



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 13 February 2018

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 13 February 2018

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Denise, Katrina and Luke Tosi, relatives of the late Paul Tosi, the former General Manager of Campbelltown City Council, guests of the member for Macquarie Fields.

[Notices of motions given.]

Private Members' Statements

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:11): Recently I had the pleasure of attending The Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club's Australia Day breakfast and citizenship ceremony at the Third Settlement Reserve, Winston Hills, in the northern end of my electorate of Seven Hills. The event was also attended by the local Federal member for Mitchell, the Hon. Alex Hawke, MP. I pay tribute to President Robert Mackey, president-elect Fran Broadbent and the club's great executive team for once again organising an engaging community and family event. Sometimes the tremendous work the club does in the local area goes unacknowledged; I am proud to ensure that the club gets the recognition it deserves in this House.

I was also fortunate to attend Australia Day celebrations at Blacktown with Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Minister Ray Williams, the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, and the member for Parramatta, Mr Geoff Lee. We were joined by Professor Michelle Simmons, the 2018 Australian of the Year, who spoke of her hard work and dedication to become a pioneer in the fields of atomic electronics and quantum computing. I congratulate Professor Simmons on her incredible achievements and, in particular, on her advocacy of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education areas.

On 8 February, I attended the opening of the new car park facilities at Blacktown Hospital with Premier Berejiklian, the Minister for Health, Mr Brad Hazzard, and the member for Riverstone, Mr Kevin Conolly. The occasion marked the completion of the \$18 million multistorey car park, which has integrated the use of parking navigation technology. The new car park adds an additional 400 spaces to the 600 spaces delivered by the Government in 2014, making a total of 1,600 car spaces within the Blacktown Hospital campus for patients, carers, nurses, doctors and administrative staff members.

It is great to see so much investment as part of the New South Wales Government's \$8 billion plan for new and upgraded health facilities, including the \$42 million that has been spent on the Blacktown and Mt Druitt hospitals since 2014. The Government is not only investing in vital health infrastructure but also helping patients and carers with parking concessions. Indeed, since the opening of the scheme last year more than 110,000 people have benefited. At the opening, the Premier spoke with, among others, a patient, Mr John Riffel, who was thankful because this scheme saved him more than \$220 in his eight-week treatment at the hospital.

The Government has also made huge investments in graduate medical professionals across the Western Sydney Local Health District—in particular, the 89 new junior doctors who kicked off their careers alongside 60 nurses and midwives at Westmead Children's Hospital in mid-January. This year 999 new intern doctors and 2,400 nurses and midwives will begin their medical careers across New South Wales. This would not have been possible without the Government's \$107 million-plus investment in new doctor programs. When first elected, the Government made a commitment to provide 1,000 additional medical professionals. I proudly report that our Liberal-Nationals team has yet again delivered, having provided an additional 6,700 nurses and midwives across this great State.

Our nurses and midwives are the backbone of our hospital and healthcare facilities and it is appropriate that we recognise their valuable contribution to our healthcare scheme. This Government is funding 300 enrolled nursing scholarships for students who wish to undertake the Diploma of Nursing at TAFE or other registered

training organisations. The scholarship program is available from March 2018. Upon completion of the students' training and professional registration, this funding program has the potential to increase job opportunities within the New South Wales health system. The Government is also funding an election commitment of \$9.6 million for 55 more specialist nurses and midwives, 10 mental health clinical nurses and educators to support undergraduates and graduates, and 30 clinical support officers over the 2017-18 period.

I also commend the hospitals in my local electorate, and I mention in particular the \$1 billion investment in the Westmead Hospital redevelopment, which is the largest in New South Wales history. In my electorate of Seven Hills the Government is upgrading hospitals, schools and railway stations. In addition, the Government is improving services, protecting the vulnerable, and driving down the cost of living with schemes such as the Active Kids Rebate, energy bill assistance and first home buyer stamp duty concessions. The Government is doing great work in the electorate of Seven Hills.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL TOSI

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:15): In early November 2017 I had breakfast with the former General Manager of Campbelltown Council, Mr Paul Tosi. We shared some laughs and some old stories, and we swapped notes on the latest political machinations and events. As was always the case, Paul beamed with pride as he spoke about his family, especially his grandchildren. It was very much like old times. As we departed, we made a commitment to catch up for a Chinese meal with two other dear friends in early December. We had had similar engagements in the past and I was looking forward to catching up with Paul again.

Unfortunately, that dinner appointment was one that Paul could not attend. Sadly and prematurely, Paul was taken from us on 23 November 2017, aged 70. Life can be so kind in bringing in people like Paul into our lives, yet it can also be so cruel in taking the people we care about so early. If nominations were called for the State's best council general manager, Paul Tosi would win in a canter—not least because no-one would dare to nominate against him. Managing the affairs of local government for an area as large as Campbelltown is complex; managing 15 councillors is near impossible. But Paul Tosi did it with ease, with a smile and with unsurpassed passion.

I was honoured to serve 12 years on Campbelltown Council, including a term as mayor. During those years Paul was always generous with sharing his time with me and he provided his company and counsel when I needed it most. He knew the intricacies of government like the back of his hand. He had the ears of the major players, and he had respect. Indeed, the respect and esteem that was afforded to Paul in life was also reflected at his funeral on 30 November 2017. All levels of government were represented, as were the many layers of the Campbelltown community Paul had served so diligently. I found the guard of honour performed by council's own staff in front of their administration building on Queen Street particularly touching. While Paul moved with Premiers, Ministers, members of Parliament and other general managers, he was first and foremost a champion of his staff, and in particular his outdoor staff. He knew them all and was happiest when at the Minto depot catching up with them.

Paul was proud of Campbelltown. As far as Paul was concerned, only the best would do for the town he called home. The epitaph on the grave of the famous English architect Sir Christopher Wren, who designed St Paul's Cathedral, reads: "... si monumentum requiris, circumspice." That Latin phrase translates to: If you are searching for his monument, look around. That epitaph applies equally to Paul Tosi. He left the city with a first-class athletic stadium and a football stadium, a wonderful arts centre and an impressive Ingleburn library and community centre. The list goes on but, more importantly, Paul instilled in Campbelltown citizens a sense of pride in their city and their home. For a city that has, at times, been on the receiving end of unfair and unflattering publicity, the importance of those sentiments cannot be over emphasised.

The appropriateness of Wren's epitaph is not limited to Paul's work as Campbelltown Council's general manager. Paul's greatest achievement and his most treasured monument was, and always will be, his family. I am honoured today to say these words with his family in the gallery. No conversation with Paul could go for any length of time without him mentioning his wife, Denise; his children, Michael, Belinda and Katrina; and his grandchildren, Luke, Connor and Sean. Paul's concern and love for his wife and his family knew no bounds. For him, they were central to everything, whether it was a family holiday to Disneyland, coffee at Macarthur Square, or watching his grandson Luke swing a golf club. At our breakfast in November, Paul showed me a video on his iPhone of his grandson Luke giving a speech at school on Grandparents Day about how special his grandparents were to him. Paul's face could not have been filled with any more pride and joy. He was never happier or more content than when he was with his family or talking about them.

