggest congratulations must go to my great friend Michele Ellery, who I first met in 2014, for her tireless work advocating for victims of childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence. Michele's work with the Queen of Hearts Community Foundation is an inspiring story. I am proud of the fact that she is Penrith's 2018 Citizen of the Year.

TRIBUTE TO MR BRIAN PETSCHLER

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:43): I congratulate my good friend and former mayor and General Manager of Kiama Municipal Council, Brian Petschler, who has been awarded the title of emeritus mayor for his service to the local Kiama community. Mr Petschler served as a Kiama councillor for eight years, the last four as mayor. He was also Kiama's general manager from 1986 to 2001. As mayor, Brian was instrumental in working with me and the local Kiama community to stop any amalgamation of Kiama council. He also worked incredibly hard to see the redevelopment of the Kiama hospital site come to fruition. As general manager he also worked hard to realise projects such as the Kiama pavilion upgrade and the Kiama Library. I thank him for his distinguished service to our community and congratulate him on this achievement—I also congratulate his wonderful wife, Sue, without whom Brian's achievements would not have been possible. I also acknowledge another former mayor of Kiama Municipal Council, Sandra McCarthy, who was made an emeritus mayor in 2013 and worked with Councillor Petschler during his time as general manager.

CRONULLA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT PETER LEVETT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (13:43): I congratulate Superintendent Peter Levett of Caringbah South on receiving the Australian Fire Service Medal in the Australia Day honours list, the highest honour an Australian firefighter can receive. Mr Levett joined Fire and Rescue NSW in 1985 and retired last year after diligently serving the community for 32 years. His career culminated in the rank of superintendent and the position of manager of operational communications centres. He is particularly noted for his work to improve firefighter health and wellbeing. He was an integral member of the New South Wales multiagency team responsible for planning and preparing for possible outbreaks of swine flu and equine influenza. He served in a wide range of operational positions as well as specialised roles such as operational personnel, community engagement and communication centres, and at special event planning including State emergency operations in response to pandemic outbreak. He was instrumental in delivering new health monitoring initiatives and fostering career development for firefighters through the national and international firefighter exchange

program. I congratulate Mr Levett on his exemplary leadership, his commitment to the New South Wales community and his service against fire.

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:45): I congratulate all Australia Day award recipients at this year's Canterbury Bankstown local government area Australia Day ceremony. I congratulate Headspace Bankstown for winning the prestigious Organisation of the Year award for supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our region's youth. I also congratulate MD Islam, who received the Citizen of the Year award for his efforts in supporting the Bangladeshi migrant community and for launching a domestic violence support group in the area. The Young Citizen of the Year award went to Talia Smith. I congratulate her for her work in supporting refugees and asylum seekers at Villawood Immigration Detention Centre. I especially mention my good friend Kylie Wilkinson from Bankstown Jets Touch Association—about whom I have previously spoken in this Chamber—for her contribution to the Bankstown Canterbury Community Transport and her work as a volunteer throughout the Canterbury-Bankstown region. I particularly acknowledge her efforts with— [*Time expired.*]

CAVES BEACH SWANSEA AREA SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:46): I might be biased, but it is my strong view that the Swansea and Caves Beach area is one of the best places in which to live. One of the reasons this is so is because we are lucky to have the Caves Beach Swansea Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group, an organisation made up of hardworking volunteers who help to keep our coastline and our community clean. I am delighted this group received formal recognition at Lake Macquarie's recent Australia Day awards ceremony for one of its key projects in 2017. The sustainable neighbourhood group's inaugural Coast and Lake Marine Debris School Art Competition allowed the group to engage with young people and increase their participation in helping to protect our environment. More than 120 school students participated by creating thought-provoking artwork from items that were previously litter, coupled with a story about their experience. I congratulate the Caves Beach Swansea Sustainable Neighbourhood Group on its efforts and its well-deserved recognition.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): I shall now leave the chair until 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to Alice Dennison, who is a new member of the Department of Parliamentary Services Recruitment and Training team. I also welcome to the Chamber students from Macquarie University, who are accompanied by Dr Geoffrey Hawker.

Members

MEMBER FOR CABRAMATTA

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I take this opportunity to forward the best wishes of the House to the member for Cabramatta. He is in our thoughts. Everyone has been shocked by the situation he is facing, but I want him to know that we are all 100 per cent behind him and urge him to keep his chin up.

Question Time

WESTERN SYDNEY SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:24): I direct my question to the Minister for Education. Why do new schools in Western Sydney come without air conditioning while all the private suites in the Government's new stadiums come fully air-conditioned?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked a question. I would have thought Opposition members would want to hear the answer.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:25): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and his interest in public schools across the State. The Leader of the Opposition may not be aware that the Government is investing more money than any government in New South Wales' history. Over the next four years, \$4.2 billion will be spent on more than 120 new, relocated or upgraded schools that will provide accommodation for an additional 70,000 students across the State. The Leader of the Opposition may not be aware that the last time those opposite were in government we saw public school enrolments in a state of long-term sustained decline. Since this Government has come to office we have seen a sustained increase in public school enrolments.

That is something we should all be excited about. It is a terrific challenge, which is why we are investing unprecedented amounts of money to ensure that we have high-quality teaching and learning environments for the growing school populations across New South Wales. We are investing in great teaching and learning outcomes for the 66,000 teachers and support staff who work hard to ensure that young people in New South Wales public schools have the best possible start in life. I had the great honour to join the Premier and the member for Camden at the sod turning of Yandelora School in Narellan, which is a terrific new school.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Will that have air conditioning?

Mr ROB STOKES: Yes, that school is fully air-conditioned.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: The school, which the member for Camden advocated strongly for, is in an area of the State where air-conditioning is an important part of providing the right teaching and learning environment. I was also with the Premier when we had the great opportunity to open a school on Sydney's waterfront.

Mr Ryan Park: They'll need it!

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

Mr ROB STOKES: The school is in the electorate of the member for Auburn. Rose Manousaridis, who is a wonderful educator, has been appointed principal of the school. She has an incredible teaching legacy and, as the member for Lakemba would know, previously taught at Punchbowl Public School. She presented the Premier and I with a great book on the history of Sydney's sea eagles—a bird that is significant to members who represent the northern suburbs.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: That is a really interesting book but we are not interested.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jodi McKay: The point of order is with respect to Standing Order 129. The question was about air-conditioning in corporate boxes versus air-conditioning in schools.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr ROB STOKES: The member for Strathfield should be enormously excited about the investment in Homebush West Public School. There is already a pop-up school there to undergird the huge investment going into that school. With respect to that investment, the Government has also negotiated the purchase of an adjacent church building that was surplus to the needs of the Anglican Church. We bought that building so as to provide extra play space and extra performance space for the students at that wonderful public school.

JUVENILE JUSTICE COUNTERTERRORISM UNIT

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (14:30): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government tackling the issue of radicalisation in the State's Juvenile Justice centres?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30): I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I note what a serious issue this is. The question from the member for Wollondilly is about an issue that affects the community at large.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When the Minister for Counter Terrorism and I announced the Government's policy today we did so with a deep sense of regret, because this is not a policy that we wanted to have to bring in. We have had to institute this policy because of the times in which we live. In 2015 in our facilities there were no juveniles with links to terrorism or who had committed acts of terrorism; unfortunately, today there are five. Global trends and trends in Australia mean that we need to do everything we can to stem the tide of young people succumbing to radicalisation, committing acts on innocent victims in the community and then having to be detained.

I make the point that our first priority is to ensure that we prevent young people from feeling marginalised, and to ensure that they feel included. Diversionary policies in the community are always aimed at making sure that we prevent young people from adopting these dangerous views. Unfortunately, though, all too frequently we see families and individuals devastated in this State by acts committed by teenagers. The policy we

have announced today sets up a counterterrorism unit within our Juvenile Justice centres. It ensures that those young people who have been convicted on terrorism-related charges are monitored, appropriately added to the national register, and also prevented from imparting their extreme, inappropriate views to other detainees. I thank the Minister for Counter Terrorism for the work he has done on the whole-of-government approach to this issue.

There is no one solution that will allow us to deal with radicalisation, nor is there one thing that will prevent young people from becoming susceptible to it. But there is a series of things that we can do. I understand that what we announced today is new—not just to Australia but to the world—in addressing, one on one, those young people in detention centres who have succumbed to this heinous way of thinking. I thank all members of the community and all community leaders for supporting our Government in trying to reduce the incidence of extremism in the community. The Government uses opportunities like this to reach out and thank those community leaders who share our concerns and who go over and above what is required of them to make sure that our policies of social inclusion and harm minimisation—or, at least, ensuring young people are included in all aspects of society—are heading in the right direction.

Unfortunately, societies around the world have been unable to stem the tide of young people being radicalised. It has not brought the Government any great joy to have to announce the policy today but we have done so because the Government wants to protect the community and other people who might be in juvenile detention centres. Unfortunately, the trend in New South Wales and in Australia has also been seen across the world. We were pleased to be joined this morning by the Executive Director Juvenile Justice. Her team has been liaising with agencies across the world to make sure that what we are implementing in this State is regarded as global best practice.

Some of what the Government is doing is crossing uncharted territory, but we believe this one-on-one intervention and the provision of resources to Juvenile Justice to put in place the infrastructure requirements is necessary. It will mean monitoring telephone activity, visitors and interaction with other detainees, in addition to other measures. It will mean providing infrastructure relevant to the detention centres to ensure that this heinous act of radicalisation does not spread to other detainees. I stress that the Government's policy is to support the prevention of radicalisation and antisocial activity in the community. Unfortunately, there are too many young people succumbing to radicalisation. It causes this Government great concern that in 2015 there were no Juvenile Justice detainees in relation to proven acts of terrorism and now there are five. That number must be reduced to zero. *[Extension of time]*

When these young people are detained they must not be allowed to transfer their extreme views to others. Today's package will ensure that Juvenile Justice has the funds to implement these policies. There are ongoing discussions regarding aspects of the policy, but resources are available for infrastructure. All stakeholders can proceed with the confidence that this Government has community safety at heart and the resources to fund these decisions. I thank all of the community leaders throughout the State who have supported the Government in countering terrorism-related activity. The work is ongoing. I commend the Minister for Counter Terrorism and the Department of Juvenile Justice for introducing this policy. It is important policy and, unfortunately, a sign of the times in which we live.

SYDNEY SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGIONAL FUNDING

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:36): I direct a question to the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Leader of The Nationals, formerly the Country Party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the member have a question?

Mr RYAN PARK: Will the Minister explain to the communities of the Illawarra, South Coast, Monaro, Northern Rivers and Tweed how they benefit from the Government spending \$2.5 billion on stadiums in Sydney?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:37): I thank the member for Keira for his question and for recognising my portfolio of Regional New South Wales, as, for me, it is the most important portfolio. For the member's benefit, I will recap the funding budgeted by this Government for regional New South Wales. It includes \$1.3 billion for the 2017 Regional Growth Fund and \$300 million for the Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund, together with Restart NSW Fund, which adds up to \$9.1 billion of funding for regional areas.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. I spoke slowly, as I was addressing a Nationals member, but I will repeat that the question is about stadium allocation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will speak slowly for the member for Keira. There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am not sure if the member was casting a slur on my multicultural background or was implying that because of my public education I could not understand the question. The question was about areas such as the Tweed, which has received \$534 million for a new hospital. Let me recap: half a billion dollars has gone into this hospital in regional New South Wales. I am sick to death of talking about the Illawarra and watching Gareth Ward open road after road and highway after highway, championing his wins to the people of the Illawarra. Labor members in the area are lucky to have a Parliamentary Secretary and a local member such as Gareth Ward who is delivering for the broader region. In last years budget, the Monaro electorate was allocated a \$70 million roads package and more than \$120 million was invested in the Kings Highway.

Almost \$100 million has been invested in new school infrastructure in the Monaro. Monaro High School received \$20 million, Jindabyne Central School \$9 million, Braidwood Central School \$9 million, and Queanbeyan East Public School \$9 million. This year the education Minister has committed to building a school for specific purposes. It is the first time Queanbeyan will have a school dedicated to the most vulnerable kids in the Monaro. Previously these students had to cross the border. Karabar High School and Queanbeyan High School will each receive \$5 million. The distance education centre, which is due to open later this year, received \$17 million. Those opposite have opposed the decisions of members on this side of the House, including the sale of the poles and wires, which have unlocked a record investment in regional New South Wales. This Government has provided the community with an \$81 billion infrastructure spend, and 30 per cent of it is being spent in regional New South Wales.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Orders 59 and 129, relevance. The question was specific: What are people in regional New South Wales getting from this Government splurging \$2.5 billion on stadiums in Sydney?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the member for Campbelltown for reminding me about what is happening in regional New South Wales. He is benefiting from a \$630 million investment in Campbelltown Hospital. He should be saying, "Thank you." We have heard nothing from him. I am sure I will be asked a question later today about the Stronger Country Communities Fund or the \$1.3 billion Regional Growth Fund which has provided for local amenities and sports infrastructure that are being built in regional New South Wales right now. Opposition members have opposed every fiscal measure introduced by this Government over the past seven years, which have seen this State not only balance its budget but also achieve a record \$81 billion infrastructure spend, a fair share of which is going to regional New South Wales.

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (14:42): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. What is the New South Wales Government doing to keep communities safe, and are there any related matters?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (14:42): I thank the member for Miranda for that wonderful question. Like all members on this side of the House, she sees community safety as one of our core responsibilities. We take community safety extremely seriously. We have seen 20-year lows in the crime statistics. We have seen 16 of the 17 major crime indicators stabilise or fall over the past 24 months. We have seen all-time highs in the recruitment of police and emergency services workers. We have seen record spending by this Government on the police and justice system.

This Government is constantly looking for appropriate new ways to protect the people of New South Wales. We know that our police and Corrective Services staff work extremely hard to protect our community. This Government is always looking for appropriate new levers to build on their hard work. We have recently reformed the High Risk Offenders Scheme, which ensures that the community is protected from the most serious sex and violent offenders. Those reforms came into effect last December. Through these reforms the Government is ensuring that the risk to the community of these serious sex and violent offenders is lowered by continuing detention or supervising them in our community.

The reforms mean community safety is now the paramount consideration of the court when considering whether to make a continuing detention order or an extended supervision order upon an offender. The reforms mean broadening the eligibility of offenders for post-sentence supervision and detention to future risk, not just of serious sex offenders or serious violent offenders, but combines serious sex and violent offenders. The reforms mean that fresh applications that an Attorney General makes to the Supreme Court for post-sentence orders can now capture more high-risk offenders and better protect our community. The reforms mean that Corrective

Services can manage these offenders better, with a regime of stringent supervision conditions, including electronic monitoring, restrictions on offenders' movements, regular reporting and participation in rehabilitation programs.

One of the levers that the Government introduced last year was expanding the High Risk Offenders Scheme to include terrorism offenders. New South Wales has led the country in strong, measured approaches to fight terrorism in this country. What have we done? Before those laws, we moved quickly to clarify police powers at the time of a terrorist incident to give legal protections to police officers who need to use legal force against terrorists during an incident. We moved quickly to tighten pre-charge investigative detention by extending the pre-charge investigative detention period to a maximum of 14 days for persons suspected to have been involved in an act of terror either past or in planning to give the police sufficient time to build a brief of evidence and question the suspected individual.

We have moved quickly to tighten bail laws to make it clear that an alleged terrorism-related offender only gets bail in exceptional circumstances. We moved quickly to tighten parole laws to make it clear that terrorism-related offenders, and those offenders who have links to terrorism, will not get parole unless the State Parole Authority is satisfied that they will not be engaged in terrorist acts or incite terrorist activity. Late last year we moved to introduce a new regime of post-sentence detention and supervision for terrorist offenders. Under this new scheme in the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017, the Supreme Court can impose orders for continued detention, or extended supervision, for up to three years against an offender who poses an unacceptable risk of committing a terrorist offence at the end of their sentence.

We have closed a loophole in post-detention laws so that no matter what offence a person might be in jail for, if they pose a risk of terrorism in the community the Supreme Court can order their detention or ongoing supervision. The previous scheme did not capture offenders convicted of New South Wales terrorism charges, convicted of terrorism-related offences like firearms or who may have become radicalised in jail. As the Premier said, these sorts of laws are a matter of great regret. It is regrettable that in the twenty-first century in modern society we have to do these things, but doing these things should give the people of New South Wales confidence that this Government will continue to adapt to the evolving threat of terrorism and do everything that it reasonably can to keep the community safe. We are leading the way in keeping the community safe. Why? Because we are led by the best Premier in the country. [*Extension of time*]

We are led by Australia's greatest Premier, who is leading the way on record investment in frontline services, education, health, transport and roads. We are not only investing in the bricks and mortar of infrastructure or frontline service delivery with teachers, firemen, policemen and so on but also attending to the core government responsibility of keeping our community safe. We are a government that will leave no stone unturned in doing everything we reasonably can to keep New South Wales safe.

HOSPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:48): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. Given that 1,742 patients are on the dental list of Tweed Hospital, many of whom are unable to eat fresh vegetables or wholegrains due to ill-fitting dentures, why is the Minister squandering \$2.5 billion on stadiums instead of investing in local hospitals?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:49): I thank the member for Port Stephens for her question. I am not sure whether she heard the response to the last question and read the budget papers where we have committed \$534 million for a brand-new greenfield site for Tweed Hospital. We are planning for the growth of that region—which is expected to grow to about 125,000 people—and helping out our Queensland cousins, who will be coming across the border to a world-class \$534 million hospital. The member for the Tweed is 100 per cent for the Tweed, and he has championed to make sure that the people in his electorate are looked after.

I mentioned \$534 million for Tweed Hospital, but the Government's total health budget and capital expenditure for 2017-18 was \$23.28 billion. That will see investment across the State improving health services and health delivery for regional communities. One needs to look at our track record—not only what we are promising going forward, but also what has happened over the past seven years—to see our commitment to health. I often hear the member for Dubbo talk about hundreds of millions of dollars—he will probably give me an exact number in a minute—of investment in the electorate of Dubbo. Those ministers who have the opportunity and pleasure of being hosted by the member for Wagga Wagga drive past the Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital. It is a hospital one would expect to see in metropolitan Sydney but it is based in regional New South Wales. We are making sure we deliver first-class health services to regional communities with a significant investment of hundreds of millions of dollars.

I ask those on this side of the Chamber—and those honest members on the other side—to put their hands up if their electorate has received an investment in health services over the past seven years. I see the hands, testament to that investment. The member for Dubbo had to put up two hands and both his legs because of the investment he has seen. Even in seats such as Orange there has been significant investment in health services. One thing the Government cannot be accused of is not caring for regional communities. Since being elected, and with the support of The Nationals under the stewardship and leadership of the Hon. Andrew Stoner, the Hon. Troy Grant, and now myself, this Government has delivered in spades for regional New South Wales. It has delivered roads, schools, rail, hospitals and, most importantly, the local amenities that make a difference—a playground upgrade, a footpath upgrade, a change room upgrade. I will speak more about that in relation to the Stronger Country Communities Fund, which partners with local government and delivers amenities at a grassroots level—and which makes a real difference for our regional communities.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite play politics with our regional communities, but those communities can see through their politics and their rubbish. They can see that those opposite do not care about regional New South Wales—not because of what we are telling them, but because they are comparing our delivery against what Labor left, or did not leave, leading into the 2011 election. We remember their decision to withdraw money from regional New South Wales to shore up inner-city seats for the Labor Party—which failed. The rise of The Greens in the New South Wales Parliament is because those opposite neglected their own seats and regional New South Wales. On the eve of what Labor will call a campaign year, Labor members are talking about stuff that they will do. The problem with Labor is it cannot be believed because of its track record. Next year's election is a long way away.

Labor members should brace themselves, because this year's budget will be Labor's greatest nightmare. Why? Because we have a fantastic Premier and Treasurer making sure the books are in the black, which means we can continue to deliver for our communities, especially those in regional New South Wales. One thing The Nationals are very proud of is the delivery of infrastructure and services in regional New South Wales—not because we want a plaque on a building or because it is all about bricks and mortar, but because it is about changing the way we live and attracting families to the regions. When we upgrade or seal a road it is about making sure that the school bus gets to school and home safely each day. When we invest in health delivery it means families do not have to travel hundreds of kilometres to a city centre to access services. I will not be lectured to by members opposite who on their watch left regional New South Wales behind.

HEALTH SERVICES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:54): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that there are 4,362 patients, most of whom are children, waiting to have their tonsils removed, how can the Premier justify to their parents her decision to lavish \$2.5 billion on Sydney stadiums instead of providing for their children's surgery?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:55): Our Government has spent more on health services and infrastructure than any other government in the history of this State. Madam Speaker, the member for Maitland should say thank you for the new hospital she is getting in her electorate.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: Could you please direct the Premier to address you by your correct title and not "Madam Speaker"?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That point of order shows that the member is embarrassed about the question she has asked. She should say thank you for the \$430 million we are spending on a new hospital in Maitland because her party did not do it while in government for 16 years. We are now delivering for their electorates because they never could. Madam Speaker, every time we wanted to recycle an asset to raise money to spend in the bush or their electorates they said no.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is a slight on you when the Premier calls you "Madam Speaker". I stand with my colleague the member for Maitland.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I can cope with it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, for the first time in this State's history we have no debt and we have billions to invest in our communities. Members opposite left us debt and deficit. We are rebuilding New South Wales from the ground up.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I ask that you stop the clock because this will clearly be a spurious point of order.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I asked about the 4,362 tonsillectomies that are required in this State but are not being funded because the Premier wants to spend \$2.5 billion on stadiums in Sydney, which will not help any constituents in regional areas.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier is speaking generally.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As an aside, the Minister for Health has confirmed to me that we now have the shortest waiting times for clinical services in the State's history. But I have digressed from the question about infrastructure that the member asked. Since we have been in government we have made record levels of investment in schools, hospitals, transport and roads. This Government invests in all parts of our community because only Liberal and Nationals members know how to have a budget in surplus and how to raise money. When members opposite were in government they not only left this State in rack and ruin but also dashed the hopes of every citizen.

The current Government has ensured the State's future for years and years to come. This Government spends \$23 billion a year on health, which is a massive increase on the Labor Government's spending each year, and \$7.7 billion on infrastructure. In conclusion I make the point in the context of infrastructure that in the Labor Government's last budget, education infrastructure received a funding boost of \$270 million. Last year the Coalition Government allocated a boost of \$2.2 billion to education infrastructure—in one budget—which is 10 times Labor's record in government.

Mr Ryan Park: That was through Building the Education Revolution [BER].

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Keira should examine the facts. In the next four years the Government plans to have a record \$80 billion infrastructure spend, a third of which will go to rural and regional areas of New South Wales, a third of which will go to Western Sydney, and a third of which will go to other parts of the State. Labor Opposition members should hang their heads in shame because the current Government has delivered what the Labor Government could not deliver in 16 years. I can tell the people of New South Wales that there is more to come. We are just getting warmed up.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:00): My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will he update the House on the progress of the New South Wales economy? Are there any alternative approaches?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (15:00): I thank the member for North Shore for her question. I must say it is great to be back in the House. I could not think of a better place to be than back in the House with everyone. But, Madam Speaker, I also must say on the topic of great starts to the year, we cannot go past New South Wales.

Ms Jodi McKay: Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Strathfield is right and I apologise. It is a bad habit. Mr Deputy Speaker, for the fourth straight year, New South Wales starts the year in poll position. The recent CommSec State of the State report declares that "NSW has retained the position as the best performing economy for the 14th straight quarter". That report is by economists and the shadow Treasurer would call it a very serious report. I welcome the shadow Treasurer back to the House. Welcome back, Ryan. I am sure it will be a very, very big year—just not for you. The State begins the year with budget surpluses, record infrastructure and negative net debt while cutting taxes and having the lowest unemployment rate in the country. New South Wales is the Holy Grail of economic management, Madam Speaker.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Deputy Speaker is male.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is only a Liberal-Nationals Government that can deliver it, Madam Speaker.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot let this go on: Mr Deputy Speaker is male and I am female—male, female; male, female.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Mr Deputy Speaker, if the only real interjection Opposition members can make relates to your gender, about which I am always happy to back you, that point of order indicates the quality of Opposition members. The difference between the current Government and Labor governments is that the Liberal-Nationals Government always provides the right conditions in which businesses can flourish. Why is that important? It means more jobs, more investment and more economic activity. Let the record show that time and again the Labor Party has stood against every measure to balance the budget, grow the economy and improve the lives of people across New South Wales. Despite that, on the second day of the Parliament's sitting, the Labor Opposition criticises the Government for delivering too much infrastructure. We know the Government is doing well when the only criticism Labor makes is that the Government is doing too much—too many hospitals, too many schools.

The Government has achieved record infrastructure across the board. Labor Opposition members cannot understand that because Labor never built anything. Labor embarks upon infrastructure projects by announcing them and then cancelling them. In contrast to that, the Liberal-Nationals Government is building infrastructure across the board in every part of the State, and Government members will always be proud of that record. The reality is that the Labor Party cannot build infrastructure. If we had a Labor government, we would have budget deficits, no infrastructure, high taxes, record debt, zero investment, fewer jobs, businesses going under and, importantly, families across New South Wales struggling to make ends meet. Why is that? It is because Labor governments always stand in the way of economic prosperity for everyone. In contrast, as the Premier and the Deputy Premier said earlier, this Government's pioneering approach to asset recycling—

Mr Ryan Park: Sell, sell, sell!

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Members opposite say, "Sell, sell, sell!" This State's net worth has grown to almost \$250 billion because of the Government's asset recycling policies. Members opposite do not understand that. Whether it is the President of the United States, members of Congress, economic think tanks or universities, people around the world are looking to New South Wales to see how to deliver infrastructure. They know about the obstructionist policies of members opposite, who always resort to debt, deficit and destruction. *[Extension of time]*

That is why New South Wales is seen as the gold standard for economic excellence. While people around the world are learning from the Liberal Party and The Nationals about asset recycling, the Labor Party should learn from the United States when it comes to cutting taxes. To its eternal shame, the Labor Party opposes the policies that have transformed this State and is questioning the Government about how it spends money. That money would never have existed under members opposite. Their Federal colleagues in Canberra oppose tax cuts for businesses and middle-income families.

As we have seen in the United States, families and workers are the winners when business taxes are cut. Since the United States cut its business tax rates, more than 180 companies have increased wages. FedEx has allocated \$200 million to wage increases, Washington Federal has increased wages by 5 per cent, Walmart has increased its minimum wage, and Disney, Comcast and the Bank of America have all given \$1,000 to hundreds of thousands of employees. Wages have increased by 3 per cent, 10 million jobs have been created, and unemployment is at its lowest rate in 17 years. Who is blocking that potential economic prosperity in Australia? It is the Labor Party. The only thing Labor stands for is obstructing economic growth. The number one impediment to the prosperity of this great country is the Labor Party and its recalcitrant opposition to policies that work.

STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUND

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:08): I address my question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is the New South Wales Government's \$200 million Stronger Country Communities Fund changing the lives of people in rural and regional New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:08): I thank the member for Tamworth for that great question about how the Government is making regional areas stronger and safer, and, more importantly, a fantastic place to raise a family, to find a job and to call home. There is probably no greater city in regional New South Wales than Tamworth, which is on the rise because of this Government's increased investment. Its population will probably soon grow to more than 100,000 because of that investment, which is driving growth and, more importantly, creating a city of which people can be proud. In my previous answers to questions today I have talked about the important investment in the big projects—hospitals, schools, railways—as part of this Government's \$81 billion investment in infrastructure. I call it "enabling" infrastructure because it changes the landscape, grows the economy, and creates the cities and jobs we so deserve in regional New South Wales.

We also have the small on-the-ground projects—improving playgrounds, fixing footpaths, upgrading amenities at local football fields—that our communities love and deserve. That is why in last year's budget the Government announced the \$200 million Stronger Country Communities Fund to support our fantastic local communities. I call it the sausage sizzle program. Why? How many sausage sizzles does a community group need to run to raise \$10,000, \$50,000 or \$500,000? It could also be a lamington drive or whatever charity drive local community groups undertake to ensure the delivery of local amenities. Labor members will call it pork-barrelling because they do not believe our communities deserve any investment.

Mr Clayton Barr: It is.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That is their track record. If those opposite actually read the guidelines they would know that under the Stronger Country Communities Fund every local government area will get a fair share—that investment is also in regional Labor electorates. The member for Cessnock should be praising this Government for the investment in his electorate. Why? We on this side of the House care about the people of Cessnock. It is not just about investing in the big projects in the cities; it is about investing in the local amenities that our communities deserve. For example, as part of the \$11 million funding in the first round it was recently announced that the Warren Shire will receive \$568,000 to upgrade the Macquarie Park playground equipment. This will ensure that community park is safe for everyone to use. Why is that important? The Government wants to ensure that the amenities built in our regional communities are safe and accessible. We are investing not only for this generation but also for the next generation. Pathways were also damaged in Warren as a result of flooding; an investment is being made there too.

It is well known that bringing communities together in regional New South Wales is good for social harmony—towns, families and sporting groups. As I said, the upgrade of the Macquarie Park playground will provide a safe play environment for the children and the parents will come together. Gilgandra has been allocated funding of \$500,000 to attract recreational vehicles [RVs]. The town of Gilgandra sits on the junction of the Newell, Oxley and Castlereagh highways. We know how important it is for tourism to attract RVs to the region—it contributes around \$40 million to the economy, 630-plus direct jobs and 60-plus indirect jobs. More importantly, we want to make sure that this infrastructure investment is safe and that we deliver for the people of Gilgandra. In the first round of this funding Tamworth in the Gunnedah Shire received \$850,000 to construct an inclusive playground at Wolseley Park. This will provide access to children and adults of all ages and abilities. What a fantastic playground. [*Extension of time*]

Any member who has had an opportunity to partner with the Touched by Olivia Foundation will know that these inclusive playgrounds allow all children and families to enjoy the amenities. At Jindabyne I used Community Building Partnership funding to partner with the Touched by Olivia Foundation to deliver an important amenity for some of the most vulnerable kids in our community. I am proud of that. I am also proud that the \$200 million Stronger Country Communities Fund being delivered by this Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government is changing amenities for everybody. Everyone in the small parts of the State and in the large cities deserve their fair share. This Government is delivering in spades. This is always about making sure we deliver the stuff that matters. Over the next weeks and months we will continue to hear announcements by members of the House about that investment in regional communities.

Yes, I want to make sure that we have the best amenities, that we have cities and towns that are growing, that our kids are safe, that our communities are stronger, that we are attracting people from the city and that we are building cities and towns for the future, but most importantly I want to make sure we support our families. As I said earlier, when we build infrastructure it is easy to put a plaque up at an opening—but what does that infrastructure actually mean? For all of us, we want safer communities. We want to make sure that when you travel on a country road you get home safely each and every night. We want to know if you get caught out in a regional area that you have connectivity through our Mobile Black Spot Program—we have already seen 186 towers committed. We want to make sure that in our schools our kids are not disadvantaged because they have chosen to live in regional New South Wales, and we want to see that investment. Most importantly I want to continue with my members to deliver the local amenities—the small projects—that make a real difference.

NEWCASTLE AND LAKE MACQUARIE BUS SERVICES

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:15): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. With the introduction of new bus timetables and routes in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area clearly impacting negatively on many existing users, will the Minister intervene to have Newcastle Transport reinstate those important services that were cut?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:16): I thank the member for his question. I cannot believe that people are being critical of a transport network that is delivering an additional 1,000 services to the people of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. I have heard enough and I would

expect it from the Labor Party, proudly sponsored by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU], but I would say this: We took a very deliberate decision to franchise the entire transport network of Newcastle—the buses, the ferry services, the interchange and the light rail. Why? Because the network was experiencing declining patronage and people were not using transport. I have some preliminary information about how things are going, which I will reveal in due course. It makes sense to go to the community to get feedback as the new operator has done. And there was feedback in the hundreds—it was not 10 people giving feedback. Approximately 33 per cent of the network has been redesigned in response to that community feedback.

What that means is more than 1,000 additional and new services. What it means is better connections with other modes of transport. What it also means is increased frequencies on core routes. The member for Lake Macquarie knows that, because there is evidence of that in his electorate. Weekend and late-night travel are also part of the mix. We have revisited the way in which the service network was working—and we found that it was failing. Those opposite know that patronage was declining. As a result, we have now made the changes with our new operator, who is incentivised to do that. I know the aversion of those opposite to the private sector being involved in the delivery of public transport services, but the reality is—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: It's a disaster.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —that we have a 10-year contract in place to get the results. I note the interjection from the member for Newcastle, who was in the Chamber yesterday asking a smart alec question. I asked my staff to pick up the phone to ring Access Industries, because he said that that enterprise was severely impacted. I told him that I would—

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order: It is relevance. The question was specifically in relation to whether the Minister would reinstate services. It is a simple question. It is a yes or no answer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister is answering the question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In response to that interjection, I am not going to reinstate services. I have enhanced services by more than 1,000 to the people of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. That is silly. Coming back to the point, you said that this business was severely impacted, and I have subsequently found out—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Will you ask the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order? I missed it because I thought the member for Strathfield said "Madam Speaker" and I did not know who she was talking to.

Ms Jodi McKay: I did not.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jodi McKay: I ask that the Minister direct his comments through the Chair and stop referring to the member directly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The point that I had intended to make is that in response to that question yesterday, members of my staff contacted Access Industries. A number of its clients now have to interchange. There is a bus stop outside the front door of that business and there is also a train station five minutes away. What I do not accept is you coming in here and asking those types of questions when I came to you yesterday and could not get an answer out of you as to what the problem was. I have had to proactively deal with that. Those opposite are deliberately trying to denigrate the new system in Newcastle.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: Apart from the fact that the Minister is still flouting your ruling—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order? The Minister directed his comments to the Chair.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Minister is directing his comment directly to the member. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It is appalling that the Minister spoke yesterday about his focus on disability and yet has had that to say today.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the s time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is a matter of record. To the member for Strathfield, I feel sorry for you because you have performed all week and you have not done yourself any favours. Coming back to the answer that—

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

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order: I ask that the Minister direct his question through the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It is not a question; it is an answer. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I feel sorry for the crossbench because their time is being wasted by the Labor Party. The member for Lake Macquarie stole a seat from Labor and 10 years later they are a bit sore about it. I would say to him that the new timetable has come in. Let us see how it goes. I am happy to meet with him. We have set a time to discuss a couple of issues. We cannot deliver a new timetable and be all things to all people. What we had under Labor was empty running—just like the member for Newcastle.

PUBLIC SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:22): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government investing in our public school system?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (15:23): I thank the member for Manly for his excellent question and his great advocacy on behalf of his incredible community. It was great to be with the member for Manly and the Premier at the opening of the new Harbord Public School under the famous leadership of Craig Davis. The school has 18 new future-focused classrooms and a new library. These great new and permanent facilities are part of an incredible school community in one of the largest public schools in the State. There is a lot happening in the Manly electorate to name just one. Manly Vale Public School has been vastly re-envisioned under the leadership of Tina Lee to double its capacity and serve a growing community in the lower part of the Northern Beaches. Curl Curl North Public School is another great local public school that is meeting this great challenge of expanding enrolment.

I already have spoken at some length about the scale of the State's capital investment in public schools across New South Wales. We will invest a record \$4.2 billion over the next four years. To put that in context, that is 120 new projects and, with existing projects, more than 200 projects across the State. The scale of this investment is unprecedented. It is a vast job and a vast challenge because we have the problem of increasing enrolments in New South Wales public schools, which is due to the great work that our teachers are doing and the huge confidence there is in the quality of education in New South Wales. This State has never seen such investment in public education. We are responding to a once-in-a-generation spike in student enrolments, which are projected to grow by 21 per cent—or 164,000 students—by 2031.

I have spoken already about the new schools that are under way, such as Yandelora, and the new Wentworth Point Public School just opened. A week or so ago, with the Premier, I had the opportunity to visit the new pop-up school in Wentworth Park in the great electorate of the member for Balmain. That school has been designed carefully within the park in consultation with the school community. We are extremely lucky that the school community is led by Saul Deane, a very distinguished landscape architect and architect, who has been very helpful in galvanising this consensus between the school, the local community and the principal, Nic Accaria, who is doing an incredible job at Ultimo. We have effectively transplanted that school community across Wattle Street into the park while we redevelop Ultimo Public School.

The great people at architectural firm DesignInc are listening to the local community and making sure that there are facilities that meet the needs of not only the next generation of students but also the local community, recognising that our public schools are a cornerstone not just of school communities but of local communities. We want to do everything we can to listen to the needs of surrounding communities and respond to those needs to ensure that schools are, wherever possible, available to everybody in the community. Another example of the pop-up schools that we will have to have while we are transitioning to building all these new schools is Russell Lea Public School in the electorate of the very hirsute member for Drummoyne. That school has a wonderful principal in Lesley Pike, an incredible educator who has been at the school for 41 years. We are rebuilding the school, and the member for Drummoyne and I had the opportunity to see the new pop-up buildings that have been placed there.

Another example is Rainbow Street Public School in the electorate of the great member for Coogee—which I understand is Russell Crowe's old school. The school is being redeveloped again and a pop-up school will be installed in the grounds while those redevelopment works are under way. But we are not just developing new schools. We have a real concern about the quality of the buildings and the built environment for the existing cohort of students and want to ensure that those buildings are in the best condition possible. This week new figures were

released in relation to planned maintenance in our schools. I am pleased to report that the cost of maintenance has been reduced by about a quarter over the past year or so, from about \$775 million to just over \$570 million. *[Extension of time]*

There is still a big challenge in dealing with backlog maintenance issues—when we have more than \$25 billion worth of assets it presents a pretty significant maintenance challenge. We are meeting that challenge head on, and it is great to see a significant reduction in backlog maintenance works across our schools. Members returning to work will have seen the huge amount of work that was done over the school holidays—\$110 million was spent on dealing with maintenance works at our schools so that tens of thousands of students would return to school and see the great-quality built environments as a result of those improvements. We recognise there is a big challenge ahead—it is a challenge for every government—but this Government has a clear plan and we are seeing the results of that plan.

Our school enrolments are bigger than ever before and are increasing steadily. At the same time, we have more and more school buildings, with more than 690 permanent classrooms already built by this Government. So we have more and more buildings to maintain yet our maintenance challenge is getting smaller and smaller because of the hard work and diligent financial management of the great people in School Infrastructure NSW. It is an enormous privilege to work with every member of this House in supporting our school communities. Our incredible teachers do a wonderful job and deserve the support of this House. One of the things we can do is ensure that the built environment in which they work is of the highest quality that we can provide. That is why we have an unprecedented building capital works program and an unprecedented figure of \$747 million over the next four years to deal with this real challenge in relation to planned maintenance.

Members

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: It is with great pleasure that I inform the House that on 30 January 2018 the Hon. Catherine Eileen Cusack, MLC, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Digital Inclusion.

Ministerial Statement

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:31): By leave: I make a brief ministerial statement to commemorate the ascension of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, by the grace of God, Queen of Australia and her other realms and territories, and head of the Commonwealth. On 6 February 1952—just over 66 years today—Her Majesty ascended the throne on the death of her father, His Imperial Majesty King George VI. On that occasion it was former New South Wales Premier and then Governor-General Sir William McKell upon whom it fell to announce this news to the world. He declared:

The Commonwealth of Australia and members of the Federal Executive Council do now hereby, with one voice and consent of tongue and heart, publish and proclaim that the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary is now, by the death of our late Sovereign of happy memory, become Queen Elizabeth the Second ...

And he continued. Today is a great day in celebrating the ascension of Her Majesty. Together with the rest of this House, we send our very best wishes to Her Majesty. It was a great declaration by Sir William McKell and a wonderful reminder of the uniting spirit of the monarchy. God save the Queen.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:32): I thank the Leader of the House for his ministerial statement and say: Enough is enough. It is time for a referendum on Australia becoming a republic.