I dare say that Campbelltown and the council will never again see the likes of Paul Tosi. He was a one-off, a very special man who touched and impacted on the lives of others. Campbelltown has lost a champion and I have lost a dear friend. In my electorate office, I have pinned Paul's funeral service booklet on the noticeboard above

my desk. His smiling photo reminds me of the importance of honourable public service and makes me remember all the good times we had together. To Denise and Paul's family, I offer my sincerest condolences on your loss. May Paul rest in peace and may his memory live on forever in our hearts.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (12:20): I acknowledge the moving contribution from the member for Macquarie Fields. Clearly Mr Tosi was an important man to the member and to the communities of Western Sydney. I thank Denise and their family for sharing him with the people of New South Wales. In relation to Mr Tosi, I refer to the quote from Christopher Wren, "If you are searching for his monument, look around." Campbelltown has lost a favourite son.

OXLEY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (12:21): Today I recognise some incredible citizens in the Oxley electorate who received awards on Australia Day 2018. Four Australia Day events were held throughout the electorate. I could attend only three because two of them clashed. Those are the decisions sometimes required of a country member. At the ceremony at Urunga in the Bellinger Valley, the Citizen of the Year was a well-deserving Ann Phelan. The Young Citizen of the Year was Katelyn Beaumont, who has a proud history representing Australia in cricket. The Community Service Award went to Debbie Rose, who for many years has been a stalwart of the Urunga Chamber of Commerce. She is a great citizen and businesswoman who absolutely loves her community.

The Community Event Award went to the Dorrigo and Guy Fawkes Agricultural Show for the annual Dorrigo Show. Sally Duckett was present with her family to accept the award. Sally is an incredibly special person and the Dorrigo Show goes from strength to strength. The Junior Sportsperson of the Year was Katie Thorn, who recently carried the Queen's Baton in the electorate before leaving to start a degree in physical education at Wollongong University; I do not think there could be a better student. Katie was a former captain of the Bellinger High School futsal team and represented the school in netball, basketball, cricket, football, touch football, hockey, volleyball, cross-country, Little Athletics and swimming. In 2017—her final year before going to university—she attended the Australian Athletics Championships, coming sixth in the 400 metres hurdles and eighth in the heptathlon. Katie is an incredibly inspiring young woman.

At the Nambucca Valley ceremony, the Young Citizen of the Year was Molly Langley. A credit to her community and her family, Molly spends a lot of time raising money for students in Fiji. She recognises and acknowledges she is a very lucky young woman to live on the Mid North Coast and wants to ensure that children in countries such as Fiji have the opportunity for a good education. My good friend Francis Robinson, an amazing woman, was named Senior Citizen of the Year. Since retiring as a volunteer coordinator at the Anglican opportunity shop, she has worked with all the energy imaginable to set up Mums from Macksville, a small group of crafty volunteers who create care packages for groups such as Dads in Distress and Homes for Heroes. She is an incredible lady, a very good person and a proud citizen of the shire.

The Nambucca Valley Citizen of the Year was Irene Rowsell. Irene is never backward in coming forward in raising funds for the cancer society. She is an incredibly hardworking person and also a good friend. I acknowledge that Gary Johnstone has stood down as the coordinator of the Nambucca Valley Shire Australia Day awards. He has done a great job. I thank his wife, Norma, for sharing him with the community, and continuing to do so. The Macleay Valley Citizen of the Year is another good friend, Betty Green, who for many years served as matron of the Kempsey District Hospital and also as Kempsey Shire mayor. She has given many years of committed and distinguished support and guidance to the community and is a Kempsey icon.

The Kempsey Shire's Young Citizen of the Year was Abigael Baker from Aldavilla; Volunteer of the Year was another friend, Richard Collins, from South West Rocks; and Community Group of the Year was Baylin's Gift. Baylin's Gift resulted from a very personal and sad situation, but out of sorrow can come strength. It is a charity committed to educating young people and their support networks on depression, anxiety, gender/sexual identification and suicide awareness. It was started by Hayley Hoskins, a beautiful woman whose son took his own life. She is an incredibly special person who is continuing to fight so that people do not have to experience what she and her family have had to experience.

In the Hastings Valley, the Wauchope community celebrated Australia Day in style at the showground, led by the master of ceremonies, Neville Parsons, and Mayor Peter Pinson. Senior Citizen of the Year is George Campbell, who is involved in Wauchope Rotary and many other community organisations. Two of the nominees for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's Citizen of the Year were Lisa McLeod from Pappinbarra—ironically, it is the anniversary of the Pappinbarra fires, which took place 12 months ago to the day yesterday—who was recognised for her tireless work in helping the community recover from those terrible fires; and a community stalwart, Phillip Morton, from Rollands Plains. He is always fighting for a better deal, sealed roads and community facilities. I congratulate all these wonderful people from a wonderful electorate.

PITTWATER ELECTORATE VOLUNTEER SURF LIFESAVERS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (12:26): Today I express my local community's gratitude, admiration and great affection for our volunteer surf lifesavers. Across Pittwater's amazing ocean beaches thousands of men and women don the red-and-yellow cap over the summer months to keep the public safe at our beaches, including locals and the countless visitors to Pittwater's wonderful beaches every year. These brave and dedicated men and women are not paid. Their clubs often function on little more than the goodwill of community members, local businesses and the club members themselves to provide the resources they need. Their role in my local community is fundamental. They are an intrinsic element of the social capital that binds the Pittwater community together.

Over the 2016-17 season, Pittwater's volunteer surf lifesavers performed almost 350 rescues, more than 6,500 preventative actions, and 1,890 first aid treatments. These potential tragedies were averted because of the love, selflessness, dedication and professionalism of the volunteers in our surf lifesaving clubs. It is an outstanding effort that is made all the more impressive by the fact that it is achieved by unpaid volunteers who perform with incredible diligence and professionalism. Apart from their beach safety responsibilities, our surf clubs are a bastion of the strong community and volunteer spirit that makes Pittwater such a special place to live and to visit. Every time a volunteer surf lifesaver pulls on their red-and-yellow cap, that ethos of selflessness, of giving back to the community and of helping those in need burns that little bit brighter.

I thank all surf lifesavers for their contribution, which continues a great legacy in our community and is enmeshed in the very fibre of who we are. I express my great pride and passion for our volunteer surf lifesavers. However, I am compelled to give a warning in this place today to those who may seek to threaten the great tradition of volunteer lifesaving in Pittwater and, indeed, elsewhere on the New South Wales coast. Last year, from this very spot, I reported community concerns that Northern Beaches Council was increasing its surveillance of volunteer surf lifesaving operations with an apparent view to taking over those operations and replacing them with professional services. This had led to members of my community questioning whether the council would take over volunteer surf lifesaver responsibilities with paid lifeguards. Council assured me that no such takeover plan existed, but concerns in my community remain. Reports persist of individuals within council suggesting that the current arrangement with Pittwater life saving clubs is not working.

Most recently, I was surprised to learn that council is conducting a review of service scopes, looking into what role volunteer lifesavers and paid lifeguards should play in the future. Of course, there is nothing wrong with a local council reviewing its provision of services and ensuring that those contracted to provide services, even volunteers, carry out that role with the highest degree of professionalism—it is quite appropriate. However, when combined with the ongoing concerns expressed by members of my community, the situation gives cause for alarm. It would be totally unacceptable if a review such as this was used as a tool to justify a takeover by paid lifeguards.

Let me make this crystal clear: My local community will not countenance our volunteer surf lifesavers being subtly coerced out of their role on our local beaches. Such a move would betray our volunteer surf lifesavers, would besmirch the great legacy they represent, and would be an attack on the volunteer ethos at the very core of our local community. It would also be an extraordinary waste of ratepayers' money. In the 2014-15 financial year, the former Warringah Council, with its professional lifeguards, spent more than \$1.7 million on beach control, whereas Pittwater Council, with its volunteer surf lifesavers, spent a little over \$1 million. That means a paid service conservatively costs 60 per cent more a year, notwithstanding that Warringah has fewer beaches to manage than Pittwater. It makes the difference in cost even more profound.