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

Personal Explanation

DISABILITY SERVICES

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (15:33): By leave: I seek leave to make a personal explanation. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure accused me of asking silly questions. On Monday I was approached by Access Disability, an organisation that represents over 100 disabled people, to talk about transport issues and the disadvantage being experienced by disabled people as a result of the new timetable that has been implemented by the transport Minister. Disabled people have been badly affected. Some have been unable to get to work and are losing money. They have been extremely disadvantaged by the new timetable. For the Minister to say I am asking silly questions when I am representing the people of Newcastle is an absolute disgrace.

*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**.

Night-time Economy and Public Transport

Petition requesting Government support for small bars and late-night music venues and the provision of all-night public transport, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Companion Animals on Public Transport

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

Summer Hill Electorate Bus Routes

Petition opposing the removal of bus stops along the 412, 422, 423, 426 and 428 bus routes, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Inner West Bus Services

Petition opposing the privatisation of inner west bus services, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Sussex Inlet Community Church

Petition requesting an investigation into the sale of the Sussex Inlet Community Church and calling for protection of community land used by churches, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Plastic Bags

Petition requesting the banning of plastic bags in New South Wales, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

McNeilly Park

Petition opposing the closure of McNeilly Park, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

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

Brisbane Water Channel

Petition requesting the funding of a long-term dredging solution for Brisbane Water Channel, received from **Ms Liesl Tesch**.

*Business of the House***BOWEL CANCER AWARENESS****Reordering**

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:35): I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notices) given by me this day [Bowel Cancer Awareness] have precedence on Thursday 8 February 2018.

Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of death and the second most common cancer in Australia and New South Wales. In 2004, there were 1,750 deaths from bowel cancer in New South Wales, which accounted for 12.4 per cent of all deaths from cancer in New South Wales. The rate of bowel cancer deaths in New South Wales has decreased over the past 10 years, but it could decrease further if all people aged between 50 and 74 participated in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. Up to 90 per cent of bowel cancers can be successfully treated if they are detected early. An early diagnosis also means that treatment can be less invasive. Bowel cancer often develops without any early warning signs.

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program uses a faecal occult blood test to collect samples of bowel motions, which are analysed to detect tiny traces of blood that are invisible to the naked eye. The screen tests cannot diagnose bowel cancer but the results indicate whether a further test is needed. Bowel screening involves testing for bowel cancer in people who do not have any obvious symptoms of the disease. The aim is to find the cancers early when they are easier to treat and cure. Bowel Cancer Australia is a non-government, charitable organisation dedicated to prevention, early diagnosis, research, treatment and care for everyone affected by bowel

cancer. Bowel Cancer Australia is responding to a new report that shows that many people in Australia have low levels of awareness about bowel cancer and the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program.

Throughout February, Bowel Cancer Australia is reminding people to take advantage of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program's free faecal occult blood test when it is sent to them every two years. The New South Wales Government, through the Cancer Institute NSW, will be conducting its own bowel cancer screening awareness campaign between April and June in preparation for Bowel Cancer Awareness Month in June. In Australia and New South Wales, too few people are participating in bowel cancer screening—approximately 39 per cent overall. Men have a lower participation rate than women, with approximately 37 per cent of men and 41 per cent of women taking advantage of the free national program. There are measures everyone can take to reduce their risk of getting bowel cancer, such as quitting smoking, drinking alcohol in moderation, maintaining a healthy body weight, being active and eating healthily. But the most important thing for everyone between the ages of 50 and 74 is to participate in bowel cancer screening.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:38): When the Government announced that it was going to privatise Newcastle Buses and Ferries there was scepticism in the community. The community believed that a privatised model would cut services and put profits before people. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure tried to hose that down by promising the community a world-class transport system. When the Minister said, "We will deliver a world-class transport system that you deserve," did he include in his definition of "world-class transport system" the situation of Kimberley, a mum with a brand new baby, who has been left stranded and isolated by Newcastle Buses? There is not one bus on her route that has wheelchair access.

When the Minister talked about a "world-class transport system", was he referring to the situation faced by Mr Walters, an 89-year-old man from Marks Point, who was forced to walk home from Belmont in the dark because the Minister signed off on reduced operating hours? Perhaps the Minister was referring to a situation such as that faced by Warren, a vision-impaired man from Eleebana, who is expected to get three buses, and who, even with a taxi subsidy, would spend up to \$300 a week to get to work. Dwayne is an intellectually disabled man from Redhead whose best option to get to work on time, according to the Government's Trip Planner, is to leave the night before. A blind couple who lived in Adamstown had to sell their house because the bus stop at the front of their home was removed. Thirty-seven students from Callaghan College Wallsend campus were left stranded. Parents and teachers had to drive them home.

As we now know, the Minister's shallow words amount to either a lie or a broken promise because we have poor connections, longer journey times, a more inconvenient service and reduced operating hours. People with disability, workers, and students have been forgotten. The elderly, the frail and the most vulnerable have all been forgotten. Just this morning I spoke to a woman from Nords Wharf whose adult daughter Clancey has an intellectual disability. For years, Clancey travelled from Swansea to Hamilton on the 350 bus but she is now forced to travel on the school bus. What dignity does that afford her? Government members should be ashamed of themselves that a disabled woman now has to travel on a school bus with schoolchildren. Where is the Minister? He has skulked out of the Chamber—I knew he would—because members are hearing the facts, not his fake stories. As members of Parliament, we come to this place to improve the lives of the people we represent. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure should not be a Minister of the Crown. He is not fit to hold that position.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the notice of motion standing in the name of the member for Myall Lakes have precedence on Thursday 8 February 2018.

The House divided.

Ayes48
Noes38
Majority..... 10

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M

AYES

Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Williams, Mr R

Petinos, Ms E
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Provest, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 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
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 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
 Finn, Ms J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D (teller)
 Park, Mr R
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Donato, Mr P
 Foley, Mr L
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T F
 Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G
 Gibbons, Ms M

Haylen, Ms J
 Lalich, Mr N

Motion agreed to.*Motions Accorded Priority***WATER SECURITY****Consideration**

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (15:47): My motion regarding water security across New South Wales should be accorded priority for three reasons. First, it is important to see how governments and leaders within the community prepare for and respond to climatic change. The second reason is the Think Big campaign. With the support of the community and industry, the Liberal-Nationals Government is thinking big and restoring infrastructure that for too long was neglected by those opposite. The third reason is job security, which this Government has shored up by buying local product. This Government is using local Australian steel product from the Illawarra to construct iconic infrastructure. It is setting an example for States and Territories across Australia by shopping locally. The Illawarra steel industry supports the project, as do the workers and the union.

At the end of last year, 70 per cent of this State was either experiencing low rainfall or inflows into water storages. Many of those communities were bordering on drought. Much of Sydney was in the same situation but we never heard any comment from Opposition members about our capital city experiencing a dry and hot summer. That is because they do not understand climatic conditions. To them a drought is when the tide goes out, but it is resolved when the tide comes back in. They do not experience the vagaries of the bush, largely because of the environment in which they live. I do not blame them for that. If we look at the intensity of climatic conditions that have always plagued this country, we know our weather is extreme.

In South Africa, Cape Town experiences the same extreme climatic conditions. We have to better prepare for climatic conditions and much of that is done through better implementation of infrastructure such as town and country water upgrades and pipelines. Many communities around this State have had pipelines constructed or they are being constructed. When Labor was in Government, Broken Hill was a city of 30,000 people. It now has fewer than 20,000 people. On its watch Labor managed that community backwards. It will not happen on my watch or on the watch of the Liberal-Nationals because we will rebuild confidence in that community and restore jobs. They are on a roll. That is why— *[Time expired.]*

SYDNEY STADIUMS

Consideration

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:51): My motion deserves priority because today four senior Government Ministers were asked questions about the stadium splurge and not one of them could bring themselves to utter the word "stadiums". First it was the Minister for Education—I will talk about him in a minute. The Deputy Premier was asked twice about stadiums. He had two lots of five minutes to give two answers and he could not utter the word "stadiums". The truth is that Tweed Hospital, which he boasted about, is to be upgraded by 2025. The new Sydney stadiums come three and four years earlier. That is the reality of the stadium policy that he signed the Country Party up to. Remember when there was a Country Party that actually stood up for the bush? The Premier could not bring herself to boast about her own Government's stadium policy.

This is the first State Government in history that does not talk about its biggest spending commitment. It made this announcement the morning after Parliament rose for 2017. They were so scared they could not announce it when Parliament sat last year. In four lots of five minutes allocated to answering questions about stadiums, not one Minister mentioned "stadiums". Apologies to Oscar Wilde: This is the policy that dare not speak its name. But, Labor members, there is hope—the member for Penrith never shuts up about stadiums. I say, "Keep going. Keep talking about stadiums: It is going well for you."

No-one other than the member for Penrith will talk about this Government's stadium policy. Santa was good to me at Christmas. I received a gift one month before Christmas called Stuart Ayres and another one two weeks later called Andrew Constance. Then there is the Minister for Education. We know why he will not mention stadiums. He is hawking his wares around town. While his staff are camped at AGL waiting out the long winter, he is making it known that he is ready to pick up the cudgels—he is ready to serve.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Point of order—

Mr LUKE FOLEY: The Leader of the House is trying to shut me up. I say to the member for Pittwater, "Hang in there." He might have been in Oxford when the leadership was stolen from him and he may have had Planning stolen from him, but I am confident he will be the next Leader of the Opposition.

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

The House divided.

Ayes48
Noes37
Majority..... 11

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
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
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
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
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A
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
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T

NOES

Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

Donato, Mr P
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G
Gibbons, Ms M

Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N

Motion agreed to**WATER SECURITY****Priority**

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (16:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government on ensuring long-term water supply for the people of New South Wales by investing record dollars in water infrastructure across the State in response to the deep dry.
- (2) Welcomes the decision of the Government to address the historical water security issues at Broken Hill and country communities right across regional New South Wales.
- (3) Notes that the Government is boosting job security and skills by using Australian steel from the Illawarra to build the nationally iconic Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline.
- (4) Notes that the Opposition continually lacks the capacity and willingness to solve water security problems in country New South Wales, and is now playing politics with the people of New South Wales by attempting to undermine the construction of the pipeline.

When this Government was elected in 2011 a lot of work had already been done by it in opposition. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition was not a lazy opposition; it did its homework. Issues had to be addressed in the State which were identified by infrastructure groups such as Local Government NSW, the engineers association and just about everybody who lived in regional New South Wales. Water infrastructure, road infrastructure and hospital infrastructure needed upgrading. Work had to be done to build a war chest to improve not only the health and safety but also the amenity of people in regional and rural New South Wales.

I am sure Opposition members are yet to understand, in particular in relation to the poles and wires, that part of the recycling of assets involves moving those public assets. Hospitals, schools, roads, water treatment plants and pipelines are all public infrastructure. Recycling means moving public assets from one area to another; it does not necessarily change ownership but it repurposes State assets. Labor in its 16 years in office built or refurbished four country hospitals; this Government in its seven years in office has completed or is in the process of completing 75 country hospitals. We knew we were facing an infrastructure backlog. It is no accident that there are no Labor members west of the Great Dividing Range. I suspect that will be the case for a long time to come.

Climate variation and intensity have to be dealt with. Restart NSW funding involved an initial tranche of \$4 billion. A billion dollars was set aside for water security in country regions in this State. We built a large war chest to invest in water infrastructure right across the regions and we identified the communities that were most at risk—communities such as Broken Hill, Cobar and some of our smaller communities. Goulburn's water issue had already been addressed by the time this Government was elected and in late 2011 that pipeline was opened largely as a result of the efforts of the current member for Goulburn, the Hon. Pru Goward. I believe that Labor in its planning—I was a part of that process—wanted the people of Goulburn to be drinking recycled sewage water. Luckily that decision was turned around as a result of the intervention of the current member for Goulburn and the new mayor.

Water security is an issue not just in remote communities but also in some of our larger cities and in rural communities across New South Wales. We have already invested hundreds of millions of dollars in communities such as Tamworth with the upgrade of Chaffey Dam; North Coast upgrades around Murwillumbah for water storage; the Barraba pipeline; the Nyngan to Cobar pipeline; and a significant amount of work has been done in the Central West, including on the Orange pipeline. We have sunk bores for water security and are in the process of undertaking work at Coonabarabran. Work has been completed at Coolah, Murrurundi, on the Liverpool Plains, in the Upper Hunter, at Grawin near Lightning Ridge, and at Bourke and Wilcannia. Water treatment upgrades have taken place at Cobar, Nyngan and Narrabri. Work is well under way around the regions to address the 60-year backlog.

For seven months in 1891 the thriving city of Broken Hill had to rely on water carted in from South Australia. Water security was an ongoing issue in the Far West until the Menindee Lakes and pipeline were constructed in 1950s. That pipeline has now deteriorated and needs replacing. It is clear from the records that the only reason a pipeline was not built from the Murray at the time was that the old Broken Hill Water Board could not afford it. The cheaper option was to build a pipeline from the Darling River and Menindee Lakes. Members opposite are experiencing what I call budget envy. We are building the Broken Hill pipeline from Wentworth because we should; it is the right thing to do and we can afford it.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:05): I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following paragraph:

- (5) Calls on the Government to reveal how much extra the people of Broken Hill will pay on their water bills each and every year as a result of the Murray to Broken Hill pipeline.

That is a sensible amendment. This is a curious motion for the member for Barwon to move. For the past six months he has been a bit like the Scarlet Pimpernel: we have not seen or heard much from him in Parliament. Rather than giving us a history lesson on the particulars of the pipeline or Labor's position on it, we would like to know whether the member gave a room full of irrigators permission to pump during a ban, whether there was an email to Office of Environment and Heritage investigators calling off or suggesting that an investigation of land clearing was not warranted or was too explosive, and whether and why he appointed Gavin Hanlon to his department and the circumstances surrounding his hiring. I would also love to hear from him how he justifies a note from the Matthews inquiry that says Mr Matthews "observed a group culture diverging from the best traditions of Australian public administration." In my view, that is the most damning indictment of a Minister and ministry in this term of Parliament. Yet the member for Barwon has said very little about his tenure as the Minister responsible for water.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: With all due respect to my friend, the motion is not about the member for Barwon. If the member for Kogarah wants to discuss the member for Barwon he must do so by way of substantive motion. His comments are not relevant to the motion before the House.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: To the point of order: My comments are relevant. The member for Barwon talked about water supply in the 1800s. My comments are relevant because the motion says that this House welcomes the decision of the Government to address historical water security issues. I am making the point that during the member's tenure as water Minister he did not secure the water supply.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! I uphold the point of order. The member will return to the leave of the motion.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The truth of the matter is that serious questions must be answered about the cost of this pipeline to the people who will supposedly be its beneficiaries. The pipeline will cost \$500 million. Buried in the fine print of a statement to the Australian Stock Exchange it was revealed that John Holland has received a further \$107 million maintenance contract over 20 years. Broken Hill has roughly 10,000 water consumers. That means that each household will pay \$530 per year for the next 20 years because of a pipeline that the member for Barwon insists is important for water security, which is in addition to whatever they pay for water today. Each household will pay a minimum of \$500 extra per year for the privilege of having a pipeline that they do not want.

The Broken Hill City Council said it does not want the pipeline. The Nationals on that council said they do not want it. The Wentworth Shire Council does not want it. I point out to the member for Barwon that that area does not constitute a Labor stronghold. It is not the Labor Party or people in Sydney who are revolting against water policies that were designed and implemented by the member for Barwon but, rather, the people of his own electorate who are grape farmers in Pooncarie, people who live on the banks of the Darling River in Wilcannia, and farmers and sheep and goat graziers on the lower Darling. It is not people from Kogarah, Rockdale or any Sydney electorate who reject the pipeline.

I admit that the first time I visited Broken Hill was when the story broke on *Four Corners*. The member for Barwon should be a tourism ambassador for Broken Hill. All the Labor members of Parliament are visiting Broken Hill because of the serious revelations of conspiracies in the handling of water in the Darling River. The Government insists that the pipeline is needed, but serious questions remain about water viability in the absence of Government changes to policy that were drafted by the member for Barwon and implemented when he was a member of Cabinet. The Opposition wants to get to the bottom of that.

The Government should tell the House how much the project will cost. The member for Barwon should tell the House about his tenure as the Minister for Natural Resources, Land and Water and cease obfuscating by moving ridiculous motions. The member for Barwon should meet with his own constituents. I should not be meeting them. The member for Barwon is their local member. He should open the door and hear from them himself. *[Time expired.]*

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:10): I certainly agree with the member for Kogarah: He certainly should not be meeting with his constituents and should stop scaring the people of his electorate. Not once throughout the contribution to this debate did the member for Kogarah refer to the Labor Party's position on the pipeline.

Mr Chris Minns: We are against it.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the interjection. I also acknowledge the contribution to this debate on water security made by the member for Barwon, who has been a fighter for water security in his electorate. I cite paragraph (3) of the original motion, which states:

Notes that the Government are boosting job security and skills by using Australian steel from the Illawarra to build the nationally iconic Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline.

Mr Chris Minns: I am not so sure about that.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the interjection. The Government is sure about that.

Mr Chris Minns: Watch this space, mate.

Mr GARETH WARD: I appreciate the advice. I stood in the Illawarra with the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry, the Hon. Niall Blair, who is responsible for the project. We were delighted to announce that BlueScope Steel will produce much of the steel used in the project. My parents met in 1973 at BlueScope, which is a similar story for many Illawarra families. I acknowledge that people are concerned about steel procurement and the Government has made changes. The Government re-examined Australian standards that apply to government infrastructure and is committed to using as much local product as possible. That is evidenced in the Illawarra by projects such as the Berry bypass and the Gerringong upgrade that used Australian steel. I am very proud of that.

Similarly, I am proud of the Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline project. Approximately 20,000 individual sections of pipeline will be made from Australian rolled steel. Delivery of the steel to the project commenced in January 2018. Steel is rolled in Port Kembla and is used to manufacture the pipes in Victoria and Western Australia. Later the pipes are transported to Wentworth and Broken Hill respectively for construction. The project is nation building infrastructure. The project would not have been implemented under a Labor government. Labor Opposition members have stated clearly that they are opposed to the pipeline. Equally clearly, Labor members are not in favour of ensuring water security for people in regional areas of New South Wales. Local companies have been engaged to transport the pipes, undertake pipe fabrication and perform other services, which will create local jobs for Broken Hill and Wentworth.

Ms Kate Washington: But at what cost to the people of Broken Hill?

Mr GARETH WARD: The project will cost \$420 million.

Mr Chris Minns: Have you been out there?

Mr GARETH WARD: I have been to Broken Hill. I am surprised that there is not a member representing Illawarra in the House to stick up for local jobs and discuss what this project will mean to the steel workers of Port Kembla. Labor Opposition members like to come to Parliament and talk a big game, but when it comes to supporting projects that generate jobs in the Illawarra, we seek them here, we seek them there, we seek them everywhere.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Why does Broken Hill have to subsidise you?

Mr GARETH WARD: When the member for Maitland shouts louder, she does not make any greater sense. In relation to this project, the Labor Opposition is nowhere. The pipes are each approximately 13.5 metres

in length and weigh approximately three tonnes. They are transported by a combination of road and rail to the construction site, which will result in jobs for the Illawarra. I stand together with the member for Barwon and our Government in delivering real infrastructure to the people of regional areas of New South Wales.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:14): I thank the member for Barwon for his history lesson. I cannot speak about the past, but I have recently been to Broken Hill. It was my first visit to the city, although my dad was born there. I could not find one person on the streets who had anything positive to say about the \$500 million being spent on the construction of the River Murray to Broken Hill pipeline. The population of Broken Hill is now probably half of what it was when the city relied on the Menindee Lakes to provide town water. Why are we spending \$500 million on a pipeline to provide water to such a reduced population?