I remind the Northern Beaches Council that it should seek to reduce costs for ratepayers, not increase them, and that any move to extend the role of professional lifeguards would impose a greater cost for a service that is already undertaken at an extraordinarily high level by volunteers. I hope against hope that this is all a simple misunderstanding. I have great respect for the paid lifeguards who keep us safe on the northern beaches, and I hope that peaceful coexistence with volunteer surf lifesavers continues. The current arrangement on Pittwater's beaches, with paid lifeguards on weekdays and volunteer surf lifesavers on weekends and public holidays, works perfectly well. There is no need for a change.

I encourage the Northern Beaches Council to work with our local surf clubs and lifeguards towards our common goal of keeping the public safe. Should the Pittwater community be required to defend our volunteer surf lifesavers then be in no doubt that we will do so. We will fight any misguided attempt to hamper volunteer surf lifesavers' vital beach safety work and any action that threatens their central position within our community.

NEXT STEP COMMUNITIES INC.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:31): Today I recognise Next Step Communities Inc., an organisation in my electorate that assists locals in a variety of ways. Next Step Communities' programs focus on

areas such as youth unemployment and food security. Next Step Communities operates a pantry on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week, providing affordable foods to the families of our communities. It also offers free fresh vegetables, fruits and bread with purchase. These programs make a substantial difference to many local families in my electorate. I have personally seen the excellent work done by Next Step Communities and I acknowledge the amount of time and dedication the organisation puts into making Mount Druitt a better place for all who reside there.

The most important element of this organisation is that the individuals who run the project do so selflessly. They are unpaid volunteers who dedicate their personal time and money to this wonderful cause. The group has had an exponentially positive impact on my electorate, and the demand for this type of service continues to increase. It clearly demonstrates that the work done by this organisation is both important and crucial in the Mount Druitt community. The company's motto resonates clearly: "Leading Youth and Communities from Potential to Success".

In an electorate where unemployment—specifically youth unemployment—is one of our biggest hurdles, this program enables local young people to participate, gaining real job experience that can benefit and brighten their future. Proving its worth in the community, more than 60 unemployed youths worked at the pantry in 2017. I have high hopes for Next Step Communities and I welcome the news that it plans to open a new community cafe, which will provide a safe place for its members to come together and develop positive social networks, which will minimise the issue of social isolation that plagues individuals within our society. There is no doubt in my mind that this group seeks to create positive pathways and to enrich the lives of those whom they provide assistance and services to.

Next Step Communities has only been operating since September 2016, yet the results achieved have been outstanding and impressive. It is my firm belief that the organisation will continue to grow from strength to strength as its work is having a positive impact on many families. I congratulate the founder of Next Step Communities, Vicki-Julia Crawford, on her vision in developing this innovative approach to aid so many vulnerable families struggling with cost of living pressures. I wish the very best to the Next Step Communities group, and thank them for providing opportunities and chances to the people of the Mount Druitt electorate.

GLEN INNES SHOW

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (12:35): In the Northern Tablelands it is show season, and today I will talk to the House about a show that is the royal of the north. I speak, of course, about the Glen Innes Show. For the show's 150th year, the Glenn Innes community came together to celebrate the pinnacle of agricultural produce and achievement under great weather at the Glen Innes heritage-listed showground, which is exquisitely picturesque. The show has an interesting history. The first show, held in 1869, was a joint show with Inverell. The show alternated between the two towns until 1873, when each town established its own showground. It was great to see a true-blue Glen Innes gentleman, Roger Fletcher, open the show. Anyone from country New South Wales will know Roger from Fletcher International Exports in Dubbo and its meat products. He is an absolute giant of the agricultural sector and it was great to hear him talk about his days as a youngster showing cattle and agricultural produce at Glen Innes, and how that shaped his future career.

I acknowledge Andrew Hancock, President of the Glen Innes Show Society. The show society at Glen Innes is special. At a time when many show societies are struggling to get committee members and volunteers to run the various sections of the show, the Glen Innes Show Society has more than 100 members, and people have to be interviewed to become members of the society. It was a great touch that, at the opening of the 150th show, a number of men who had served more than 50 years on the show committee were acknowledged. Bill Hughes, OAM, has served for more than 60 years on the Glen Innes show committee, and is still involved. Others who were acknowledged included Dick Hartmann, Geoffrey Lynn, Peter Sloman, Terry Sloman, Robert Wheatley, Malcolm Kiehne, Jack Alt and Jock Kerr. All those gentlemen have served for more than 50 years on the committee and every single one of them is still active as a chief steward or an assistant steward in one of the many events.

The show is great—not just because of the committee, the community spirit and the number of people who turn up, but also because of the wide variety of events. Events include the pet show; showgirl competition; ute show; woodchopping; young judges competition; stud beef cattle competition; the hoof, feeder and commercial cattle competition; sports shearing; merino and poll merino sheep and farm produce; meat breed stud sheep; prime lambs; wool in grease; caged birds; apiculture; horticulture; decorative horticulture; and preserves. I must mention the Glen Innes Show Kitchen, with Mary Hollingworth, Maggie Dent, Margie Leahy, Simone Sloman, Robyn McDougal and India Chapman-Burgess. They are the heart and soul of the kitchen, which keeps all of those committee people going throughout the show by supplying important sustenance.

On display at the show there is also needlework, handicrafts, fine arts, junior fine arts, photography, pottery, hand-painted porcelain and glass, folk art, and decorative painting. There is also a construction corner and home brew. That is just a small selection of what is on offer at the royal of the north, the Glen Innes Show. Andrew Hancock does a great job leading the team that puts on the show. I also mention the gourmet fiesta, which is now in its thirteenth year. That is a wonderful addition to the show, and continues to grow and grow. It is in a special cordoned-off section of the showground. There is a beautiful big pavilion, where local producers are able to show off their wares and beautiful local produce such as home brew, gins, liqueurs and the goose products of U Goose. There are also bookshops, foods and other delights.

I pay tribute to Phil Lynn, Chairman of Gourmet Fiesta, and committee members, who do a terrific job in putting the display together each year. It is a real highlight of the Glen Innes Show. This year was not just the show's 105th year; it was a blockbuster show. The number of cattle entries reached almost record levels as a result of upgrading the beautiful more than 100-year-old cattle pavilion, thanks to government funding. Beer takings were also up. This year the show went through 56 kegs, or roughly 2,900 litres of beer, which is always a good indication of the success of a country show. The 2018 Glen Innes Showgirl was Tiarna McDonald, a local property agent who was a wonderful ambassador for the show and will achieve much over the next 12 months. I congratulate Andrew, the committee and everyone involved. The royal of the north is still going strong.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:43): One of the pressing issues in my community is transport, the need for public transport in particular. One of the easiest ways to improve the lives of residents in my electorate and across the State is to make fast, efficient public transport a priority. Sydney's ailing public transport system and chronic traffic jams put enormous pressure on people's daily lives, costing commuters and businesses in lost productivity. It can also have a significant impact on our greenhouse gas emissions and other toxic emissions. The Greens have a vision for world-class public transport that aims to make our cities better places to live and work, to create healthier lifestyles for our community and to reduce dangerous emissions. Sadly, it seems that this Government's decision-making is focused on the solutions of the 1950s.