Members talk about water security for the people of Broken Hill. The general community perception is that the pipeline will provide water security only for a select few irrigators. I had some nice things to say about the member for Barwon on the streets of Broken Hill, but I received no positive feedback. The Indigenous community is also extremely concerned about the impact the pipeline will have on the lakes system. This project has the potential to be one of the worst environmental disasters in this country. It is all about filling the pockets of a few irrigators to the north.

Former supporters of the old Country Party would not normally approach Labor members to express their concerns. I would be hiding if I were the member for Barwon, but he is doubling down on this fiasco. So far, 13,000 people have signed a petition saying that this project is outrageous. Rather than spending this money on the pipeline, the Government should give every household in Broken Hill \$50,000 cash up front, and if does so they will avoid these potential annual water charges. I am simply conveying the opinions of the people of Broken Hill and the southern farmers. The Labor Party calls on the Government to withdraw from this pipeline project.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (16:16): In reply: I thank the member for Kogarah for his ill-informed comments. I also thank the member for Rockdale for his contribution to the debate, and I know that he supports the people of Western New South Wales. The River Murray to Broken Hill pipeline will be built; in fact, 1,500 pipes have been delivered to Wentworth already, a pipe-laying trial will be conducted later this month, and the project will be completed by the end of the year. The member for Kogarah legitimately raised the cost of the pipeline. A maintenance contract with the tenderer was an issue, but the process has been transparent and the situation has been resolved.

Not everyone raised it, but water pricing has always been an issue. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal makes recommendations to the Government on water pricing, and it has commenced discussions and consultations with the local community already. Also, there have always been concerns about who supplies water to Broken Hill. Unusually for a regional local government authority in New South Wales, the Broken Hill City Council has never supplied town water and it has no experience in this area. In the past, water has been supplied by Essential Water and the Broken Hill Water Board, and before that by a number of private operators. As has been stated, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal must always consider affordability. That will be raised in its consultations with the community and it will provide appropriate relevant advice to the Government.

The average price of water for consumers in New South Wales is between \$500 and \$600 a year, and the people of Broken Hill are asked to pay that amount even though they have poor water security. Broken Hill is facing the most serious lead dust issue in this country. The Government responded to that by implementing a lead suppression program, but members opposite cut it. This is the biggest health issue facing the community. Young people are leaving the area because of lack of amenity, but this Government is addressing that issue. The Government has made a commitment to resolve the issue of the Broken Hill pipeline and water affordability, and people who have genuine concerns about the situation should engage in the process.

The Murray River is the greatest source of water security in this country. We are in the process of discussions with the Federal Government to reconfigure the Menindee Lakes to help give better amenity in the area and better outcome for downstream users. All that the government of those opposite started, we and other State governments have signed off with the Federal Government. It is ridiculous. They have no idea how the system works. Those opposite started the water sharing plans; we finished them off. To link the Broken Hill pipeline to any other issue in western New South Wales is ridiculous and disingenuous. They are doing themselves no favours. Occasionally they go to Broken Hill, but it only reminds the people of Broken Hill what Labor did not do, and will not do, because they cannot do it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The question is that the amendment of the member for Kogarah be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes32
 Noes48
 Majority.....16

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Leong, Ms J
 Mehan, Mr D (teller)
 Park, Mr R
 Tesch, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dib, Mr J
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harris, Mr D
 Kamper, Mr S
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Smith, Ms T F
 Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
 Barilaro, Mr J
 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
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
 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
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
 Brookes, Mr G
 Cooke, Ms S
 Davies, Mrs T
 Evans, Mr A
 George, Mr T
 Griffin, Mr J
 Henskens, Mr A
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Foley, Mr L
 Haylen, Ms J
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N

Berejiklian, Ms G
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Tudehope, Mr D

Amendment negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Barwon be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes48
 Noes33
 Majority.....15

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
 Barilaro, Mr J
 Conolly, Mr K
 Coure, Mr M

Aplin, Mr G
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Constance, Mr A
 Crouch, Mr A

Ayres, Mr S
 Brookes, Mr G
 Cooke, Ms S
 Davies, Mrs T

AYES

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
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Williams, Mr R

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
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Evans, Mr A
 George, Mr T
 Griffin, Mr J
 Henskens, Mr A
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Leong, Ms J
 Mehan, Mr D (teller)
 Park, Mr R
 Smith, Ms T F
 Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dib, Mr J
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Piper, Mr G
 Tesch, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harris, Mr D
 Kamper, Mr S
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Tudehope, Mr D

Foley, Mr L
 Haylen, Ms J
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N

Motion agreed to.*Matter of Public Importance***OVARIAN CANCER**

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:32): In Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, I draw attention to the deadliest women's cancer, ovarian cancer. Of all women's cancers, ovarian cancer has the lowest survival rate. It also has little awareness and no cure. Every day four women are diagnosed with this disease and three will die from it. Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is held each February to raise awareness of women's cancer, highlight the risk factors for ovarian cancer and educate Australians on diagnosis and treatment. Unfortunately, Ovarian cancer's status as the deadliest women's cancer has not changed in 30 years.

I begin by acknowledging the work of our medical practitioners and researchers in this field. In my electorate of North Shore, the Royal North Shore Hospital is a specialist centre for ovarian cancer treatment and Dr Gregory Gard is a noted specialist in the treatment of ovarian cancer. I acknowledge another specialist centre, the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, and I especially acknowledge Gail O'Brien for her work and her recent recognition in the Australia Day honours. Between 2007 and 2016 the New South Wales Government provided \$17 million to the Cancer Institute NSW for research into gynaecological cancers in an effort to beat this disease.

As I said, Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month takes place every February. Ovarian cancer is just one of several diverse types of gynaecological cancers. Other gynaecological cancers include cervical and uterine cancer. In New South Wales ovarian cancer is the eleventh most common cancer in women and the sixth most common cause of female cancer deaths. One in 77 women will develop ovarian cancer by the age of 85, and 40 per cent of

women are alive five years after being diagnosed with it. Gynaecological cancers are diverse and, as I said, ovarian cancer has the lowest rates of survival.

Nationally, in the period 2007 to 2011 the five-year survival rate for ovarian cancer was 43 per cent, whereas for cervical cancer it was 72 per cent. Ovarian Cancer Australia seeks to reduce the incidence of ovarian cancer by 25 per cent by 2025. The key to reducing deaths from ovarian cancer is early detection, when more effective treatment options are available. The experience over recent decades with breast, cervical and bowel cancers has shown that cancer screening is a key lifesaving tool for detecting cancer and its precursors and for reducing mortality from these cancers. Ovarian cancer is often not detected early enough. It is often detected at an advanced stage because the symptoms can be vague, generalised and non-gynaecological and resemble those of other conditions that are more common and less severe.

Most women with ovarian cancer report at least one symptom in the year before diagnosis, including abdominal bloating, indigestion, loss of appetite, feeling full quickly, fatigue, increased abdominal girth, abdominal or pelvic pain, unexplained weight loss or gain, changes in bowel habits, urinary frequency or incontinence, and a feeling of pressure in the abdomen. It is important that women who experience any of these symptoms see their doctor, particularly if the symptoms are unusual or persistent. There is currently no screening test for ovarian cancer, although, thankfully, recent research suggests that we are getting closer. Professor Ian Jacobs, Vice-Chancellor of the University of New South Wales since 2015, has led the world's largest randomised trial for ovarian cancer screening, which is based on an annual blood test of levels of a blood protein, CA125, in conjunction with transvaginal ultrasound.

There are resources for general practitioners, including guides published by Cancer Australia, to assist them in assessing symptoms that may be ovarian cancer and in identifying women who should be referred to a gynaecological oncologist. Women diagnosed with ovarian cancer should be treated in a specialist gynaecological oncology centre under the care of a gynaecological oncologist who is part of a gynaecological multidisciplinary cancer care team. Research evidence shows that being treated in such a specialist centre, including in centres at Royal North Shore Hospital and the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, is associated with better survival. The Cancer Institute NSW publishes details of seven specialist gynaecological oncology centres on its website. Women with ovarian cancer are recommended to be assessed and treated at one of those centres. It is no coincidence that today I am wearing teal, the colour for ovarian cancer awareness. On Wednesday 28 February we will recognise Teal Ribbon Day. I encourage people to purchase and wear a ribbon to support those living with and working to defeat ovarian cancer and to start a conversation which can hopefully save a life.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:37): I speak on this matter of public importance and I thank the member for North Shore for raising the issue of ovarian cancer, particularly in Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. This matter is terribly important to women and families across New South Wales and Australia. Every February we recognise the importance of highlighting the symptoms of ovarian cancer and we share challenging stories of women affected by the disease. I will cut to the important issue we should all be discussing, that is, the symptoms, so that women may understand that what they are experiencing and feeling may not be a simple health issue and should not be ignored. I encourage all women to not ignore the seemingly minor symptoms such as pelvic and abdominal pain, bloating, frequent or urgent urination, constipation, fatigue and indigestion.

Unfortunately, none of the symptoms of ovarian cancer is indicative of a major problem, which makes this insidious disease so nasty. In addition, no screening or prevention controls are currently available. But people must not overthink the issue. The message for all women is that if they think something is wrong, if they are not feeling right, they should go to their doctor and ask for an examination. Every woman needs to hear and understand that clear message during Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. The activities this month will culminate in Teal Ribbon Day on Wednesday 28 February as communities across New South Wales, including my own, come together once again to recognise the progress we have made in treating this disease, to support women fighting this disease and to remember those friends and family members who have been lost to this terrible disease.

The Afternoon Teal events held across the country are just one of the ways people support the many people who have been impacted and the many who are likely to be impacted in the future by ovarian cancer. Across Australia, each year around 1,600 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and around half will no longer be with us five years after their diagnosis. With every diagnosis, family, friends and loved ones suffer enormous and lifelong impacts. Most people in this place are likely to know someone who has been impacted in some way by this disease.

There are a few stories from my community about people who go above and beyond to ensure that women recognise the symptoms and then try to reduce the impact on those who are diagnosed. I acknowledge Brian and Fay McGuigan, who are known to many across the Hunter for their wines. The loss of their 21-year-old daughter, Vanessa, to ovarian cancer prompted the family to fund a 10-year fellowship at the Hunter Medical Research

Institute. This fellowship will focus on improving treatment options for women with ovarian cancer. Researchers have spoken about the importance of this guaranteed decade of continuous research into this awful cancer. At the time Mr McGuigan said:

We've all got to put something back into our society if we can, and God willing, that will help other people, other sufferers in the future not have to go through the same anguish that Vanessa did.

It is so impressive when people like the McGuigans can turn the worst possible experience into something that will ultimately make a difference to the lives of others. I thank the McGuigan family for their significant contribution to hopefully improve outcomes for sufferers in the future. The sentiment of giving back to improve the future for others is very evident at Afternoon Teal events. Whether the donation is large or small, every donation is extremely important. Another person I acknowledge today is Jill Emberson, a person who is well known across the Hunter. Her voice had been on our airwaves for some time but has been missing in recent years as she undergoes treatment for ovarian cancer. I was pleased to see that Jill was in Canberra this week speaking at parliamentary Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month events. She has used her experience to try to help others who have been diagnosed with this disease. I encourage everyone to support Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and Teal Ribbon Day.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:43): I, too, thank the member for North Shore for raising this very important issue. I acknowledge the comments of the member for Port Stephens who emphasised the importance of using Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month to highlight the symptoms of ovarian cancer, which often go unnoticed by women. I take this opportunity to highlight advocates in my community who have raised awareness of ovarian cancer and who, like the McGuigan family, have taken what is obviously a difficult time in their lives and have used it as an opportunity to inform others. One of those is Robert Jordan, who is an Ovarian Cancer Australia Community Ambassador.

Although Robert lives in Sydney, he has many childhood memories of the mid North Coast, in particular of Port Macquarie. He has used that connection to actively pursue opportunities for further education with regard to ovarian cancer and was a guest of the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie West in November last year. Robert was motivated to raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer after he lost his wife to the disease. As for so many women, it happened without warning—she did not understand that her symptoms were related to this insidious disease. I also acknowledge the staff and patients of Greenmeadows Medical Centre in Port Macquarie. They raised funds to support ovarian cancer research and received a lovely letter from the Chief Executive Officer of the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation that states:

Without the continued generosity and significant contributions from individuals, corporates and the community, the vital work undertaken by research scientists and their teams to develop and implement an early detection program for ovarian cancer would not be possible.

That comment sums up the importance of community support and fundraising for further research and an increase in public awareness around diseases such as ovarian cancer. I congratulate Greenmeadows Medical Centre staff and patients for the support they provided to the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation. Last but not least, I acknowledge Rosie Adams, a Port Macquarie lady who lost her grandmother to ovarian cancer. Every year, Rosie holds an Afternoon Teal for her friends in the backyard of her home and it is always great to get the invitation to go along. It is only a small gathering, but it is important to raise awareness and small amounts of funds that make a difference in supporting research.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:46): By leave: I thank the member for North Shore for introducing this important issue, which has had a poignant impact on myself and many others. I remember Dayle Walker, who was my teaching colleague and staff member. Dayle started feeling unwell at the end of 2010 and did not think much of it. She saw the doctor and was unfortunately diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Dayle passed away on 25 September 2014. She was survived by her husband Bob and children: Jamie, Laurie and Chloe. Dayle was a fit person who ate healthily and was well known in our community, not only as a teacher but also as someone who worked with charity and children. Her death was a great loss. At the time, I wrote:

A great human being passed away today. It was after a long fight with ovarian cancer. Dayle Walker worked with me as a teaching colleague and as my researcher and speech writer in Parliament. Dayle was always so positive, caring and passionate. Cancer is such a horrible disease. My thoughts are with Bob and his family during this difficult time. At least the pain has ended and Dayle is in a better place. Rest in peace lovely lady.

Even during the days when she was fighting the disease, Dayle turned her attention to raising money for research into ovarian cancer. She attended many events, despite being so unwell herself. She was always positive. It was devastating when I found out, but Dayle did not want to tell me initially because she did not want to upset me during the election campaign. She knew we were in a fight so, although other staff knew, I did not find out until a little later. Dayle was an incredibly positive person and introduced me to the book *The Secret*, which is all about positive living and thinking. She fought hard against the disease. What today's speakers have said about seeking

treatment is very important. The survival rate for ovarian cancer is increasing, but it is still one of the worst cancers to get. This is a great opportunity to remember Dayle, who was such a wonderful person. I was looking through some old photos today, and I get emotional about it. I thank members for the opportunity to speak on this issue.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:49): By leave: I contribute to the debate on the matter of public importance relating to Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Teal is the international colour for ovarian cancer awareness. I ask members to note Wednesday 28 February in their diaries because it is Teal Ribbon Day. I encourage all parliamentarians to purchase and wear a teal ribbon to raise awareness of ovarian cancer. I ask that they show their support for the women, and their families, who are living with this disease, and remember those who have died. As some members will know, Temora, which sits in the heart of the Cootamundra electorate, is my home town and is well known for its harness racing—as are many other towns throughout the State. I am thrilled to announce that female mini trot drivers will be on board to raise awareness for ovarian cancer during the months of February and March by wearing teal-coloured driving pants. What a wonderful show of support!

The monthly national Tele-Support phone groups are particularly helpful for women living in regional, rural and remote communities. Ovarian Cancer Australia facilitates these phone support services for two groups each month—one for women who have recently experienced initial diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer, and one for women dealing with a recurrence. The Diagnosis, Treatment and Beyond Tele-Support group is held on the third Monday of each month at 2 p.m. Australian Eastern Standard Time. The Tele-Support group for women with a recurrence of ovarian cancer is held on the second Tuesday of each month at 2.30 p.m. Australian Eastern Standard Time.

These facilitated Tele-Support group meetings provide an opportunity for women to connect with other women experiencing a similar situation, gain information about diagnosis and treatment, and learn about other support options. Ovarian Cancer Australia provides this service to help reduce the isolation and distress felt by women diagnosed with ovarian cancer across Australia as statistics show that women living in rural, remote and very remote areas find it far more difficult to access support and information. The teleconference uses a toll-free number, which enables equity of access regardless of where participants live in Australia, and the groups are facilitated by Ovarian Cancer Australia support team members and other health professionals. I hope that women living in regional New South Wales will take advantage of this opportunity, and I applaud the efforts of Ovarian Cancer Australia to reach every woman affected by this disease.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:52): In reply: I thank and acknowledge the members who contributed to debate on this matter of public importance regarding Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. It is clear that everyone who spoke today is already channelling the message of this month and of Teal Ribbon Day by being advocates, raising awareness of the symptoms and reminding women who are suffering this terrible disease to seek support. I thank the member for Port Stephens, who talked quite a bit about awareness of symptoms. She supported the case that has been put by medical practitioners, who say that there are very few symptoms of this disease and, as all speakers have noted, there is no screening. She supports the message that all women should get checked. She also shared a very powerful story about members of the McGuigan family, who, after losing their daughter Vanessa, made a 10-year research funding investment to the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

I thank the member for Port Macquarie, the Parliamentary Secretary, who spoke about some of her constituents who have been affected by ovarian cancer, including Rosie Adams, who runs Afternoon Teal in memory of her grandmother. I thank the member for Wyong for sharing a personal story about his staff member and former teaching colleague, Dayle. It is amazing to think of the empathy that she showed the member for Wyong during that time and the contribution she made to the broader community in raising funds for ovarian cancer awareness.

I also thank the member for Cootamundra for her unique Cootamundra contribution about the mini trot female racers in their teal driving pants raising awareness and funds. She reminded us all about the isolation and challenges that women in the country have and the support they receive through the Tele-Support lines for ovarian cancer. I remind all members that Teal Ribbon Day is held on 28 February. I am sure each member will buy and wear a ribbon. I encourage people to learn about the symptoms and understand the risk factors of ovarian cancer. On that day we support those fighting and we remember those we have lost. With an incredibly low survival rate awareness, treatment and research are paramount in the fight for a cure. I ask members to support or host an Afternoon Teal event. I thank members for their contribution to the debate on this matter of public importance.

Private Members' Statements

RETURN AND EARN SCHEME

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:55): I inform the House of the bungled rollout of the Berejiklian Government's Return and Earn scheme in the electorate of Maitland. My electorate is not the only one

affected by this Government's inability to implement a container deposit scheme, but my community has been particularly neglected. Prior to the introduction of Return and Earn, the Labor Opposition warned that the scheme was not ready to begin. The Government admitted this by delaying its implementation from 1 July to 1 December 2017. The Government spent that time rushing around trying to sign up as many businesses as it could prior to 1 December. The Government imposed extra costs on beverage manufacturers and distributors with little consultation. That cost was passed on to consumers who could receive partial compensation through participation in the scheme. The people of Maitland returned their bottles and cans at the Tenambit Takeaway and the Hotel Tudor at Woodberry.

These two small businesses stepped up to play a part and to encourage recycling in our community. It allowed consumers to recoup part of the 15¢ they paid for the containers. It was great to see small businesses in Maitland being so community oriented. Unfortunately, the Tenambit Takeaway was forced to pull out of the scheme in early January following multiple calls to TOMRA, Cleanaway and the Environment Protection Authority to have the containers removed from its property. I was informed that staff from a collection point had to use bathroom amenities in another shop as theirs had filled up with containers waiting for collection. The clean up that followed those calls could not accommodate all the containers. Then just before Australia Day the Hotel Tudor exited the scheme. I have been to visit both businesses. The owners of those businesses are average small business people and it is shameful that the Government's lack of support has caused tears, angst and upset.

Minister Upton promised that the Government would support small businesses who participated in the scheme. For the businesses in Maitland that has not been the case. They collected hundreds of cans and bottles over the counter and paid out thousands of dollars for which they were not reimbursed. That caused cash flow problems for the businesses. Storage of the cans and bottles created a health and safety issue. Store owners have risked having their containers stolen from outside their premises while waiting for collection. A shipping container installed by one business on its premises elicited threats of fines from the local council. Nearby businesses have complained of people dumping containers that are not covered by the scheme. Cardboard boxes used to transport the containers are placed in local shopping centre garbage bins creating significant garbage and litter issues for those shopping centres. It is an extra impost on the council to maintain a clean environment.