Other great cities around the world are not investing in tollways because they fleece people—in this case, the people of Western Sydney—and if they proceed they also induce traffic. We know that induced traffic demand is a reality with motorways. People will simply shift modes of transport. If they think a particular form of transport is faster, they will shift to that form of transport. We must put world-class public transport first. I accept that we need good-quality, safe roads in areas in which it is critical for people to get around, but for Sydney and throughout the State we need the world-class public transport that people take for granted in other cities of the world.

When good-quality, reliable and affordable public transport is built, people in my electorate have, and will, use it. A great example is the Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill light rail. When I was mayor of the former Leichhardt Municipal Council we pushed hard for the disused railway line to be used for light rail. We were told that it would not be used as it was a tiny service and would not make any difference. In the run-up to the 2011 election, the Coalition in opposition and the former Labor Government said they would build this project. I congratulate all those in the community on their fantastic campaign to help make light rail a reality. The Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill light rail has been an incredible success, with patronage far exceeding even the most optimistic predictions. Customer journeys shot up by almost 60 per cent between 2014 and 2015, jumping from 3.9 million to 6.1 million trips.

Now the same problem is being experienced by many other services that are at capacity during peak periods, with people struggling to board and disembark during peak periods. With so many people voting with their feet, it is clear that we must invest in more light rail services. We need new rolling stock, better terminuses—in particular, at places such as Dulwich Hill—and improved platforms to ensure greater accessibility. The service should be extended to the city, which is what we are seeing. We support the extension of the light rail to the central business district [CBD]; it is an important way to link up the light rail system.

Another fantastic way to get commuters off the roads is the ferry network. I am delighted that through advocacy and with the support of the Government \$10 million was secured in the past few years to upgrade ferry wharves to enable people with disabilities, prams and others to access the wharves. In 2016 I presented the Government with the Glebe ferry feasibility study, demonstrating that the introduction of a Glebe ferry wharf could result in more than 11,000 work-related trips per week. I am pleased that the Government has included a potential Glebe ferry stop in its future ferry plans. It is time to get that wharf built. The commissioning of new ferries by Sydney Ferries should allow buses to be removed from the CBD—they are a major contributing factor to city congestion. Taking buses out of the city and putting people onto ferries at places such as Glebe and Annandale is critical.

Annandale, in particular, is a short distance over water to both Circular Quay and Barangaroo. A ferry to and from Annandale could take even more commuters off our roads during peak hours, get them out of their cars and also get them quickly and efficiently to the new centre at Barangaroo. Many people in my electorate work in Barangaroo's insurance, finance and property sector. It is a fantastic opportunity to get cars off the roads, reduce the number of buses causing traffic congestion in the city and transport people to the CBD at a relatively low cost to government. For Annandale commuters who do not have the option of light rail or ferry services the bus system is critical.

My electorate of Balmain does not have any train stations and the bus system is, to put it mildly, in difficult times. The answer to improving Sydney's bus services is not privatisation but, rather, improving services and making sure that bus stops are not removed—which is a habit of this Government, particularly in the inner west. I am committed to seeing genuine improvement in all transport services in our community. The investment should go into public transport first and then other road-based options should be examined. I commend all the people in my community who have worked so hard to support public transport. I stand with them, and I will continue to do so.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:45): Madame Temporary Speaker Hornery, it is wonderful to see you back in the chair. I thank the member for Balmain for his statement. Anyone who wants to vote in favour of public transport at the next State election should vote for the Coalition. New South Wales has never had as many public transport services on road, rail or ferries than is the case at this point. Opal card has been introduced. Record investments have been made in north-west rail and south-west rail. Indeed, it was a Labor Government that ripped up the tramlines under former Premier John Cahill, but this Government is reinstalling them throughout the city. We are seeing a revolution that occurs once in a lifetime

I thank The Greens for its consistent support for public transport unlike the Labor Party, which in office promised 12 rail lines and delivered none, and 10 transport plans but delivered none. The Coalition Government has a future needs of transport plan, which is planning that includes current works but more work to be done across the city and across the State. Anyone who wants to support public transport should vote for the Liberal-Nationals.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The Parliamentary Secretary was stretching the friendship by promoting the Government, which is not the purpose of a response to a private member's statement. Let us not have that again. The Minister has the call.

DUBBO ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (12:46): It gives me enormous pleasure to acknowledge a number of citizens in the Dubbo electorate who were recognised in the Australia Day awards. They are community champions one and all, and come from across many communities. I recognise the Citizen of the Year, Jill Phoebe from Wellington, who is a wonderful community-minded citizen. Jill cares for the community's sick, elderly and disabled. She is involved in transporting less mobile members of the community to doctors' and specialists' appointments, and helps them to do their grocery shopping as well as perform their daily tasks. Jill is a member of the Wellington Tennis Club, Meals on Wheels, and the Wellington Country Music Club. She volunteers 13 hours a week as a social support volunteer and exhibits at the Wellington Show. Jill Phoebe is a wonderful example of a true community champion.

The Australia Day award for Young Citizen of the Year was presented to Jesse Mills, who is very highly involved in the community. The award for Senior Citizen of the Year was presented to Jan Montgomery of Wellington for selfless dedication to the community across a number of voluntary age groups. The award for Sportsperson of the Year was presented to Alistaire Thompson, who is an outstanding touch footballer at the local level. The award for Young Sportsperson of the Year—Community Service/Achievement was presented to Kerry Goodworth, who is dedicated to assisting others in their health journeys. In the mid-western region of my electorate, which is the Mudgee-Gulgong area, the award for Citizen of the Year was presented to Carolyn Peek, who is absolutely dedicated to the service of others, especially those with intellectual disability. In 2005 Carolyn was appointed as the Manager of the Mudgee Coolah Lifeskills and Community Access Service, which is known as Lifeskills Plus. She was the driving force behind the establishment of that organisation, which looks after disability services in the mid-western region.

The Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year award for the mid-western region was presented to Brody Munday, who is a very active young citizen and who is known for an outstanding contribution across the community. He volunteers at many local organisations and events, and is excelling at school. He extends himself as a real leader among young people in the mid-western region. The Environment Award, which is a very important award in the Dubbo electorate, was presented to the Mudgee Bee Group, which was formed as recently as 2016. Despite that, the group already has 30 members and has established four community hives. The group has breathed new life into beekeeping. Soolan Clifford won the Sports Award. Soolan is a key member of the

Mudgee Triathlon Club and Mudgee Running Festival. The club is a very strong in the Dubbo electorate. Some of Soolan's achievements in 2017 include competing in the Ironman World Championship, coming second in his age group for Ironman Australia, first in his age group at the Huskisson Triathlon event and seventh at the Triathlon Club Championships.

The Junior Sports Award was presented to Alesha Bennetts, who competed at the Primary School Sports Association titles for athletics and cross-country events. Alesha was also included in the State finals for the 100 metres and 200 metres events, and was among the top eight competitors for the long jump. She is a wonderful young athlete. The Arts Award was presented to Josh Hayward, who is a champion drama teacher at the Mudgee High School. Josh has done so much to drive forward the performing arts sector in Mudgee by writing, directing, acting and administering the group. Congratulations, Josh! The mid-west Community Event of the Year award went to Cudgegong Valley Public School Garden Fair. The garden club is a not-for-profit organisation. In 2017 it joined forces with the parents and citizens organisation to raise \$11,000. Trent O'Brien received the Volunteer Services Award and Garry Dollison received the Volunteer Emergency Services Award as part of the Mudgee Volunteer Rescue Squad. Two names were added to the Wall of Reflections for their community contributions—Ruby Gossage and Edna Wells.