The pattern that is emerging is that Minister Upton and the Government entice small businesses to join the Return and Earn scheme and then abandon them. Under the scheme, if those businesses achieve collection of half a million containers they are promised payment of 3¢ per container, which would amount to \$15,000. That is not enough to employ anyone for a year which is what would have been required to look after that volume of containers. We talk in this place about business franchises forcing small business owners to the brink and to engage in wage theft. The Government is also doing it. The Government still has not implemented a reverse vending machine in the Maitland electorate. My community is not receiving any recompense for the money it has paid out. It is a disgrace and an outrage for the community. I urge the Government to do something about it.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:59): I speak about this year's Australia Day celebrations in Camden. It is a day when all Camden residents can acknowledge how proud they are to be Australians. The day started with an ecumenical service for all religious denominations. That was followed by a civic awards and citizenship ceremony, followed by a Lions Club street parade. Steve Wisbey, OAM, was an outstanding master of ceremonies at the citizenship and civic award ceremonies. I commend the Mayor, Councillor Lara Symkowiak, and Camden Council for hosting the ceremonies. Former Paralympic swimmer Sam Bramham, OAM, was our Australia Day ambassador. He was a great representative and well received.

The Camden Civic Awards recognise young people, adults, seniors, community and sporting groups that contribute to making Camden a great place in which to live. I acknowledge all those who were nominated this year in the civic awards. Being nominated is recognition of their outstanding work in our local community. I acknowledge Aneek Mollah who was nominated Citizen of the Year. Aneek is a great mate of mine and as a small business owner he has done wonderful things. Jennifer Murphy was also nominated Citizen of the Year. She has contributed tremendously to our area. David Funnell was also nominated and won the Camden Citizen of the Year award. I congratulate David on all he has contributed to our area. He was born in Camden and at 72 years of age he continues to work tirelessly for our area.

Emelia Gelardi-Bunyi was nominated Young Citizen of the Year. Emelia is a beautiful and remarkable nine-year-old girl who is passionate about giving back to her local community. She was a wonderful example for our audience. The second nominee and winner of Young Citizen of the Year was Lubna Sherieff. She is an active member and youth volunteer in the Camden Youth Council. I congratulate Lubna on all that she contributes to our area. Maddison Lewis was nominated and winner in the adult division of Sportsperson of the Year. She is a great sportsperson. Well done.

The outstanding nominees for the Young Sportsperson of the Year were: Chantelle Barnard, Jaide Gayle-Weiling and two twin sisters, Amy and Natalie Sligar, who are remarkable athletes. The twins won the Junior Citizen of the Year and are outstanding netballers. Nominees for the Community Event of the Year were: the Camden Show and the Macarthur Lions Australia Day Parade, for which I congratulate them; Camden Rugby Union Club—the Chain Gang—the Camden Men's Shed; Currans Hill Rainbow Babies and Kids Playground; and the winner, Camden Lioness Club. Well done. Finally, the Community Group of the Year nominees were 1st Narellan Scout Group and Everyone Can Dance Charity, which won. I thank all of the groups and people acknowledged on Australia Day for their wonderful efforts and all they contribute to our local communities.

TRIBUTE TO RON WALESBY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:05): On Sunday, 18 February Port Macquarie resident Ron Walesby will celebrate his 100th birthday. I could highlight so much of Ron's incredible life story but I would be here well into the night. I want to share one of Ron's lifelong passions, flying. Like so many boys, he wanted to fly from a young age. With the outbreak of World War II Ron signed up with the Royal Australian Air Force, serving for five years. He flew protective convoy escort duties and carried out maritime surveillance throughout the war before joining East-West Airlines as a pilot.

His role with East-West Airlines led him to participate in the official opening of the Port Macquarie Airport in November 1955. Ron's extraordinary aviation career prompted him, with much encouragement from friends and family, to publish his 2012 memoir *Like Snow on the Desert*. The book includes Ron's abovementioned wartime years with the Air Force, two decades predominantly as a manager of flight operations at East-West and the next 16 years as general manager of the south-west Pacific area for Dutch Royal Netherlands Aircraft Factories, Fokker. Following this role Ron retired.

Retirement allowed Ron to put more time into his other great passion, Rotary. Ron is a foundation member of the Rotary Club of West Tamworth and more than 60 years later he still speaks highly of this worldwide organisation. Joining Rotary in 1956, he was the club's third president and has held every club position along with a few at district level. Ron was instrumental in the formation of the Rotary Lodge Committee at Port Macquarie. He chaired the committee for the first seven years, proudly seeing the construction of an accommodation facility at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital—Rotary Lodge—that opened in 1996.

Through Rotary he also chaired the committee for the renovation of Flagstaff Hill in Port Macquarie. This involved acquiring an ex-navy flagstaff, having the area paved and erecting a stone cairn and bronze plaque that records some of the history of Port Macquarie's early settlement. Ron is very proud of the ethics of Rotary and believes the club has been a very positive force in leading the community. Ron believes Rotary fills a void by providing people with opportunities that may not necessarily have been available to them.

Impressively, at almost 100 years of age he still holds an unrestricted drivers licence, but his attendance at his beloved Rotary club meetings are now more infrequent. I have served 10 years as a Rotarian but when I reflect upon the contribution that others have made to this amazing organisation—an international organisation that every single day literally changes lives—it is people like Ron who make me so proud to stand beside them as Rotary fellows.

Finally, Ron's other great passion in life is his marriage to his wife, Lois. Ron married Lois 74 years ago on 15 November 1944. After a long and adventurous career, he and Lois retired to Port Macquarie in 1983. Ron and Lois's two daughters and son, along with seven grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren, now all reside in Port Macquarie. Congratulations, Ron Walesby, on 100 wonderful years. I know there will be many like myself enjoying the opportunity to share in this personal milestone with you and your family in the weeks ahead.

ST NARSAI ASSYRIAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (17:08): On 21 January 2018 there was jubilant celebration as I joined with hundreds of members of the Assyrian community to officially open St Narsai Assyrian Christian College. The college is a year 7 to year 12 coeducational Christian independent college of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East located within Horsley Park in my electorate. This is truly a magnificent milestone for my Assyrian friends as it is the first Assyrian college to be established in the Western world, and it is the fulfilment of the dream and passion of His Beatitude, Archbishop Mar Meelis Zia, AM. St Narsai Assyrian Christian College is the continuation of the educational dream of His Beatitude after St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School was established in 2002. While the secondary school commenced in 2006, it is only this year that it will operate in a state-of-the-art modern, brand new, multimillion-dollar educational environment.

Members of the Assyrian community in Australia should be forever proud and grateful that future generations of Australian Assyrians will have the opportunity to learn about their faith, language and culture.

I thank and congratulate the hundreds of Australian Assyrians who have been sacrificing financially for many years to be able to establish this footprint for the perpetual learning of the Assyrian culture, faith and language within the educational curriculum. The vision of the college to foster the heritage and Christian values of the Assyrian Church of the East developing individuals who strive for excellence, are life-long learners and live their faith is brought to life through the college crest.

The college crest illustrates the school's foundational beliefs. At the head of the crest sits the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East patriarchal insignia, which symbolises the church as the head of the college. Underneath is a picture of an open Holy Bible with an image of a harp on one side and a dove on the other. These images portray the *Bible* and its teachings as a central part of college life. The harp and the dove stand as a symbol of the college's patron saint, St Narsai, the faithful Christian writer who was lovingly known as "The Harp of the Spirit". The cross is in the centre of the crest and speaks for itself. The college is founded and centred on the teachings of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Finally, the college motto, "Excellence, Christian Values, Commitment". Instilled in the college community is the value of showing excellence in every aspect of our daily lives. I am sure one such biblical quote extolling this virtue is referenced in Colossians 3:23 which says:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters ...

The Christian values are reflected in our actions, manners and quality of life. Students are encouraged to show commitment to persevere through the challenges of college life to grow and mature into successful students who implement these foundational characteristics through their lives enabling them to build successful, contributing lives as members of the Australian community. I pay tribute to His Beatitude, Archbishop Mar Meelis Zaia, AM, for his longstanding leadership, pastoral support, vision and passion to preserve the rich Assyrian history, culture, language, and, most importantly, faith.

Anyone who has studied history will understand that the Assyrian community dates back thousands of years, well before the birth of Jesus Christ. Their rich history has been under fierce attack in the Middle East through the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS]. A substantial number of historical monuments, churches and rich historical references have been destroyed by this terrorist organisation. It is important that in the Western world we have an environment, a country that welcomes and values diversity, and that encourages people to not only become members of our Australian family but also to celebrate their rich cultural background.

I acknowledge the Assyrian schools board, and the teachers and leaders within the college who are committed to capitalising on these new facilities to encourage greater curiosity, creativity, inquiry and collaboration that will prepare students for educational success as well as lifelong success in our fast-changing world. Congratulations to everyone involved. I am pleased that this amazing facility, and the people who work and teach in it, and have supported this school are located in my electorate. I stand proud alongside them and support them as they continue to build wonderful people who will become citizens of this great State.

MULTICULTURALISM

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:14): New South Wales is one of the most multicultural places to live not only in Australia but also around the world. I hear Government members talk fondly about multiculturalism in the Chamber, at functions and on the radio. Tonight a function to celebrate Pongal will be held at Parliament House, where members such as the member for Parramatta, the member for Oatley and the Minister for Multiculturalism will talk about the benefits of multiculturalism and how diversity enriches our State. They are hypocrites, because their party is not ruling out striking a deal to direct Liberal preferences to One Nation.

The NSW Labor Opposition is demanding that Premier Gladys Berejiklian, who comes from a migrant background, finally rule out striking a deal to direct Liberal preferences to One Nation at next year's State election now that the far right party has registered to run candidates. The NSW Electoral Commission has confirmed that One Nation will stand candidates at the March 2019 election, and Pauline Hanson has stated that she will move to Sydney. Premier Berejiklian has consistently refused to rule out striking any deal with One Nation, despite being given ample opportunity to do so. On at least seven occasions in question time—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the member for Canterbury that private members' statements are not normally used to address electoral matters, or to make attacks against the Government or any member. Although the member has a multicultural community in her electorate, so does every member of this House.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Can you stop the clock, because you are taking up my time?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I might be taking up your time, but I am about to rule you out of order.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: So you are not going to let me speak?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: What you are saying at the moment—

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I am talking about my multicultural community, which is going to be affected by One Nation, and so are members of your Government.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: What the member is delivering does not constitute a private member's statement. If the member wishes to raise matters such as this she may do so by way of a substantive motion. There are plenty of opportunities for that. This is a broadbrush attack on the Premier, which should be done under Standing Order 73 or by way of substantive motion.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Thank you. I have a multicultural community in my electorate.

Mr Thomas George: We all have.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Yes, you all have, but you are not ruling out directing preferences to One Nation candidates, who are vile and racist. In my electorate attacks against Muslim women and members of the Asian community are happening right here, right now. I am calling on every Government member to urge the Premier to rule out directing preferences to One Nation. Former Premiers Barry O'Farrell and Mike Baird ruled it out, and so did Prime Minister John Howard. On Friday 2 February at the NSW Labor Administrative Committee monthly meeting the Labor General Secretary Kaila Murnain moved a motion to rule out preference deals with One Nation, which was adopted unanimously. I commend that. I urge the Liberal Party and The Nationals to do the same. This will affect people's lives. Members of this Government walk around and talk about how wonderful it is to have multicultural electorates and say that diversity is our strength. At the same time they are not ruling out preferencing One Nation. That is the reality.

Mr Thomas George: That is rubbish.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Then you should make a statement. Multicultural NSW officers and the Minister for Multiculturalism have said absolutely nothing. I condemn them. They should be ashamed of themselves.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I point out—

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I am finished.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: For the sake of *Hansard*, I point out that the member is discussing a policy issue in her private member's statement. There are other ways in which she can do that. As far as I am concerned, the member is totally out of order. I warn other members who wish to make policy statements about any matter to use the forms of the House that allow them to do so. The member for Canterbury is a shadow Minister. She has other opportunities through her shadow portfolio to do this. I make it clear to all members that this is the way I am ruling.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Excuse me. Can I say something?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: No, you cannot.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I would like to say something.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I will not give the member the opportunity. I call the member for Tamworth.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I want to say something.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order?

Ms Anna Watson: I have been watching and listening to the speech made by the member for Canterbury. I agree with her. It is in order. She is representing her community.

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

Ms Anna Watson: She is entitled to represent her community.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I remind the member for Canterbury that she is on three calls to order. If she and the member for Shellharbour wish to challenge my ruling—

Ms Anna Watson: If it is good enough for the member for Canterbury, then it is good enough for Government members, who do exactly the same thing in this Chamber, day in and day out, when this House is sitting. It is one rule for us and one rule for them.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: No, it is not one rule. I am always fair in my rulings. I urge the member for Shellharbour to examine the standing orders.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Excuse me, Mr Assistant Speaker, what in heaven's name are you doing?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Anna Watson: Mr Assistant Speaker, with great respect to you—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I give the member for Shellharbour an opportunity to leave the House voluntarily. I call the member for Tamworth.

WERRIS CREEK WATER SUPPLY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:20): I draw to the attention of the House an important project for the township of Werris Creek in the Tamworth electorate. The project has been made possible thanks to funding from the Coalition Government. Werris Creek is a township of approximately 1,500 people. For many years those people have endured restrictions on their access to water due to an ageing and inadequate water treatment facility. The current facility was built in the 1930s. Despite having an adequate supply of water from an upgraded Quipolly Dam, the water treatment facility is unable to service the township adequately due to its inability to treat enough water in a suitable timeframe. The town is always on permanent water restrictions.

On 4 December 2017 I was joined by the member for Upper Hunter, Michael Johnsen, when we announced funding of \$10 million from the Government's Safe and Secure Water Program for the Liverpool Plains Shire Council's regional water strategy, which includes the upgrade of the Werris Creek water treatment plant. Other works proposed include an additional high level reservoir at Werris Creek and a new raw water pump station to transfer water from Quipolly Dam to the water treatment plant. Once those works are completed, they will provide a safe and secure water supply to the people of Werris Creek well into the future.

We have heard it said many times before: If water were gold, then dams are the bank. If dams are the bank, then the Werris Creek water treatment plant is the automatic teller machine [ATM] that allows the incredible community of Werris Creek to access their local water supply. This upgrade is more than an average infrastructure announcement. This is about sending a message to the small community of Werris Creek and to similarly small communities in the Tamworth electorate that they are important to me and that I believe in their future. I believe in growing Werris Creek, and increasing its appeal for new residents and tourists so that we can boost local businesses and bring new life to this railway town.

As well as our \$10 million investment into the regional water supply strategy, I am also identifying projects to build on for the future that will help to lift Werris Creek. Whether it is investment in the Werris Creek Golf Club, in which I had the pleasure of presenting more than \$36,000 for a new tractor and air conditioning, improving kerbs and blistering in the main street, or providing \$60,000 for the men's shed, or providing funds to the local Lions Club to build a shed in which to house its barbecue equipment, I am finding ways by working with the community to deliver for Werris Creek—and I am not done yet. I will continue to invest in and back the great township of Werris Creek.

MACQUARIE PARK DEVELOPMENT

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (17:23): A vital part of Sydney's global economic corridor is situated in the Ryde electorate. Macquarie Park, which is a workplace of high-value and knowledge-intensive industries within finance, information technology [IT], professional services, engineering, research, health care, marketing and media, is just 12 kilometres from the central business district [CBD] of Sydney. Macquarie Park contributes more than \$9.8 billion to the State's economy each year. Given the current and projected growth of the precinct, the provision of an effective public transport systems and the promotion of sustainable travel options are essential. The community is fortunate to have Connect Macquarie Park + North Ryde.

This organisation is the first transport management association in New South Wales. It is a business-led, independent, not-for profit organisation that attracts funding support from State and local government. Since its inception in 2013, Connect has been instrumental in increasing sustainable transport use from 26 per cent in 2011 to 31 per cent in 2016. That change alone has helped the community to save 23,464 metric tonnes of CO₂ each year, which is the equivalent of almost 5,000 fewer cars on the road. Today, its membership represents 50 per cent of employees and 70 per cent of commuters to the area. In addition, 51 per cent of member employees travel sustainably to the area, which is 20 per cent more than the area-wide benchmark. Further, 19 per cent of its member employees live in Ryde and 50 per cent live within a 10-kilometre radius of the area.

Connect views mobility solutions through a business lens and is actively collaborating with local businesses, the City of Ryde and Transport for NSW. Connect provides a car pool mobile app called "CoHop", and up-to-date details of public transport options, and information on bike and walking tracks, as well as encouraging businesses to consider flexible work practices. Zara Crichton, the General Manager of Connect Macquarie Park + North Ryde, stated that the company's mission is:

... to assist organisations and their people to seek out the most efficient and sustainable transport options. The delivery of the Sydney Metro rail upgrade in 2019, the Macquarie Park Bus Interchange Upgrade and the launch of the on-demand peak hour bus service in 2018 will be game-changers for the area—further accelerating economic growth to solidify Macquarie Park's position as the second highest contributor to GDP in NSW.

Connect local business members include: Abbott Australasia; AMP Capital Office & Industrial; AMP Capital Shopping Centres; Aristocrat Technologies; BOC Limited; B. S. A. Limited; DEXUS Property Group; DXC Technology; Foxtel; Frasers Property Group; Fuji Xerox Australia; Fujitsu Australia; Konica Minolta; Macquarie University; Novartis Pharmaceuticals; Optus; Schneider Electric; Stockland; and Wolters Kluwer. It is estimated that the number of employees working in Macquarie Park will double to 111,000 over the next 15 years. The area is also experiencing a residential boom.

One planned development is the Ivanhoe Estate comprising 3,000 homes, including at least 950 social housing units and 128 affordable rental units over the next 10 years. This urban renewal project will integrate a new year 7 to year 12 vertical high school for 1,000 students, a residential aged-care facility with a wellness centre for seniors, two 75-placement childcare centres, a supermarket, cafes and speciality retail shops, a jogging track, nature-based playgrounds and exercise stations, a basketball court, open green spaces, and community gardens. This Government is continuing to build education infrastructure. A high school will be built at the site of the Peter Board High School because the Government has secured an exclusivity agreement to buy back the land, and a site for a new primary school is being sourced in the upcoming Macquarie Park Plan. Furthermore, Kent Road Public School is having demountable classrooms replaced with a permanent building.

The development of Macquarie Park will ensure jobs, education, transport and community facilities for a diverse, healthy and sustainable urban environment. This Government is proud of Macquarie Park. It is an engine room and a critical component of the State's economic productivity success story. To avoid the ghettos of the past, Macquarie Park will have affordable housing and mixed housing developments, such as the Ivanhoe Estate. Its location in this State's Silicone Valley demonstrates how strong we are and how lucky we are to live in Ryde.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:28): It is with the deepest concern that I draw the attention of the House to the pain my community is suffering. In July last year, the Liberal Government privatised Newcastle Buses and Ferries. Since then we have lurched from one public transport crisis to another. Last year, I outlined my efforts to ensure that my community was not forgotten. I made every effort to work in good faith with the newly appointed private provider, Keolis Downer.

I have made every effort to bring my concerns and those of the community to the attention of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. I have requested meetings. I have asked for public consultation with the community. I have made representations to both the Minister and Keolis Downer. From the get-go, the Minister has had an arrogant and belligerent approach to his portfolio responsibilities. Even worse, he has been dismissive of the legitimate and serious concerns of the people who rely on public transport. The Minister claims that he has seen no evidence of the disadvantage faced by vulnerable people. If that is the case, he is either wilfully ignorant or he did not bother to look at the changes before signing off on them. That makes him a liar.

Six months ago, the Minister for Transport patronisingly told me to be patient. He said, "Give them two minutes. They've only been there for three months." We are now heading into the eighth month of complete chaos. The so-called "assurances" I was fed have been mistruths—broad public consultation, four- to seven- minute waits between connections, better services, more frequent services, and a new way to travel. The Minister continues to peddle these fake facts and ignore the concerns of public transport users. The 350 bus service, which previously ran directly from Swansea Heads to Newcastle, had one of the highest levels of patronage in the entire network. Indeed, until three months ago it was considered a major route in the Newcastle transport network. Over the past months the needs of the community have not changed radically, but the tick-and-flick attitude of this arrogant transport Minister has forced an unworkable transport network on my community and allowed a private provider to put profits before people.