The Trangie Citizen of the Year award went to Jessica Skinner. For the past seven years Jessica has been instrumental in developing and encouraging Aboriginal culture, including dance. She is the driving force behind the Wungunja Cultural Centre that has attracted visitors with its wonderful display of artefacts. I visited the cultural centre just before Christmas. Narelle Shillingsworth-Budd is a year 6 student at Trangie Central School and a true all-rounder, with talents in the creative and performing arts, swimming and athletics. She was chosen from amongst 2,000 students to be one of 30 who travelled to Sydney to record a Christmas CD with the Moorambilla Voices Program. For these reasons she received the Young Citizen of the Year award.

The Community Event of the Year was the Wungunja Cultural Centre opening. I encourage everyone to visit and view the artefacts on display. It is a community-initiated dedication to our ancestors. Gabrielle Wake received the Trangie Senior Sports Person award for establishing, nine years ago, free strength, health and fitness classes. Gabrielle has been the president of the Trangie Swimming Club for five years, is a member of the senior netball team and regularly coaches children's sporting teams. She is a worthy recipient of the award. Benjamin Thornton received the Junior Sports Person award. He is in year 9 at Trangie Central School and is achieving excellent results in rugby league, swimming, athletics, cross-country and touch football. In Narromine Judy Barlow received the Citizen of the Year award for her work as an advocate for the Narromine Cancer Support Group.

NEWCASTLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (12:51): Tomorrow marks exactly one month since the changes to Newcastle Transport came into effect. That is one month of an unworkable and unacceptable timetable and one month of chaos for our transport network. Almost every day since then I have met with constituents whose lives have been dramatically affected. Take, for example, the dozens of wonderful workers I met with yesterday at Access Industries. Access Industries, one of the largest disability employment providers in the Hunter, was not consulted during the Clayton's consultation process that was undertaken to design the new network. Those workers described to me the effect that these changes have had on them. They have been late to work almost every day, which has affected their wages. They have been unable to visit family and friends, leaving them socially isolated. Their daily commute now leaves them exhausted at the end of each day, and each working week.

This timetable affects not only workers with disability but also workers who rely on public transport to get to and from work. Patricia from Marks Point used to catch one bus to Newcastle West, a trip which took about 40 minutes. That same journey now involves catching three buses, or a bus and a train and walking the remainder of the way, arriving five minutes late to work. It now takes her an hour and 50 minutes. Many workers have had to renegotiate their working hours, reduce their shifts and take a pay cut simply because they cannot get to work before their scheduled start time. For example, Julie from Belmont South has a teenage son who works at Subway. His increased journey time from school has meant that his shifts have been cut by half an hour, resulting in less money in his pocket. Young workers who work part-time at retail hubs such as Charlestown now spend as much time getting to their jobs as they do working their shifts and as a result are reliant on their parents to drive them to work.

It is my strong view that the role of Government is to provide good public services and to ensure that no-one is left behind. This is how communities thrive and prosper. If those fundamental public services are not serving the needs of the communities who rely on them that will not happen. That is occurring right now in the Swansea area and its surrounds. Last week the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure stood in this Chamber and feigned disbelief at the criticism voiced by the community at having their public transport network chopped to bits. He claimed he had seen no evidence of people with disability being adversely affected by these changes.

The Minister refuses to accept that his decision to sign off on the changes has resulted in absolute chaos. But wilful blindness is no excuse. If the Minister will not listen, the Premier needs to step in. As a former transport Minister, the Premier knows how important transport services are for vulnerable people and how important it is to get the transport system right. We have had a month of the new network, which is long enough to know that it is not working. The Premier must intervene and review the changes.

Every day that we represent our communities, we need to remind ourselves why we are here, what purpose we serve and what drives us to stand and fight for better outcomes for the people we represent. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure once said, "Arrogance and elitism should never characterise government. Politicians should never see themselves as above and beyond the people; rather, they must stand alongside and work with the communities they represent." I agree with the Minister, but he should be standing alongside my community. He should review the network, like he is reviewing the Sydney trains. The people in my electorate cannot bear the burden of the network changes. The network is unworkable; it is causing social isolation. People are unable to get to work or to social events, and elderly residents are unable to attend medical appointments. It is a shocking burden on the people of our communities. The Minister needs to think back to his words and work with the community to deliver an outcome better than the shambles known as the Newcastle transport system.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK JAMES RODGERS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (12:56): Patrick James Rodgers was a truly remarkable human being. Patrick was the young son of two of my constituents and dear friends. His father, James Rodgers, is an alumni ambassador at Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview and one of life's great gentlemen, who attempted to teach me during my time at the college. Patrick's mother, Liz, is also a remarkable teacher at Saint Ignatius' College. I wonder whether there are other members in this House who get the feeling that God puts certain special people on earth, sets them unique tasks and then recalls them to heaven. Patrick could be in this category. He was sent to earth, where he achieved a lot in a short space of time in sometimes trying circumstances. Patrick, a son, brother and devout man of God, did not live to see 2018. He passed away on the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Patrick devoted his life to the needy in Cambodia. On his last Christmas Eve, he went to mass at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Pailin. His last text states, "I'm just about to go to mass." In the early hours of Christmas morning, Patrick Rodgers joined his spiritual father in heaven. In a difficult phone call to Patrick's earthly father, James, Brother Francis said that Patrick was doing the saints' work and was now with the saints in heaven. Patrick did not only talk about the poor; he worked for the poor and he walked with them. The poor friends of Patrick included: little Somnang, who Patrick rescued from an orphanage; Somnang's disabled mother, Sokha; Rhett, who had no legs; Kosal, who had one leg; Puchi, a leper; the Skinny family; and a family suffering from muscular dystrophy. These people were Patrick's friends in Cambodia, and some might say were Patrick's reason for being on earth. They had little, but they loved Patrick. He was the voice of the voiceless.

Shane Hogan, a former headmaster of Saint Ignatius' College and a dear friend of the family, said that Patrick was Christ's feet and hands in Cambodia. Patrick lived a life of giving and sharing. At the age of five, he gave the contents of his moneybox to Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets. At 15, he marched to Villawood Immigration Detention Centre in solidarity with asylum seekers. At 16, he instituted the annual cricket game for Koori kids in Redfern. His parents and everyone found him committed and caring. Patrick would spend weekends at the JCA camps for refugee families. In year 12, he was one of the first to shave his head in solidarity with one teacher at St Ignatius' who had breast cancer. They were called the "Rough Heads for Rosie". On his last day in year 12, his parents were filled with pride as Patrick was presented with the Ignatian medal for service to the community.

This young man, who followed his beliefs to join the monastic life in Cambodia, was capable of extreme absurdity. He laughed uproariously when he accidentally set his arm and beard on fire with bush repellent in Cambodia. Patrick Rogers was also capable of extreme irreverence. He once implored a plane-load of passengers leaving China to "free Tibet". When required, this goody-two-shoes was also capable of making a trooper blush with his swearing and profanities. His father said that conversations with Patrick could be exhausting. He had no small talk and no interest in the trivial or mundane. Conversations were often forensic examinations. He had to have the last word and he had to be right—he could have found a place in this Chamber. He railed against consumerism and found peace in Pailin. He fought his personal demons and now he is free of them. Patrick loved words, language and speaking. He loved and adored his mum and dad and brother, Michael. Patrick James Rogers loved his birth family and his extended Christian family, and they loved him. I can only believe he is now having some great debates in heaven. Vale, Patrick.

KIAMA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:01): Australia Day is a wonderful opportunity to pause and reflect on what we all love about this country and how we can make Australia an even better place to live. For many years, my family and I have attended Australia Day events not only to enjoy the essence and flavour of Australia Day but also to stop and pay tribute to local residents who have made an outstanding contribution to our local community. I was delighted to attend the Shoalhaven City Council Australia Day awards with my friend and colleague the Hon. Shelley Hancock and acknowledge the following recipients from across the Illawarra and South Coast. I congratulate Master of Ceremonies, Chris Firth, who did an outstanding job on the evening. I congratulate 2018 Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year, Aunty Nelly Mooney, from Ulladulla on her work with youth at Ulladulla High School and her commitment to Aboriginal culture. The Highly Commended Citizen of the Year award was presented to Brian Muller of Nowra for his work with the children's charity, Variety. Youth of the Year was awarded to 16-year-old Riley Nolan, also from Ulladulla, for his work with Budawang School, judo and for being a positive influence on his peers.

I was delighted to present the Shoalhaven Inclusive award to Gayle Dunn, founder of the Dunn Lewis Centre in Ulladulla, which is an all-abilities space. Chris Mitchell from Nowra was presented with the Highly Commended Inclusive award for his passion for making tourism in the Shoalhaven accessible for everybody, particularly those with a disability. National Parks and Wildlife Services employee Noel Webster was presented with the Environment award for his dedication to preserving the environment and traditional Aboriginal practices. Meanwhile, the region's sporting stars were also awarded for their success. The Junior Sports award was presented to Dante Hyam for his efforts in motocross both overseas and in Australia. William Miller was presented with the Sports award for his efforts on the rugby field. In 2018, he will play for the New South Wales Waratahs, and we are proud of his outstanding achievements.

I was pleased to attend the Kiama Municipal Council Australia Day awards ceremony at the Jamberoo School of Arts with my good mate Kiama Mayor Mark Honey. The ceremony was presided over by Councillor Neil Reilly, Chair of the Kiama Municipal Council Australia Day Awards Committee. Australia Day Ambassador Jeremy Jones, AM, gave a moving address to the audience about what Australia Day means to him and the opportunities afforded to those who call Australia home. Citizen of the Year was awarded to Barbara Adams for her many years of involvement with the Jamberoo Red Cross and Friends of Blue Haven Nursing Home. I am pleased that Barbara was recognised for her incredible work. I am proud that our community has outstanding contributors of Barbara's calibre. Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Sarah Young for her mentoring efforts with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring program at Lake Illawarra High School, and for volunteering in various roles for the Kiama Show Society. She has also travelled to Cambodia twice on house-building projects. Her contribution and character is nothing short of inspirational.

Senior Citizen of the Year was awarded to Noel Edgell for his contribution to enhance the built environment locally and internationally, and for his many years of service to the Rotary Club of Kiama. I was delighted to present Noel with his award and I enjoyed listening to him as he described some of the projects and activities in which he has been involved. Community Group of the Year was awarded to the Jamberoo branch of the Red Cross for its 2017 fundraising efforts. It raised \$21,000, which supported local food, literacy programs, mental health and homelessness initiatives, emergency response, and international support to provide clean water and sanitation. In the Senior Citizen of the Year category, the council also honoured Scouts veteran David North as well as Annette Beaufils, long-time northern suburbs doctor. Young pianist and composer Bronte Guggisberg gave a stunning vocal performance before students from Jamberoo Public School sang the national anthem in Dharawal and English.

In Shellharbour, David Williamson—affectionately known as "Scooter Dave"—was named Citizen of the Year for his commitment to keeping Windang Bridge and its surrounds clean and tidy. His passion for our community is nothing short of impressive. Kiki Ratna Cuda was recognised for her community spirit. At 12 years old, Kiki is the youngest Young Citizen of the Year in Shellharbour's history. She was nominated for her kind and caring nature. For example, on her eleventh birthday she asked friends to donate to Sydney Children's Hospital in lieu of presents and raised \$500 in the process. Kiki also makes care packages for the homeless and Christmas packages for Australian soldiers deployed overseas. In Wollongong, Vicki Tiegs was named Citizen of the Year for her outstanding contribution as co-founder of the Illawarra International Women's Day Committee. Since 2005, it has raised more than \$250,000 for local Illawarra women's charities as well as creating awareness of the issues that women still face.

The Young Citizen of the Year award was presented to dance teacher Ebony Austin. The University of Wollongong motorsport team, which each year designs and builds an open-wheeled race car to compete in national and international competitions, was presented with the city's Innovation award. In 2017 the team designed and built two cars—an internal combustion car and an electric vehicle. The team also developed an electric race car

to compete internationally. Conservatorium of Music teacher Eric Dunan received the Arts and Cultural award. In the Sports Achievement category, the Bulli Surf Life Saving Club's Open Men's George Bass Surf Boat Marathon Crew got the nod for being undefeated. I congratulate all recipients.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:06): I extend my congratulations to the Australia Day award recipients in Wollongong, Shellharbour and the South Coast. They are outstanding residents of the Illawarra and beyond. On Saturday night I attended WIN Stadium with 12,000 others for the first game of English Super League to be played outside of Europe when the Wigan Warriors took on the Hull City Association Football Club [FC]. For those members who are interested and did not see the game, Wigan was victorious, defeating Hull 24-10. It was also a victory for tourism in Wollongong, which continues to grow. Such an event does not succeed without a lot of work by a lot of people. I acknowledge the efforts of the board and team of Destination Wollongong—in particular, General Manager Mark Sleigh—which involved them working lots of late nights and early mornings. I also acknowledge the efforts of the team from WIN Stadium, led by Marc Swan, and the boards and management teams of the Wigan Warriors and Hull FC, which decided to take the leap and bring a Super League competition game to the other side of the world during the football mid-season.

I acknowledge everyone else who helped make the event possible. Hotel rooms in Wollongong were fully occupied, and restaurants and bars were packed. I also acknowledge the member for Kiama for his involvement in the event and for presenting the Kenny-Sterling Shield on Saturday night. The game is one of a series of events that has taken place in Wollongong over the past two months. On 29 January a cruise ship arrived in Wollongong, adding to the four that landed in Port Kembla between late 2016 and 2017. The city and its hundreds of local ambassadors are looking forward to the arrival of the next cruise ship in March. We saw some legends of Australian music performing on Sunday night, which followed on from Elton John's only concert in New South Wales that was staged in Wollongong last year. The Sydney Sixers women's and men's Big Bash teams played a double-header last year.

More recently, the University of Wollongong hosted the International Conference on Nanoscience and Nanotechnology 2018, which was attended by approximately 1,000 delegates and three Nobel Prize winners. Other events such as the CrossFit Games and the Yours and Owls Festival were also hosted in Wollongong. This does not capture the 3.5 million domestic overnight visitors to the Illawarra and South Coast or the one in five visitors to regional New South Wales who contribute millions to our economy when they visit the Jamberoo Action Park or the Symbio Wildlife Park, skydive into Stuart Park or onto North Beach, or frequent our bars and restaurants. Apart from entertainment events, in 2016-17 business events in the region boosted the local economy by more than \$7.5 million. Wollongong is looking to build on tourism into the future. An increase in tourism requires support through upgrade and enhancement works.