My community now has a public transport crisis. I have not spoken to a single person who is better off because of these changes. It is no exaggeration to say that they have ruined people's lives. For example, Ebony from Pelican, a young woman claiming the Newstart Allowance, recently travelled to Charlestown for a meeting with her job service provider. Ebony was late for her 10.00 a.m. appointment because she had to wait 50 minutes

at Lake Macquarie Fair for the connecting service—and it was not running late. When she called her job service provider she was threatened with non-compliance and told that her payments could be suspended. So we had to fix that as well. Jack, a student studying for the Higher School Certificate at the selective Merewether High School at Broadmeadow, now has to get a bus at 5.32 a.m. in order to get to school by 8.00 a.m. Instead of taking one hour, his commute now takes two hours and 13 minutes.

Support service providers have also told me that elderly people have been robbed of what little independence they had and now face severe social isolation. The bus that formerly went past the Belmont 16s sailing club has been scrapped. This means that patrons can no longer get to the club for social events such as bingo. Now the Minister might trivialise this but we are talking about people's lives. All these issues could have been corrected if he had done his job properly. The spin about "broad consultation" was a lie. Schools were never consulted and support and disability service providers were not contacted. People who actually use public transport were largely excluded from the consultation process—or the fake consultation process as it turns out—and as a result we have had nothing but chaos. This Minister is not fit to hold an office of the Crown. If he had a shred of dignity he would tender his resignation immediately.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Swansea that if she wishes to call a member arrogant and say that a member is not fit to hold office then she should do so by way of substantive motion, or under Standing Order No. 73 or Standing Order No. 74. The personal attacks that have been made in this Chamber are unacceptable. I note that the Leader of Opposition Business is in the Chamber. I suggest that he counsel Opposition members because when I am in the chair I will not hesitate to sit a member down if they continue to act in this manner. Attacks on Ministers or other members should not be of a personal nature, as they have been this afternoon.

Mr Michael Daley: So long as it applies both ways, Assistant Speaker, because sometimes it does not.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Maroubra would know that I am fair and even-handed in my rulings in this House. During debate, one Opposition member was completely out of order and another marginally less so. I ask the Leader of Opposition Business to pass on the message to Opposition members to be temperate in their attacks on Ministers. Opposition members may attack the Government—as I did when I was in opposition—but they must modify their language.

LISMORE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (17:35): I congratulate the winners of the Australia Day awards that were presented at ceremonies held in the electorate of Lismore in January. I had the pleasure of attending the award ceremony at Lismore City Hall where Anna Ludvik was named Lismore 2018 Citizen of the Year. Anna was among eight deserving individuals and groups who were recognised on the day. Other winners included 13-year-old Ben Auckram, who was awarded Young Citizen of the Year, and Ayden Miners, who was awarded Aboriginal Citizen of the Year. Michael Berry was recognised through the Services in Community Award, and the Lismore Girl Guides and the 1st Lismore Scout Group were the joint winners of the Lismore Group Services in Community Award. James Durham was named Junior Sportsperson of the Year, Dunoon United Football Club was named Sports Team of the Year, and the Lismore City Council Recycling and Recovery Centre staff were acknowledged for their contribution to sustainable environment. I congratulate all winners from Lismore.

Tweed Shire Council held its award ceremony in Murwillumbah, at which local Vietnam veteran Kevin Palmer was named Tweed Shire 2018 Citizen of the Year. Other award recipients were Jenny Kidd and Pat Tate, who shared the Volunteer of the Year Award, and Sam Smith, who was awarded the Young Achiever in Community Service Award. The Australia Day Award for Sporting Achievement went to 16-year-old Anthea Warne; the Charity Cup Touch Football Tournament was awarded the Tweed Shire Community Event of the Year; and the Arts and Cultural Achievement Award acknowledged the incredible staff and students at Wollumbin High School.

Kyogle hosted its Australia Day awards at Kyogle Memorial Hall with the theme "Everyone, Every Story". Louise Petherbridge received the Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award for 2018; Jan Hastie was acknowledged as Senior Citizen of the Year; and Eloise Cawter was named Junior Citizen of the Year. Dean Ferris, who is well known around the world for his ability on motorbikes, was named Senior Sportsperson of the Year. Rocco Patridge was awarded 2018 Junior Sportsperson of the Year, Emily Ferguson was awarded Senior Student of the Year, and Tom Brosnan was awarded Junior Student of the Year. Tom also sang a song and entertained the crowd. Everyone was delighted with his efforts.

Almost 200 people turned out to celebrate with Tenterfield Shire Council as they announced Allan and Thea McKenzie as joint Citizens of the Year for 2018. Jake Murphy received Tenterfield Young Sportsperson of the Year Award; Captain Bruce Johnstone and the Liston-Wylie Creek Rural Fire Brigade were acknowledged as

the Emergency Services Volunteers of the Year, and Tenterfield Rotary Club's Biennial Bavarian Beer and Music Festival was announced as Community Event of the Year. Woodenbong also held Australia Day awards, where Lynnette Parker was acknowledged as 2018 Citizen of the Year and Katelyn Grimmert was named both Young Citizen of the Year and Sportsperson of the Year.

Woodenbong Pre-School and Kindergarten was named the Community Organisation of the Year and Manoj and Priti Kumar's Woodenbong Grocer received the Business of the Year award. I congratulate and recognise all the nominees and recipients of Australia Day awards from the Lismore electorate. They were nominated and recognised for their exceptional service to the community. We honour them and truly appreciate the selfless contribution made by so many. I congratulate everyone who took part in the Australia Day activities for 2018 in the Lismore electorate.

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK BUSHFIRE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:40): At 12.45 p.m. on Saturday 20 January 2018 my phone rang with a warning from the Rural Fire Service to prepare my fire plan as there was an out-of-control fire at the Royal National Park. Looking on the app Fires Near Me, I could see two distinct areas of concern at Sir Bertram Stevens Drive which brought me to the conclusion that these fires had been deliberately lit. I then received a call from the office of the Minister for Emergency Services to inform me that two fires were burning out of control on Sir Bertram Stevens Drive in the Royal National Park and that firefighting aircraft was on its way. As I was told that, the Ericsson helicopter passed over my home.

Prior to this event, the Royal National Park had not had a major fire since 2001. If the wind had blown in the wrong direction, the communities of Bundeena and Maianbar would have been directly in the crosshairs. Due to the enormous fuel load on the ground, temperatures of 1,600 degrees were expected on the fire front. With half-hour updates from the Minister's office, I was able to set at ease the people who had directly contacted me. When the evacuation signal went out, there were several hundred visitors in the park and along the Coast Walk visiting the Figure Eight Pools and Wedding Cake Rock. There was a Surf Life Saving carnival, a camp with around 100 participants and even a wedding. On top of that, Bundeena and Maianbar were ordered to start evacuating the sick and frail and those who wanted to leave. By 2.00 p.m., the ferocity of the fire, by all accounts, was building into a major concern.

The next update from the Minister's office was that *Nancy Bird*, the DC-10, was on its way. Fifteen minutes later it flew over my home. I am proud that our Government has supplied the vital equipment to combat such disasters. As a member who represents an electorate surrounded by bushland, I am well aware of the brave men and women who volunteer to keep our communities safe. The fire shone a bright light on services that many of us take for granted. I thank every man and woman from the NSW Rural Fire Service's Sutherland Shire brigade, the State Emergency Service, Cronulla Ferries, NSW Surf Life Saving and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. I also acknowledge these agency partners: the NSW Police, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Ambulance, Marine Rescue NSW, the Roads and Maritime Services, the Rapid Relief Team and the Sutherland Shire Council.

As I have said previously, these groups formed a well-oiled machine that went into action, with every person knowing their role and executing it without question. I visited the Rural Fire Service headquarters in East Heathcote and witnessed how well organised and well equipped they are. The real-time satellite imaging overlaid with temperature and smoke levels was truly eye-opening. With all the fireground activity, it is usual for medical incidents to occur. Thankfully, there was none except for smoke inhalation and a couple of minor cuts and bruises. It is a credit to the training, in which the volunteers continue to participate. With a total of 2,194 hectares burnt, the fire has had a large impact on the oldest national park in the Southern Hemisphere. However, the old girl will regenerate as it has many times before. Last week I visited the park and saw signs of green shoots already, which is remarkable.

Returning to the start of this fire, it is alleged that it was deliberately lit. To anyone who endangers not only residents of the Royal National Park but also countless volunteers, take my word for it: the full force of the law will come down on you. Give yourself up before the inevitable knock on the door. I, for one, will advocate that the book truly gets thrown at you. An update of another fire was reported in the same vicinity on 5 February, and the fire was quickly brought under control. The countless man-hours this fire cost our community during the fire emergency is still ongoing—the fire maintenance was considerable. To all those brave women and men who face the danger and come out when our communities need them most I can only say, "Thank you."

TRIBUTE TO ANNE GABRIELIDES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:44): Tonight I reflect on the life of Anne Louise Gabrielides. I also pay tribute to her life partner, Paul. Together they championed the rights of others, demonstrating a lived commitment to improving the quality of life of so many. Sadly, Anne left this world on

6 January 2018, surrounded by family and friends. She suffered from motor neurone disease and, although she was determined to make the best of her life, she eventually succumbed to her condition. Not long before she died Anne sent this message out to the world via social media:

My MND has progressed rapidly. I am in a wheelchair now. I am fed via a tube in my stomach to avoid choking. Yet whilst I can, I intend to suck every drop of life, every drop of wine and every kiss I can.

Anne was an incredible human. She was a wife, a partner, a mother, a sister, a colleague, a teacher and an activist. She was a much-loved member of the Blue Mountains community and enjoyed special relationships with many across the Blue Mountains and further afield. Anne started life as a teacher, studying at the Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education where she met her husband-to-be, Paul Gabrielides. Clearly, Anne and Paul were destined to be a formidable duo—Anne with her determination, care for others, patience and love of life, and Paul with his irreverence and sense of humour. They were a great match. Eventually Anne and Paul had three children. They bought a house in Winmalee, which soon became their family home. At the recent celebration of her life in Leura, it was clear that Anne was not only the love of Paul's life but also the cherished mum of Michael, Christopher and Eleni. She was fortunate to become the proud Ma to Harriet not long before she died. She was brave, determined and very much loved.

In spite of the health issues Anne was dealing with, and her deteriorating health that left her unable to speak and struggling to walk, Anne and Paul continued their activism in support of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017. When she lost the ability to speak Anne asked me to be her voice. I was humbled and privileged to do so. Some of my colleagues in this place had the opportunity to meet Anne and Paul when they came to visit. They were smart, articulate and could run an argument in support of their case. What was clear to all who met them was that Anne was not only fighting this fight for herself but she was also standing up for all those who do not have a choice in how and when they die.

Motor neurone disease is an extremely debilitating disease that renders the body useless. In the case of motor neurone disease, the usual palliative care remedies are challenged in providing a comfortable death and, instead, terminal sedation is often the only option to address this unbearable suffering. Of course, this not only impacts the sufferer but also their family. This is an unbearable situation for all involved, including those providing care. I acknowledge the work of the Dying with Dignity NSW team, who worked so closely with Anne Gabrielides to advocate for law reform. I acknowledge particularly Gabrielle, Shayne and Sarah: They are a formidable team committed to justice for all and to standing up for the rights and dignity of those facing unbearable pain and suffering in their life.

I acknowledge the respectful way in which the NSW Parliamentary Working Group on Assisted Dying worked alongside people with terminal illnesses. We will get there next time. Finally, Paul, in honouring your Annie I want to say this: Your reading of the poem *Surrender* will stay with me forever. Your unconditional and empowering love and strength is heartening. Vale Annie Gabrielides. You fought the good fight until the very end, and the struggle for choice continues.

TRIBUTE TO GEOFF MACK, OAM

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (17:49): Today I pay tribute to an Australian legend, a man who received recognition and awards within Australia and internationally, a man who stood up for freedom when he fought for his country in the Second World War, and a man who helped put Australian music on the map, so to speak. Geoff Mack was all of these things and, putting him even closer to my heart, he was a resident in my own seat of Hornsby, living in Mount Kuring-gai. Geoff's real name—and perhaps I should not say his "real name" when it was his stage name that was known by millions, but his birth name was Albert Geoffrey McElhinney.

Although Geoff lived in Mount Kuring-gai for more than 60 years, he was not born there or even in the State but in Surrey Hills, Melbourne. I think his move here is almost as much proof of his good taste as his music was. Geoff served during the Second World War in the Royal Australian Air Force, working as an aircraft mechanic. Even then his talents were recognised as he would be roped in to support any visiting entertainer. When they were not around he was just as happy to pull out his guitar and sing himself. After the war he served in Japan, at Radio WLKS, as the voice of the Commonwealth forces. There he also performed for audiences from Britain, the United States, France, Germany and of course Japanese home audiences.

He returned to Australia in 1950 and it was here that the mantle of the immortals was draped on his shoulders. In 1959 he wrote a song which he thought he would call *The Swagman Rock*, a reference perhaps to his own well-known rendition of *Waltzing Matilda*. *The Swagman Rock* was never played because Geoff was told by a producer that rock 'n' roll would be dead within a year. However, renamed *I've Been Everywhere* and first recorded here in Australia by musician Lucky Starr, it has been covered by more than 130 artists, including versions by such icons as Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson. It is not just country music figures who have used

the song. In 2011 Rihanna sampled the refrain in her own *Where Have You Been*, showing that more than 50 years on that song still brings out something in music fans. I note also that Geoff was a Mount Kuring-gai resident at that time, so we really can claim the song for the seat of Hornsby.

Following his success with *I've Been Everywhere*, Geoff toured through the outback, performing to hundreds of thousands of Australians and playing alongside the likes of Lucky Grills and Slim Dusty. In 1963 Geoff was inducted into the International Songwriters Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tennessee, and into the Hands of Fame at Tamworth in New South Wales in 1978. In 1997 he received the Tamworth Songwriters Association Songmaker Award and finally he was honoured with the 2013 Lifetime Achievement Golden Guitar Award. What makes Geoff's achievement even more spectacular is that *I've Been Everywhere* was the very first of his songs to be recorded or published.

Geoff passed away at the age of 94. He was survived by his wife, Tabbi Frances, who was a fellow entertainer. Geoff was a brilliant man, a man whose musical talent touched the lives of millions here in Australia and throughout the world. But today I want to remember him for more than a song, for more than a career spanning decades, a career which helped shape Australian music. I want to remember him as a man who saw and loved his local area, Mount Kuring-gai, who saw something of himself there, something that drew him back and kept him living there for more than 60 years. Today I want to remember Geoff as a representative figure for his local community in Mount Kuring-gai and for our community in the Hornsby shire.

His passion, the passion which kept him coming back on stage through the years and kept him playing his guitar, is the same passion I see in our Hornsby sports teams and in our Hornsby artists. It is the same passion I notice in community outreach and other organisations—the passion for our area that brings us together at great events like the Hornsby festival. Geoff's undeniable talent, while it was definitely unique in itself, is mirrored in the talents of Hornsby residents. It is seen not only in the talents of residents whose names made the history books, like Edgeworth David, who led the first expedition to reach the South Magnetic Pole, but also in daily life—in the mother who paints watercolours after taking her children to sports on the weekend and the writer whose poems delight his grandchildren and work colleagues. Geoff Mack was an iconic Australian, a great resident of our shire and a true local. It is my privilege to be the one to put his achievements on the record and to note again the wonderful people who make the Hornsby electorate the great place that it is today.

HIDDEN TREASURES HONOURS ROLL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:54): Hidden Treasures is an annual initiative of the Department of Primary Industries Rural Women's Network, which recognises the outstanding efforts of women volunteers in New South Wales and promotes the valuable role of volunteering to the community. The 2017 Hidden Treasures honour roll celebrated the valuable work of 103 female volunteers from across the State. It was an outstanding achievement to have 26 women from the Cootamundra electorate named on the list. Over the past seven years, more than 900 rural women throughout New South Wales have been identified for their volunteering efforts to improve our rural and regional communities. This important tribute captures their inspirational stories and documents and celebrates the unpaid work of women who ensure the viability of many important and crucial community groups and charities, such as emergency services, arts, environment, social justice and education groups, sport organisations and many others within rural and regional communities.

Last week I had the opportunity to host an afternoon tea in beautiful Narrandera to congratulate all the nominees and present them with their splendid certificates. It was a delight to spend time talking with and hearing the stories of the nominated women. It was a delightful afternoon of connection and collaboration. Among the guests were the Narrandera community recipients, including Kimberley Beattie, Jane Carter, Judy Charlton, Joan Clancy, Tammy Galvin, Roxy Heckendorf, Margaret Hocking, Vanessa Hoffman, Sharon Hutchinson, Shirley Jensen, Mary-Anne Lattimore, Gwen Lee, Kath Mahy, Marilyn Manning, Josie Marks, Fran McDonald, Fran McLachlin, Lee Reavley, Sharyn Rowlands and Kerry Sproston. Beryl Brain of Grong Grong, Joy Coggan of Jugiong, Cathy Denning of Cowra, Sally Green of Mandurama, Jodie King of Temora and Nadine Mattiske of Warrinya also joined us.

The women shared inspiring stories of their many hours of unpaid work, which ensure the viability of crucial community groups and charities. Joy Coggan of Jugiong is a woman that every community needs. She has lived on her Jugiong farm for 50 years and has been involved in the community for all that time. She is involved in many community organisations and groups, and puts her heart and soul into every major Jugiong event, including the biennial arts festival and the Jugiong Writers Festival. Joy never hesitates to learn new skills. The Jugiong Writers Festival began several years ago, all due to Joy's connection to women in the area. At the time, there were six published female authors living around Jugiong, none of whom knew of the others existence. Joy brought them all together and organised a fair in Jugiong to sell their books and promote their work.

It was out of this event that the Jugiong Writers Festival was born. Joy—the catalyst—built on her skills and took on the role of developing the festival website. She is also treasurer and secretary, runs the successful short story competition and assists with the Small Schools Writers Day. Without Joy, there would be no festival. According to those in the community, Joy is the rock who ensures everything runs smoothly. The recent second festival was a resounding sellout success, with authors such as Di Morrissey and Stan Grant attending. This is only one example of Joy's community involvement. She is more than a hidden treasure; she is a priceless treasure. Joy's story is just one of many amazing stories. Her work is putting Jugiong on the literary map.

The work of all these women helps to ensure that we are all creating, connecting, collaborating and helping to sustain and grow our regional economies in ways that are usually unseen and unheard of. Thankfully, the Rural Women's Network is making sure that we uncover each of these hidden treasures as they have been inspirational in their contribution to their communities through their dedication and support to families, organisations and businesses. The honour roll provides a lasting legacy and is a chance to thank the women for their generosity and for the enormous amount of support they provide. I congratulate all the nominated women and the Rural Women's Network on this outstanding initiative.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE BUS TIMETABLES

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:59): Having sat largely untouched for more than a decade, bus timetables in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area were changed in January. A review was certainly warranted, but the final result has left many people wondering why certain routes have been abandoned altogether and how, or if, they will be able to adapt to the new system. As this House is aware, management of government bus, ferry and light rail services in the greater Newcastle area was privatised in July last year and is now run by Keolis Downer through a new body called Newcastle Transport.

This impacts on services in the northern parts of my electorate of Lake Macquarie. I have no doubt that those behind these changes wanted to improve services. Yes, the issues of lowering costs and being profitable no doubt entered the mix, but they should be considerations in any enterprise, private or public. But if it is a public service, the imperative is to provide the best service for the needs of the people. Clearly some people have benefited from the new timetable, but for a large number of people in Lake Macquarie catching a bus to school, work, shopping centres and hospitals has become significantly harder, and in some cases impossible.

I raised the issue with the Minister in question time today, and I can appreciate why he seems frustrated by the complaints. On the face of it, as he says, the new arrangements provide for about 1,000 extra services, increasing frequency and adding more weekend services. Why would people not be happy with that? I agree that there have been winners—and that is great—but I am more concerned about the losers. I have been hearing from people who had planned their lives or established their daily routines around existing bus routes. I have heard from people across the Newcastle Transport network, including from people in the electorates of Swansea, Charlestown and Wallsend, and they join with residents in the Lake Macquarie electorate—particularly people living in Cardiff, Cardiff South, Macquarie Hills, and Speers Point—who are angry that their bus services have disappeared or now require multiple connections and longer journey times.

Among those constituents is Sylvia Cathcart who used to catch a direct bus service between Cardiff South and Charlestown. That is not a great distance—a four-kilometre trip which used to take eight minutes but which now takes almost 40 minutes under the new timetable. Direct services from Cardiff South to Kotara and Newcastle have also gone. Another constituent, Vicki Bryant, has two adult sons with special needs. They used to catch a bus from Cardiff South to attend special activities in town but they now need to catch three different buses to get there. That is having a huge impact on the family. Sue Selby's 84-year-old mother relied on the direct services into Newcastle to attend regular medical appointments. She now has to catch three different services and spends most of the day travelling. I have been contacted by a great many people with similar stories. Most of them say that the new timetables and cuts are a disgrace. Others simply describe them as inconvenient and being all about profits for the private operator and not about services for the public.

The campaign for better public transport links throughout Lake Macquarie has been ongoing and is one I will continue to support. Many residents have chosen to live, rent or buy homes around the public transport system. They did this knowing that they would be able to access work, schools, medical services or retail centres by public transport. At a time when services should be improved or their frequency increased, the opposite has happened for many people, leaving them understandably distressed because the changes mean they might have to move house or, in cases where they can afford it, buy a car. Some had plans to age in place and that option is no longer going to work for them. I understand why these people feel so angry about these changes.

If the Government is serious about getting people in these areas to use public transport services need to be increased in frequency and new links created; however, cutting public transport routes that have been embraced by people who have made major life decisions to live along them does nothing to build equitable and sustainable

communities. I have sought further meetings with the Minister, Newcastle Transport and Keolis Downer in a bid to have these timetable changes reviewed and have the cut services restored, particularly the old 334 service in the Cardiff South area. Coincidentally, today I have been contacted by the Minister's office to set up a meeting in response to my request. I place on record my thanks to the Minister for agreeing to meet with me to discuss this important issue.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (18:03): I bring to the attention of the House some of the fantastic events held in my electorate on Australia Day to celebrate all things Australians. I had the pleasure of attending the Yass Valley Council's Australia Day breakfast. Mayor Rowena Abbey announced the citizenship award recipients. Water polo champion Debbie Watson, OAM, was a wonderful role model as the Australia Day ambassador.

The award winners were recognised for their commitment to the community. Awards were presented to Victoria Alley for Young Citizen of the Year, Janice Wilson for Citizen of the Year and Pauline Abbey for Senior for Citizen of the Year. There were several other awards worth noting: the individual community service award was presented to Ross Webster for his contribution to the Yass Landcare Group; the award for Community Group of the Year was presented to Yass Pony Club; and the mayoral award for sporting excellence was presented to Tayla Jones. Each recipient reflected core Australian values of hard work and service to the community. It was a privilege to be part of their celebrations.

I was honoured to participate in the Goulburn Australia Day celebrations at Seiffert Oval. Goulburn's 2018 Australia Day ambassador Dick Smith gave a stirring speech about his life and the opportunities that Australia has given him. Australia Day is an important time to remember that it is the spirit and character of the Australian people that have given us what we have today. We must continue to promote and protect our values if our grandchildren are to have the same chances as Dick Smith had. Desmond Rowley received the Goulburn Community Citizen of the Year 2018 award and Margaret Hagan received the Youth Citizen of the Year award. Both of these recipients are highly regarded in the community for their efforts and ongoing commitment to other people. They are the best of us.

The Goulburn Community Event of the Year award went to the Tallong Apple Day Festival, an annual event and a fantastic day out for the whole family. Tallong Apple Day Festival is the result of year-round planning and hard work by the local community. The lead coordinator for the event is Christine Wursten. The festival celebrates the region's rich apple orchard heritage with fun attractions, 50 craft and food stalls, special events for children and competitions galore. There were lots of apples for sale, and all of the profits from apple sales go to support local community groups. I am thrilled that the Tallong Apple Day Festival was the recipient of this year's Community Event of the Year award. I know how much hard work and community effort go into making that day the success it has become for such a small community. I commend Chris Wursten.

Australia Day celebrations occurred in Berrima at the historic court house and the Boorowa Recreation Park. They are always well attended and successful events. As we approach the agricultural show season in my region I am thrilled to be opening the 140th Crookwell Agricultural Pastoral and Horticultural Society Show on Saturday 10 February. Since 1879 the Crookwell Agricultural Pastoral and Horticultural Society has placed this pretty region on show. It provides a celebration of our Australian traditions, recognition of the excellence of the shire's livestock and producers, an exhibition of the community's creativity, skills in the arts and crafts and the marvellous baking and fruit presentations. One day I will participate in those baking and fruit presentations.

The Crookwell Agricultural Pastoral and Horticultural Society show features two full days of agricultural competitions, exciting animal experiences, live entertainment, carnival fun, and much more. The pastoral industry has made the district wealthy. History has seen the fortunes of the rural sector wax and wane. Today I see a different future for our farmers. Prosperity in Asia has created a middle class that demands sheep, cattle and produce from many rural and regional areas, including Crookwell. I love the show season in my electorate and endeavour to attend as many as possible. Agricultural shows provide a family day out and give rural communities a chance to show off in a fun and interactive environment.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:08): The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Andrew Constance, has become an object of ridicule statewide. In Port Stephens the mention of the Minister for the Environment, Gabrielle Upton, is met with rolled eyes and sighs of exasperation. The Minister's agency exists to protect the environment in which we live and is designed to safeguard the native species we regard as iconic. I will outline five separate events that have occurred in my area in 2018 that have eroded confidence in the Minister,

and it is only February. After weeks of rumours, it was confirmed that a multi-agency task force has been established to investigate an unauthorised 16-kilometre canal that was dug on a property outside of Tea Gardens. This property is owned by LDF Enterprises and run by property developer Phillip Lee who is based in Point Piper.

Aerial photos of the site look like a freeway has been built through a forest. Over several years this property developer and his companies have been investigated for environmental breaches across multiple sites. In 2012 his company Tea Gardens Farms Pty Ltd was fined \$200,000 by the Environment Protection Authority after a dam wall partially collapsed and contaminated local waterways. In 2015, Great Lakes Council issued an \$8,000 on-the-spot fine to the company for illegal clearing. In 2016, MidCoast Council issued stop work and clean up orders to the company for environmental breaches. No-one knows what is going on with this latest activity. I sought a briefing with someone from the Minister's office, but I have received no response. My community deserves answers. It is sick of the secrecy and wants to know what is occurring on that site.

Another problem my community is facing is the approval of a five-year trial of an offshore fish farm situated adjacent to our beautiful marine park. Over summer, the fears of residents and tourism operators were confirmed when one of the so-called fortress pens buckled in rough seas and 20,000 mature king fish escaped into the marine park. King fish are big fish and they eat other fish. We can only speculate the impact that 20,000 carnivores entering a delicate marine park had and the disruption it will cause to the food chain. Local fishers talk of putting an empty hook into the water and catching a dozen of these fish in minutes. Commercial fishers are concerned about the possible impact on the fish stock that they purchased the right to fish through the Department of Primary Industries—Fisheries latest botched reform process.

The scenario could play out like this: Department of Primary Industries—Fisheries force commercial fishers to buy the right to fish, say, \$400,000 but the fish they are authorised to catch are wiped out by the king fish. To make matters worse, a ban on fishing in the area of the fish pens has been imposed by Fisheries. The ban, which was due to expire tomorrow, has been extended until the end of the month. This means two compliance officers from Fisheries will be sitting in a boat outside the marine park policing fish that are swimming freely in the ocean. In doing that, they are prioritising the commercial interests of Huon Aquaculture and Fisheries, which is a venture partner in the fish farms. A fully independent arm's-length review should be established to investigate how this occurred and what should happen next.

Back on land, residents at Jimmys Beach near Hawks Nest spent a harrowing night recently wondering if the road between them and the water was going to wash into the sea as large swells exacerbated existing coastal erosion. Similar erosion is occurring at Stockton, south of Port Stephens. In January we learned that the NSW Coastal Council that advises on coastal erosion had never met, despite its establishment being announced with much fanfare in 2016. Coastal management has dropped off this Government's radar entirely. The reforms started by the then planning Minister Rob Stokes were given to the environment Minister and they have fallen into an abyss. Another disgrace is this Government's failure to buy back the Mambo Wetlands, which were sold to a property developer 18 months ago.

This week we were excited after hearing that the Government was going to make an announcement. We thought it might do the right thing and buy back the Mambo Wetlands. However, the Government announced it would only investigate the feasibility of buying it back. The announcement showed that the Government has done nothing for the past 18 months. The final issue is the continuing plight of the residents of Williamtown, Salt Ash and Fullerton Cove who are affected by the contamination leaving the RAAF base in Williamtown. I acknowledge that the Premier met with residents before Christmas. Action was taken following the Premier's visit—*[Time expired.]*

NORTHERN BEACHES COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)
(18:14): The Government has invested \$106 million in new community health facilities on the northern beaches of Sydney. For 16 years under the former Labor Government nothing happened on the northern beaches—there were no new hospitals or community health facilities. Existing health facilities were decades old. One hospital was close to 100 years old and the other was approximately 60 years old. This Government is pleased that as part of an overall investment in infrastructure across the entire State, which is occurring equitably in all electorates regardless of political flavour, the northern beaches is seeing a proportion of those capital funds.

In the past couple of years I have had the great privilege of witnessing the construction of the Brookvale Community Health Centre. The former Minister for Health and I effectively turned the first sod on the project—assisted by a large mechanical device because there was an old house on the site. The new Brookvale facility is one of three new community health facilities, with another located at Mona Vale in the electorate of the Minister for Education and member for Pittwater, and the facility known as Dalwood at Seaforth in the electorate of Manly,

which was opened in December 2015. It is a very exciting time because it is clear that the Brookvale facility is almost complete, and we hope to open it formally on 19 February.

This facility represents a \$50 million expenditure by the State Government to support the community of the northern beaches. The centre will focus on preventative care, supporting people in their local community with a wide range of services that are available close to home. The services will include: child and family health, child and youth mental health, BreastScreen NSW, chronic and complex care, community adult mental health, the Northern Sydney Home Nursing Service, community drug and alcohol, multicultural health, oral health, rehabilitation and aged care, and health promotion. These services will be provided from the new purpose-built facilities, which will have state-of-the art, twenty-first century equipment.

In addition, at the rear of the community centre at Brookvale is a new area for car parking that will provide approximately 460 car parking spaces, of which about 250 spots will be reserved for commuters who use our new B-Line buses that operate on the northern beaches peninsula. It is a fantastic car park and I encourage all northern beaches commuters who catch public transport to use the new car park. The Brookvale centre will house some incredible staff who work in many areas that are aimed primarily at preventative health issues. Many of the staff worked at the old Queenscliff community health site for many years. I remember going there about 25 years ago when one of my two sons was only about 18 months old and the facility was dated even then.

It is certainly time for residents of the northern beaches to have the sorts of community health facilities that enable our wonderful nurses, doctors and allied health staff to deliver the preventative health services that every community should be the beneficiary of. In that regard, I wish the staff at Brookvale well as they enjoy the new facilities and I look forward very much to working with James Griffin, the member for Manly, at the opening on 19 February and in years to come to make sure that those services receive all necessary support from the New South Wales Government. I referred earlier to the first sod being turned on the project. That occurred on 19 May 2016, and the member for Manly conducted the topping off ceremony on 26 May 2017. The official opening on 19 February 2018 will be a great day, and I expect that the member for Manly and the Hon. Natalie Ward will also be in attendance.

ILLAWARRA PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:19): On 25 January 2018 Sean Kendall commented:

It's an indictment on a government that can't run a full service without using overtime.

That quote summarises the frustration of commuters on the South Coast line. It summarises the frustration of a community raising concerns about overcrowded four-car afternoon services on the South Coast line. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure responded by saying, "I want to make it abundantly clear there is no way to provide additional carriages for services on the South Coast line because every carriage in the fleet is used during peak periods." It is no surprise that the Minister is out of touch with the needs of Illawarra commuters. After all, he is following the lead of the Premier, who told Illawarra residents last year that:

The Illawarra has never had it so good.

She followed that up yesterday with the claim that the people of New South Wales were grateful for this Government. Sorry Premier, people are not "grateful" for the Government's continued failure to deliver key services. Among my priorities is pursuing the concerns about transport services that residents of Wollongong and the Illawarra raise with me. These include the need for safe access for everyone to Unanderra station by ending the six-year construction hiatus on the lifts that the Government abandoned in 2011. During these six years the elderly, parents with prams and people with a disability have struggled every day with the 72 steps to access the platform. People have to use other stations several kilometres away from their homes. People have been injured and hospitalised using those stairs, and people are sick of seeing lifts constructed and access improved at stations that ranked below Unanderra in the Government's own rankings.

I am sure that frustrated local residents would even be willing to name the lifts "Lifty McLiftyface" in a fake naming competition if that will help convince the Minister to get them built. But despite the Government refusing to build lifts at Unanderra station, according to the Premier, the Illawarra has never had it so good. I do not accept that and this year the Government should match Labor's commitment to fund the construction of the lifts and get them built once and for all. Local residents have waited long enough for the Government to finish the lifts whose construction began under the previous Labor Government.

Another concern is getting eight-car carriages on crowded afternoon services from Central to Wollongong. Commuters are sick of being squeezed like sardines onto these services. They are sick of being told that the only way to fix overcrowding is to wait until the new intercity fleet is introduced sometime in 2019. Once again, this Government is not even trying to address the concerns of Illawarra train commuters. But despite

constant train overcrowding and no Government plans to fix it, according to the Premier, the Illawarra has never had it so good.

Residents and stakeholders alike want the Maldon-Dombarton rail link built. Cancelled by the Greiner Liberal Government 30 years ago this year, this rail link will better connect the Illawarra with south-west Sydney and Western Sydney and take pressure off the South Coast line by removing some of the considerable freight load it carries. They want this Government to match Labor's commitment to invest \$50 million and work with the private sector and get the Maldon-Dombarton rail link built. But despite competing pressures between passenger and freight rail on the South Coast line, according to the Premier, the Illawarra has never had it so good.

Wollongong residents also want the Government to formally accept the Gong Shuttle funding offer put forward by the University of Wollongong and Wollongong City Council. Despite this offer being made last year, it appears that Transport for NSW officers have not picked up the phone to accept and finalise an agreement. While the Government backflipped on its decision to introduce full fares on the free Gong Shuttle from 29 January, and today passengers travel on it without charge, without a signed agreement Illawarra residents cannot be confident that this will continue beyond 30 June this year. We have discovered through documents released under freedom of information legislation that the fare decision was made following a three-day survey without consultation with major stakeholders, despite acknowledging that it would hit hardest low-income earners who use the shuttle to access education, shopping or the hospital, and that planning for fare introduction had been under way since August 2016.

There was another significant event taking place in Wollongong around that time: the Wollongong by-election. The record shows the Government, on the advice of the member for Kiama, was too scared to face the people of Wollongong then—and we now know why, given it was planning to introduce fares on a free service that was being used more than three million times a year. The brief to the Minister recommended that the introduction of fares on 29 January would allow for "adequate time to engage with stakeholders—estimated at a minimum three months."

I am not sure how this was going to be achieved, given the Government delayed the announcement for as long as possible because it knew it would outrage the people of Wollongong. And that is exactly what it got. But despite the Minister's attempts to scuttle the shuttle, according to the Premier, the Illawarra has never had it so good. It is time for the Government to stop the delays, end the excuses, and get on with improving transport services in the Illawarra. Until it does, I will continue to pursue the Government for a better deal for public transport users in my region.

WENTWORTH ANGLING CLUB COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANT

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (18:24): Just prior to Christmas 2017 it was my great pleasure to meet and congratulate Wentworth Angling Club committee members President Bob Maynard and Vice President Ross McClure on their recent successful grant under the Community Building Partnership program. For those who might not know, the club is 17 kilometres west of Wentworth on the Old Renmark Road, within the wonderful grounds of the Fort Courage Caravan Park, which occupies up to 70 acres of Murray River frontage. Nearby is Frenchmans Creek, Rufus River, Deadmans Creek and the Darling Anabranch. It is a great fishing area for cod, golden perch, redfin perch and yabbies. The Fort Courage park is located not far from the New South Wales border with South Australia. It is one of the furthestmost points in my electorate of Murray and more than five hours by car from my home in Coleambally in the eastern part. On the day it was wonderful to meet Bob and Ross and other representatives of the committee. They were very appreciative of the funds that will go towards the construction of disabled toilet facilities and a connection to the waste treatment system.

These grants make a difference to small community organisations such as the Wentworth Angling Club because they provide them with an opportunity to expand or upgrade facilities and ensure access and inclusion to activities for all. As I noted on the day, the club has some wonderful facilities that open up onto the mighty Murray River and can be utilised all year round. Competitions are held on the second Saturday of each month. A Saturday evening dinner often follows a great day's fishing and families and visitors are most welcome. The club's reputation is so strong that it has more than 800 members spread far and wide across Australia. I once again congratulate the committee on its efforts in applying for and receiving funding under the Community Building Partnership program. I look forward to again travelling to the area and catching up with more representatives of our great community organisations.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:26): I join with a number of members representing the Hunter region in raising the outrageous new transport timetabling that private contractor Keolis Downer introduced on 14 January and its significant impact on the people of the Charlestown electorate. Hundreds of

constituents have contacted my office with concerns about limited operating hours, changed routes, lack of access to timetables and significant increases in journey times. During the rollout of the new bus timetables and routes my office was inundated—and continues to be inundated—with requests from individual constituents and local community groups for assistance with printing timetables, simply because the Newcastle Transport Hub did not have any available. Reduced operating hours have meant that shift workers are unable to get to and from work and increased journey times have had a significant impact on the livelihoods of commuters.

No-one has been impacted more than the most vulnerable members of our community—people living with disabilities. I have written to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure about each of these issues. I have met with a number of parents of people with intellectual disabilities who use public transport to get to their workplaces. David told me that his daughter Jodie was forced to leave her place of employment because she could no longer commute to and from work on public transport. It is now far too difficult for her to navigate the multiple routes she would need to. Jodie had been employed by the same employer for 30 years. Prior to the change in bus routes she would catch the 111 bus from her home in Windale directly to Lambton where she would have a short walk to work.

Jodie overcame the various difficulties of learning to catch public transport through the repetition of using the 111 route daily. Recent changes to bus timetables and routes have meant that to get to work Jodie would have to catch three buses, bringing her one-way travel time to more than 1½ hours and her total travel time to more than three hours per day. This was difficult enough, but if one of Jodie's buses was running late—which we are hearing is often the case under the new timetable—she would miss the connecting route. That is not an easy task for someone with an intellectual disability to work through. Unfortunately, the difficulties of learning to coordinate the new routes have proven to be too difficult for Jodie and she has been forced to resign. Jodie's story is one of many.

I also met with Shirley, the mother of Josh who also has an intellectual disability. It took a long period of training for Josh to learn his bus route to work. Josh now has to be completely retrained to catch six different buses, with Shirley by his side every morning and afternoon. People with disabilities, such as Jodie and Josh, should not have to lose out financially or socially because of timetable changes. Jodie and Josh should be able to commute and work in exactly the same way as they have in the past. People like Jodie and Josh should be considered to be an intrinsic part of our society, but the new bus timetable is telling them that they are not valuable contributors. They are being shut out because the bus timetables do not work for them. The changes in timetabling and routes have robbed Jodie, Josh and many others of their independence.