This is the sort of investment that Labor supports because we on this side of the House understand that tourism forms part of the transformation of regional economies. Wollongong is the third largest city in New South Wales. It has a world-class university that attracts world-leading academics and conferences, and it has shown on multiple occasions that it is more than willing to host major domestic and international events, and more than capable of doing so. But one of our largest assets is showing its nearly 20 years of age. The WIN Entertainment Centre was built by a Labor government and opened in 1998. The region, as a united front, had lobbied for a stadium for some time, and now, for several years, the united voices of regional stakeholders, including the member for Kiama, have been lobbying for an upgrade. As well as the local stakeholders calling for it, performers have made comment mid-performance that it is time the Government invested in the facility.

Labor is committed to an upgrade and has pledged to fund a \$50 million upgrade as part of a package of measures in our Illawarra Jobs Action Plan, which was announced during the Wollongong by-election. When requests have been made to the Minister for Sport, the voices of regional stakeholders and visiting performers have not been heard. The Minister acknowledged the importance of the venue and then pointed to fixing a leaking roof that has made some parts of the venue unusable. Similarly, the calls by my colleague the member for Keira for an upgrade to the Mount Keira Summit Park to maximise the potential of this regional asset have gone unheeded. Once again, Labor is willing to back the park with a \$5 million investment in an upgrade.

In advocating for the future of tourism in Wollongong, I repeat my call for the Government to release its Cruise Ship Development Plan and, more importantly, to make sure the plan includes Port Kembla. Port Kembla was not even in the terms of reference until I pushed for it; I am pleased the Government listened. Wollongong has hosted successful cruise ship visits in the past. Our community wants the Government to consider our potential as seriously as the cruise liners do. The steel, mining, engineering, health and education sectors are important contributors to our local economy but so too is tourism. Our potential should not be limited by a government that is ignoring our needs and pursuing a \$2.5 billion spend on stadiums, from which the Deputy Premier could not identify a single benefit to the Illawarra.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:11): I thank my friend the member for Wollongong for his positive comments in relation to the Wigan versus Hull game. The result of this great game of rugby league was 24-10. It was wonderful to be there with the member for Wollongong and the member for Keira and to see the children of the member for Wollongong, Oliver and Preston, running onto the WIN Stadium field as part of the youth teams. It was a great event for the Illawarra. The community enjoys the major sporting events that have come to our region, and I know I speak for both sides of the House when I say that we want to see more.

I am grateful to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events for promoting and focusing on regional tourism. I briefly thank Kris Radlinski from the Wigan Warriors and Ian Lenagan, the owner of the team that has promoted this particular event. I join the member for Wollongong on congratulating Mark Sleight as a true champion of tourism. I was pleased to be there with councillors Cameron Walters, Lee Colacino and John Dorahy, who coached the Wigan Warriors back in the day and did a great job. I thank everyone from the Destination NSW team who was involved. Congratulations Wollongong. It was a great win for the South Coast.

TRIBUTE TO HARRY LACHLAN WALLACE

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (13:12): On 20 January 2018 the Beecroft community lost one of its most beloved residents, Harry Lachlan Wallace, who sadly passed away while planting a tree on his country property near Wingham in New South Wales. He will be greatly missed by his wife, Pat, his children, Andrew, Catriona, John and Kristie, friends, and the local community. I knew Harry as a man who was passionate about sharing ideas and learning from the experiences of others through his stewardship of the successful Beecroft Forum. I have attended several of these engaging and insightful dinners in my time as the member for Epping.

Some of the many thought-provoking guests to speak at the Beecroft Forum over the years include Tim Costello; Cardinal Pell; Marie Bashir; Nicholas Cowdery, QC; Professor Tim Flannery; and Berowra's own Philip Ruddock, to name a few. After attending Harry's moving memorial service, I asked his friend Reverend Martin Levine of Beecroft Uniting Church to assist me in putting together an account of some of the many facets of Harry's remarkable life. Reverend Levine spoke with some of Harry's friends and family, and I thank them all for their contributions as we honour Harry's life in the House.

Harry Lachlan Wallace was educated at Mortlake Primary and Homebush Boys High schools and after serving an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering became among the first alumni of the newly chartered University of New South Wales, graduating in 1955 with a Bachelor Degree in Mechanical Engineering. After graduation, he travelled to Scotland to work as a management consultant, to meet relatives and to broaden his horizons. Whilst there, he encountered an organisation known as the Iona Community, which was established in 1938 by Reverend Lord George MacLeod, whose charter emphasised action for peace and justice and being accountable to fellow community members for the use of one's time and money. This encounter laid firm foundations for Harry's commitment to these issues throughout his life.

In 1957 Harry resigned from his consultancy job and returned to Australia—travelling overland, I might say, from Scotland to Sydney alone and not driving a vehicle. He used his experience of attending work camps in Europe to help establish the Ecumenical Work Camp Movement, where volunteers built houses for Indigenous families. He and his wife, Pat, married in 1962 and they returned to Scotland, where both worked as teachers in Edinburgh for two years before again returning to Australia for the birth of their first child. He was deeply disturbed by Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war and, with like-minded people, initially formed the Liberal Reform Group, which later became the Australia Party and then the Australian Democrats under the leadership of Don Chipp.

In 1972 Harry established a local newspaper, the *Northern Standard*, to counter what he saw as a lack of balance in reporting. At this time he was appointed to the council of Macquarie University. He resigned from his consultancy job and set up his own business, acquiring FT Wimble and Co in 1973. He expanded its existing operations in the South Pacific and Papua New Guinea, and was deeply committed to PNG from its independence until his retirement as chairman of that company at the beginning of last month. He was passionate about the ownership of Australian companies, the future of Australian manufacturing and the economy. In 1995 he established the Australian Owned Companies Association as a vehicle to express this concern, producing many Ausbuy guides to assist public awareness of this vital issue. In that year he was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for the Ausbuy campaign and community service.

One of Harry's enduring causes was the people of Palestine. He was an active supporter of the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network [APAN]. He was a man of action who always challenged others to contribute. I acknowledge his great support of Bethlehem University. In 2001 he set up the Major Issues and Theology Foundation, which is now widely known for its Beecroft Forum, where controversial speakers present on cutting-edge topics at least three times a year and which now usually have an audience of 200 guests. The next forum, which had been organised before he passed away, was to be addressed by two Nobel Peace Prize recipients:

Gemma Romuld, the Outreach Co-ordinator of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons; and Dr Tilman Ruff, AO, who helped establish ICAN. Harry participated in disarmament marches with thousands across the United Kingdom on Hiroshima Day in 1957, and since then with his wife, Pat, at other marches in Sydney. Harry has been an active, much-loved member of his local Beecroft community for 55 years but his influence has reached far beyond, having provided support in many and diverse forms to all who met him. The mark of a great man is that he plants a tree so that others receive the benefit of its shade. Harry Lachlan Wallace was such a man.

Community Recognition Statements

WINTER OLYMPICS SILVER MEDALLIST MATT GRAHAM

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:18): What a champion. Let us hear a round of applause for Australia's moguls champion and Winter Olympic Games silver medallist, Matt Graham of Gosford. Matt showed the world today what a lifetime of hard work, commitment, belief and sheer determination can achieve. Growing up in a loving, passionate, super sporty family, Matt and his siblings have sailed and skied competitively since they were knee high. Supported by fabulous parents, grandparents and extended family, Matt has been given the opportunity to live the dream.