This Government argues that the private operator for Newcastle buses has a financial incentive to provide a good service to commuters. The transport Minister promised a "better and more frequent" service for my electorate. He promised a "world-class system". However, the real experiences of people such as Jodie and Josh show that the service is anything but world class. The commuters of Charlestown and the Hunter deserve better. Finally, another constituent story that really stuck with me is Paul's story. Paul is non-verbal and suffers from severe scoliosis. Every day of Paul's working life he has travelled by bus to ConnectAbility, which is a disability services and support organisation in Warabrook. This is not only a workplace for Paul but also an important part of his social life.

Paul's mother, Lynne, has spent a long time getting Paul into the habit of catching the bus. Unfortunately, for Paul to get to work he would have to catch a number of buses, which is far too difficult for him to learn. Lynne is driving Paul to work and paying for Paul to be picked up from work. The privatisation of Newcastle buses has come at a cost to my most vulnerable constituents. It is discrimination by this Government. This entire debacle is an obvious cash fix from a government that is pandering to the big end of town. It drops everyday people into the deep end as a result of increasing fares and has reduced services for those who need it most. Public transport exists for people, not profit. I call on the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to take responsibility for this mess, to step in, and to find a solution for commuters with disabilities.

KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:31): On Australia Day, the citizens of Ku-ring-gai traditionally reflect on the timeless beauty, tree-lined streetscapes and bushland surrounds that characterise our area. We welcome those from other lands who have chosen to become Australian citizens and celebrate the local people who have been honoured by the Ku-ring-gai Council or the Commonwealth Government for their services to the community. This year at the Bicentennial Park, West Pymble, I joined the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai, Jennifer Anderson, along with a number of Ku-ring-gai councillors, the Federal member for Bradfield and the member for Davidson to do all those things. Immigrants from 18 foreign countries became Australian citizens.

On a number of occasions in this House I have spoken about the substantial volunteer network in Ku-ring-gai, which is very much the glue that holds our community together. All five local winners of the

Australia Day Awards for Outstanding Service to the Community are perfect examples of those who selflessly give their time, expertise and financial resources to make Ku-ring-gai a better place for others. Ku-ring-gai's Citizen of the Year, Peter Kirkwood, has been a resident of the upper North Shore for nearly 30 years. He has given extraordinary service through a number of voluntary organisations that include the Rotary Club of Wahroonga, the Hornsby Community Safety Precinct Committee, the Ku-ring-gai Police Community Safety Committee, St Paul's Anglican Church and the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC].

After joining Rotary in 1999, Peter initiated a project to focus on the needs of youth and people with a disability on the upper North Shore. Last year a 16-year project was realised when the new state-of-the-art PCYC building was opened in Waitara. Not content with taking the plaudits for his efforts at the official opening ceremony, Peter impressively played the didgeridoo to accompany the welcome to country. He is a genuine force of nature and continually achieves great things from which the entire community substantially benefits. The Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre won the local Group Award. The centre has more than 20 community programs. Since 1979 it has helped local residents who are disadvantaged or who require help with everyday tasks such as transport, shopping, learning English, computer access and literacy, and socialising. In 2017 the centre helped more than 50,000 individuals and gave more than 100,000 hours of service to local residents. The centre encourages and enables aged people to identify opportunities and achieve their personal goals.

Last year I had the opportunity to take the Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Tanya Davies, to the centre at the time of the weekly meeting of the Yarning Group. The use of "yarning" with its double meaning is deliberate. There was certainly no shortage of either woolly handiwork or animated storytelling. I congratulate general manager Michele Bell and her team on the outstanding assistance and sense of community that they engender. For more than 26 years, Jo-Anne Perry has been synonymous with the Ku-ring-gai Netball Association and the Wahroonga Netball Club. She has been a coach, a treasurer, a website manager, a secretary and a vice-president, and is currently the association's president. Jo-Anne is a tireless advocate for netball in Ku-ring-gai, including for upgraded facilities and increased participation. Anyone who has experienced the phenomenon that is Saturday netball at the Canoon Road courts at South Turramurra knows that netball is a giant of local sport. Jo-Anne eats, sleeps and breathes netball for the 18 clubs and more than 3,500 members of the association, and she was a deserving winner of an individual award.

Richard Babb won an individual award for both reaching out to local residents who are experiencing Parkinson's disease, in his capacity as vice-president of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Parkinson's Support Group, and for the significant role he played in establishing the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. Under Richard's stewardship, the Parkinson's Support Group provides valuable educational sessions to assist in understanding the disease, improves lifestyles through promoting available therapies, keeps members informed of recent research, and offers practical support. The women's shelter is now three years old and has safely housed more than 230 women who have been the victims of domestic violence or homelessness. Hannah Burn is Ku-ring-gai's Young Citizen of the Year. Hannah is the volunteer coordinator at St James Anglican Church in Turramurra. While only 21 years old, she oversees six voluntary teams who regularly visit nursing homes and provide gardening support for the elderly and practical assistance to families in crisis.

I congratulate Christopher Russell—until recently of North Turramurra—on being made a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to agricultural science and technology through advisory, developmental and research roles, and as a mentor and innovator. I have personally benefited from his drive and expertise as a community volunteer, especially in support of the North Turramurra Action Group and the North Turramurra Community Fire Unit. Mark Anderson, the Principal of Normanhurst Boys High School, was deservedly recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to secondary education in New South Wales and to educational standards. Dr David Hunt of Wahroonga was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to education and mathematics. I congratulate our local heroes on their awards. They remind us that supporting others less fortunate than ourselves and fostering cohesive communities are values that as Australians we all admire. There is no better day than our national day on which to celebrate those who epitomise those values.

WALLARAH 2 COAL PROJECT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:36): I speak on behalf of not only my community but also other communities across the Central Coast about the conditional approval of the Wallarah 2 Coal Project. This project has upset many people, not only in the Wyong valleys but also in the Bluehaven area and Warnervale. People approach me daily scratching their head and asking how on Earth the development could be approved. I could make seven, eight, nine or 10 private member's statements about the development consent document and questioning how it could have been approved, but I will concentrate on compensatory water.

The Wallarah 2 Coal Project has always been questionable because of its potential impact on the Central Coast water catchment. The proponents of the mine have used some strange magical formula to determine that

300 megalitres of water will be lost from the system. They originally wanted water licences to compensate for that loss. However, the Government refused and instead told the proponents that they would be required to return water to the catchment. No-one, including water experts, can establish how the proponents arrived at that figure because there is no baseline data. The proponents' document and the consent agreement state that 2.5 megalitres a day will come from the mine, and when it rains that will increase to 3.5 megalitres. Apparently the water will not come from the catchment; it will magically come from somewhere else.

The water will be treated before being put into Wallarah Creek and Tuggerah Lake. Each year more than 900 megalitres of water coming from the mine will be treated and put into Tuggerah Lake. No assessment has been made of the damage that could be caused by this amount of water. It is said that in the tenth year, when the company gets to longwall No. 6, water will start being lost from the catchment. Then 300 megalitres from that 900 megalitres a year will be treated and put back into the drinking water of the residents of the Central Coast. On an issue as big as this, one would have thought that the Government would have consulted with the residents of the Central Coast. It has not. However, a secret meeting was held between the proponents, the Department of Planning and the council, which was under administration at the time and therefore had no elected representatives, and a deal was done to accept that water. That is not good enough.

It is bad enough that it has got to this stage after the promises that were made by previous Premiers and Ministers, which have been documented and about which I have spoken at length. It is now proposed the company will compensate for the lost water at 300 megalitres per year—even though the company's figures show 900 megalitres per year, and even that figure is probably underestimated. That 300 megalitres will be put through some treatment work which is yet to be designed and put on public display, according to a water plan that is yet to be developed and put out for consultation, and then put back into people's drinking water. The residents of the Central Coast are not going to wear it. A public meeting was held on the Australia Day long weekend. Suddenly it dawned on people right across the Central Coast, including people from the electorates of Terrigal and Gosford, that this will impact them, and they are not happy. Indeed, at that meeting they said that they are prepared to raise whatever amount of money is needed to fight it. I also will continue to fight. This Government has to start consulting with the residents of the Central Coast on this issue.

MANLY ELECTORATE PRIMARY SCHOOL SPORTS ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:42): Tonight I update the House on a remarkable effort and inspirational story of eight students from the electorate of Manly. Last October at the New South Wales primary school sporting championships there were three podium places on offer for the Boys 11 to 13 years 4 x 100 metre relay. I am proud to say that schools from Manly took two of them. Students from Balgowlah Heights Public and Manly West Public schools were placed first and third. In a blistering show of pace around the track at Sydney Olympic Park, the boys from Balgowlah Heights Public School finished in first place with a time of 52.43 seconds, followed by Manly West Public School in third place with a time of 53.38 seconds. What makes this achievement particularly special is that the boys essentially trained themselves. The Balgowlah Heights Public School students Mack McInnes, Stanley Martin, Hugo Walters and Elliot Palmqvist and the Manly West Public School students Joey Hobbard-Poulton, Tylan Berry-Blackman, Liam Davies and Connor Phillips have shown terrific dedication and discipline.

After dominating the Manly Zone Athletics Championship, followed by the Sydney North Regional Athletics Championship, these talented young men organised their parents to drop them off and pick them up at Narrabeen Sports Academy, often twice a week, so they could train together. I note that the Narrabeen Sport and Recreation Centre will receive a new \$1.2 million running track, as announced by the Minister for Sport in December 2017. Hopefully this significant investment in the athletics track will support young runners like Mack, Stanley, Hugo, Elliot, Joey, Tylan, Liam and Connor into the future. I understand that the boys received some very useful advice which contributed to their outstanding results.

One evening Australian athletics icon Melinda Gainsford-Taylor spotted the boys training and assisted them with their baton changeover. This led to a quicker change and a secret weapon for the team. I thank the parents of both teams for the support and time they have given their children. The confidence that sport can often inspire in a young person should not be lost on any of us. Ultimately, the opportunity to have a go is something that young people can only do with the support of their parents and carers. I am grateful to Mr David McInnes for bringing the great success of Balgowlah Heights Public and Manly West Public schools to my attention.

WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:44): Since the Liberal-Nationals Government changes to the State's workers compensation scheme, the support injured workers had come to expect for rehabilitation and medical treatment has been stripped away. The 2012 changes cut access to medical treatment for injured workers by restricting the time frame in which assistance is available. I recently met with Ms Mary-Louise Clifford, a

highly qualified, highly regarded and active professional early childhood director who has felt the brunt of these changes to our State's workers compensation system. She slipped and fell at work on 5 January 2013. Ms Clifford shared her experience with me in a letter, which states:

My reason for coming to see you and seek your support at this time is due to my battle with the changes to the NSW Workers Compensation System. As you know the changes made to the management of workers compensation changed five years ago. I am in the first group of workers who are being impacted by these changes. I believe the changes are very detrimental to the Workers and the community.

After sustaining her injury at work, Ms Clifford attended her local public hospital, X-rays were taken and she was assessed and sent home with pain relief and crutches. The following week she attended her local general practitioner. Her pain, discomfort and injury did not subside. She had a CT scan, physiotherapy and hydrotherapy but the pain, inflammation and swelling persisted. Then on 16 February Ms Clifford went into cardiac arrest and was admitted to Gosford Hospital. She had suffered a massive pulmonary embolism which was caused by a blood clot from the ankle area. Mary-Louise was placed in an induced coma and her family was informed that she was not expected to survive.

After 10 days Ms Clifford regained consciousness. Further complications began, including renal failure, blood loss and an E. coli infection. She now has a permanent hypoxic brain injury. Even with these challenges, Mary continued to recover and undertake rehabilitation, eventually being discharged and able to return home. After all this, Mary returned to work in January 2014 for two hours, two days a week. She is now up to four days a week, seven hours a day. For her efforts she was a finalist in the 2015 return to work awards but she has experienced problems with the system since the beginning of her interaction with it. Every claim has been disputed. Numerous representations made to the insurance regulator have invariably found in her favour, but the system is slowly wearing her down physically and mentally.

There is a consensus between her treating doctor and the insurance doctor that Mary-Louise will never return to full-time work. Under this system she will receive no further top-up payments of her wages for lost hours and she is entitled to only two more years of medical care, with no plan for chronic lifelong medical requirements for which she will need to plan and factor into her family life. After all that, she is still fortunate because, unlike a lot of workers in this State on workers compensation who have not returned to full duties and full hours, her employer has kept her on. That is something for which her employer, Glenning Valley Child Care Centre, deserves a lot of credit.

Made more than six years ago, these cruel changes are both harsh and unnecessary and result in people like Mary-Louise suffering each day. The system has left her with a lower income and no certainty as to the future care for her injuries. Mary-Louise is just one of many people who have visited my office and who are suffering under the current system. She is fortunate that her employer is supporting her. I have written to the Minister to bring Mary-Louise's case to his attention. Members need to be aware that the workers compensation system—which to be fair was not perfect under the Labor Government but which is less perfect now—needs to assist injured workers more than it currently does.

HIS HOLINESS MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ SYDNEY VISIT

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (18:50): It is with great honour and privilege that I pay tribute to His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, spiritual leader of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan [BAPS] Sanstha, on his first official visit to New South Wales. I understand that His Holiness arrived in Melbourne last night and we eagerly await his journey to Sydney. This is a very auspicious occasion for the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Rosehill and their thousands of devotees. I am honoured to have the privilege of joining the devotees to warmly welcome His Holiness to Sydney as part of his first visit to the Australia-New Zealand region. Thousands of devotees, including interstate and international visitors, are looking forward to the many traditional celebrations, spiritual discourses, seminars, and special events that will be open to the community during his visit.

His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj is the sixth guru in the divine lineage of Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan. His profound discourses have enlightened countless devotees and well-wishers and motivated them to adopt pious, addiction-free lives. His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj leads by exemplifying devotion, humility, and selflessness. For decades, His Holiness has relentlessly travelled throughout India and the world to inspire and counsel countless devotees. Even today at the age of 84, he continues to drive the BAPS mission of striving for a better society through individual development by instilling values, promoting spirituality, cultivating skills, nurturing growth and preserving Indian culture and the Hindu ideals of faith, unity and selfless service in diverse communities around the world.

As leader of the BAPS, His Holiness oversees a worldwide socio-spiritual volunteer and humanitarian organisation that was established in 1907. Today there are more than a million BAPS followers and almost

4,000 centres across 20 countries in Africa, Europe, Australia, South-East Asia and North America. I have had the privilege of visiting the BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi and seeing firsthand the largest Hindu temple in the world. It is not surprisingly rated as a wonder of the modern world due to its magnificent structures and carvings, which were created over five years by around 11,000 volunteer artisans.

BAPS has been in Australia since 1996. Although they were not formally established until 2002, they now have mandirs in each major city. Their devotees are dedicated to community service, peace and harmony and are motivated by Hindu principles to care for the world by caring for societies, families, and individuals. Volunteering is an important part of BAPS mandirs. BAPS volunteers make a selfless contribution to the community through programs that are dedicated to helping seniors, children, youths and families. Their senior care and development programs provide meaningful and enjoyable activities for the elderly and cater for their physical, financial and emotional needs. Their programs for children and youths focus on character-building activities and personal development with an emphasis on spiritual, family and cultural activities and, importantly, becoming good global citizens.

Guided by the Hindu tradition, BAPS devotees are about the common good, mutual respect and living in harmony. Their volunteers actively contribute to the community by participating in tree planting days, clean-up days, neighbourhood open days and blood donations. It is through these very spiritual and humanitarian activities that BAPS endeavours to develop better citizens of tomorrow who have high esteem for their roots and culture. Under the guidance and leadership of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, BAPS aspires to build a community that is free of addictions and is morally, ethically and spiritually pure. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I warmly welcome His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj on his first official visit to Sydney—a very auspicious occasion for the BAPS community and our State.

ALBION PARK RAIL BYPASS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:54): It is with absolutely no joy that today I speak on an issue to which many in this House need no introduction—the long-awaited construction of the Albion Park Rail bypass. Unfortunately, this project—once heralded by those opposite as their signature road project in the Illawarra—is quickly becoming a symbol of an incompetent, arrogant and out-of-touch Government whose time is well and truly up. With a little over 12 months to go until the next State election, this project exemplifies a Premier who is out of touch, a Minister who is incompetent and a local member who is more interested in seeking a promotion or a new job in Canberra than getting on with the job of delivering for our local community.

For members to truly appreciate just how woeful this Government's mismanagement of this project has been over the past seven years, I will give the House a little history lesson. First, there was the \$1.1 million study into the route of the bypass—a report that took two years to complete and a report that the Government tried to hide because it simply confirmed the same route first recommended to government 20 years ago. What absolute genius from the party that claims day after day in this place that infrastructure is its strong point. Then there is the long-awaited planning approval. First, planning approval for the project was due at the end of 2016 and then it was due at the end of 2017. It was finally granted, 13 long months after the initial deadline, on 31 January 2018. I should not have been surprised—after all, these levels of failure and embarrassment are nothing out of the ordinary for this Government. Now the Government wants us to believe that a 13-month delay in planning approval will have no effect on the time line for the construction of the bypass.

Sadly for those opposite, my community is not that gullible. And what about the member for Kiama's fake fight with Shellharbour council? He was out there throwing as much mud as he could in the middle of a local government election to deflect from his Government's deficiencies. Then came the latest budget last year, a budget with a \$4.5 billion surplus but still only crumbs for this project, and even then only enough crumbs to shuffle some more paperwork in Roads and Maritime Services. And my personal favourite—I know you will like this, Mr Temporary Speaker—was when the *Illawarra Mercury* uncovered the Government's secret plan to half build the bypass by refusing to construct the Yallah interchange—a decision that would effectively cut off Dapto and West Dapto residents from accessing the bypass.

The only thing that the Government's bypass will actually bypass will be the good people of Dapto and West Dapto—suburbs that will have an extra 20,000 homes and 55,000 people over the coming decades. It is an absolute absurdity and is a plan cooked up by a Government that does not want to fork out money for a proper bypass. It is a blatant, two-finger salute to the good people of Dapto. Let us make no mistake about this: The community is stuck in limbo, and all these failures come at a time when Roads and Maritime Services has publicly stated that congestion on the road will only get worse.

The Princes Highway at Albion Park Rail has been voted the worst road in the Illawarra and one of the worst roads in New South Wales. All my community has to look forward to is a situation that is getting worse because of the incompetence of members opposite. Let us take a step back and look at the facts. After seven long,

miserable years of those opposite in government, local residents drive through Albion Park Rail and the only thing to be seen is a traffic jam on the Princes Highway and Daisy the cow roaming through paddocks that long ago were meant to be home to the bypass. The reality is that in 2018 the Albion Park Rail bypass is non-existent.

That history lesson shows us one thing and one thing only: People cannot trust this Government when it comes to construction of the Albion Park Rail bypass. No matter where people live in southern Illawarra, there is a good chance they use the Princes Highway through Albion Park Rail, and anyone who uses that road knows that the bypass is not an option; it is not a luxury. It is not even something that should be on a wish list. It is something that needs to be constructed to ensure the local community is not stuck in deadlock. Christmas, Easter, every long weekend and almost every day in peak hour cars move at a snail's pace. [*Time expired.*]

Ms ANNA WATSON: I seek an extension of time.

Leave not granted.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (19:00): I am sure that the good member means well in her private member's statement and clearly cares for her community. However, I remind her that it was 20 years ago that Labor first identified this, but Labor failed to deliver it. I can correct the record and state that it was this strong Coalition Government that made the sensible financial decisions that have allowed us to build these highways that are so desperately needed. We are very proud of our record achievements in infrastructure development. We have some \$81 billion on the books for the next four years. On behalf of the Government I remind the member for Shellharbour that she can try to rewrite history, but history will show that it is the Coalition Government that actually delivers on vital infrastructure, whether it is roads, rail, hospitals or schools. I am proud of this Government's achievements. Despite what Labor says, we will continue to deliver for the good people of New South Wales.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: Mr Temporary Speaker, it was in 2011 that the RMS identified that the population—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:01 until
Thursday 8 February 2018 at 10:00.**