Matt has committed his life to this one event. With the support of the NSW Institute of Sport and the Australian Institute of Sport, Matt has worked with the best coaches, strength and conditioning teams, psychologists and sport scientists that New South Wales and Australia has to offer. He is a part of our strong, supportive Olympics and Paralympics family. Today we share his glory, the agony of the moguls, and his awesome aerial performance last night in PyeongChang. Gosford takes on the world and shines. Congratulations Matt Graham, you are a hero. Best wishes to all our Aussie athletes who are yet to compete. Bring on the Winter Paralympics.

WINGHAM ROTARY CLUB SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR BEN CROSS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:19): I recognise cyclist Ben Cross, who on Australia Day was awarded the Wingham Rotary Club Sportsperson of the Year Award. Ben, who is 19, began cycling in 2014 and has recently been accepted into the North Coast Academy of Sport and the Hunter Academy of Sport. Ben is a member of the Manning Valley Cycle Club and rides for the National Road Series team. In 2017 Ben produced some worthy results, such as first in the NSW Team Time Trial Championships, fifth in the NSW State Criterium Championships, national selection for the race tour of Mersey Valley in Tasmania, and winner of the Central Coast KFC Super Criterium. On behalf of the Myall Lakes community, I congratulate Ben and look forward to seeing him have great success in the future.

REDHEAD BEACH LIFEGUARDS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:20): I bring to the attention of the House the significant contribution that lifeguards patrolling Redhead Beach made over the summer. Redhead Beach is an absolutely beautiful beach and is well patronised during the summer months. However, it can be a place of treacherous waters. It is the home of what is thought to be the only remaining purpose-built wooden shark tower on the eastern Australian coast, which was built in 1929. The Redhead Beach lifeguards had an incredibly busy start to the year, pulling 46 people from the surf on 12 January alone—about 10 times the number of rescues they would normally conduct on an average day. During the December and January heatwaves in the Hunter, many locals and visitors flocked to Redhead Beach. Those large numbers of visitors—combined with challenging surf conditions—meant that lifeguards were under immense pressure to keep our community safe. I congratulate and thank the Redhead Beach lifeguards for their hard work over the busy summer season.

TRIBUTE TO BOB BIRKHEAD

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (13:21): I thank for his service to the Sutherland shire community Bob Birkhead, who recently retired from his nearly seven-year stint presenting on 2SSR community radio. An important part of the shire community, 2SSR commenced broadcasting in 1992 and today has more than 70 presenters and staff. Its programming does not just aim to entertain people in the local area; the organisation is also concerned with discussing local issues and current affairs. Its diverse and engaging programs are not usually available on commercial stations and they are presented by volunteers.

Sutherland shire listeners enjoyed Bob's selection of music on his Monday morning show; however, Bob was better known for speaking with politicians, other public figures and not-for-profit advocates in our community. Since he began broadcasting Bob has conducted more than 650 interviews. Before radio he worked in various senior management roles. Bob and his wife, Susan, lived in Bonnet Bay for 40 years and have now moved to Noosa. The shire's loss is Noosa's gain. Bob hopes to continue his involvement in community radio at

FM 101.3 Noosa. Even though he is living in Noosa, Bob will still be heard on 2SSR presenting his weekly basketball report, "Sideline Eyes".

KINGSFORD-SMITH SCOUT GROUP LEADERS GEORGE AND MICHELLE MURRAY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:22): I pay tribute to George and Michelle Murray of Mascot, who for almost 40 years have served the Botany Bay community as exceptional leaders of our local Scout troops. I first met Michelle and George at 2nd Mascot Scouts. They were so successful at that location they were asked to establish the Kingsford-Smith Scout Group, which is now one of the largest in the eastern suburbs, with 95 children aged six to 14 participating in Joeys, Cubs and Scouts. Originally intended as a Scout group for children with special needs, Kingsford-Smith Scouts has expanded to welcome all children and is a model for inclusion and diversity.

In 37 years George and Michelle have only had six months away from scouting. They are hardworking, collegial and so encouraging to their 11 fellow Scout leaders. Their Scouts contribute to our community in many ways, such as through taking part in Clean Up Australia Day, participating in huge numbers in the annual Anzac Day march and the Australia Day flag raising for Bayside Council, and assisting with the former Botany Bay City Council citizenship ceremonies before the council amalgamation. George and Michelle have contributed much to our community not only directly but also by raising generations of children who continue to contribute to our civic pride. I commend their service.

AUSTRALIAN SUPERMODEL OF THE YEAR ADRIANA MALTESE

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:23): I am thrilled to inform the House that last Thursday night, 8 February, Western Sydney local and Mulgoa electorate resident Adriana Maltese won the Australian Supermodel of the Year competition. I congratulate 19-year-old Adriana on her exciting and life-changing win. On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament, I extend our best wishes for her continued success as she pursues the next stage of her adventure. I also congratulate and acknowledge Adriana's parents, Tony and Angela Maltese, her sister, Danielle, and her brother, Christopher, for providing ongoing support and encouragement. This is a wonderful and deserved outcome for a hardworking, dedicated and talented young woman. I know it was a tough competition and we are immensely proud of her. I cannot wait to see Adriana in person to pass on the congratulations of the Parliament to her and her family.

GREYSTANES SKATE PARK

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:24): I acknowledge the contribution of many hardworking Greystanes residents towards the construction of a skate park for local kids. There is a great need to create facilities for children in Prospect and I congratulate Cumberland Council, through the advocacy of Mayor Greg Cummings, on contributing some \$500,000 towards the project. That funding will be matched by a grant of \$50,000 from the Prospect electorate Community Building Partnership fund as soon as a suitable site that complements local sports, such as our fantastic soccer and netball clubs, is agreed upon. I congratulate the Skate Park for Greystanes group, and in particular Julie and Andrew Overton, on their work in advocating for their local community.

ST IVES LIONS CLUB YOUTH OF THE YEAR QUEST

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:24): Lions Youth of the Year is an excellent forum for high school students to develop their leadership and public speaking skills. Last night, Monday 12 February, I was honoured to attend the St Ives Lions Club Youth of the Year evening at Killara's Greengate Hotel with club president Paul Doman, event chair Ann Perry and many others. The contestants were Hannah Nouri from Killara High School, Daniel Hasenauer from St Ives High School, Dominica Leaver from Loreto Normanhurst, Anila Bonfil from Masada College, Emily Dawson from Roseville College and Ciara Flynn from Brigidine College.

They each delivered a prepared speech with style, intelligence and fluency, and insightfully addressed two impromptu topics: the pros and cons of social media being used to broadcast news; and whether it is appropriate to retain 26 January as Australia Day. I congratulate all those who contributed to the Youth of the Year event, particularly the organisers and judges. I was pleased to present certificates to all six of the potential future community leaders. I wish the winner, Emily Dawson, success at the area final on 4 and 5 March at Belrose Bowling Club and, hopefully, beyond.

TRIBUTE TO ADELE COCKBURN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:25): I acknowledge the contribution of Ms Adele Cockburn, who this year has announced her "retirement" from her position as chief steward in the horticulture section of the Hunter River Agricultural and Horticultural Association Maitland Show, now in its 156th year. The show will be

held this weekend from Friday. Having been involved with the show and entering her plants in competition from childhood, Adele was named chief steward 35 years ago. After so many valued years of service, at 80 years of age Adele is known locally as the "Queen of Horticulture". Her presence and knowledge will be sorely missed at this weekend's show. I thank Adele for her consistent and dedicated service to our community through her involvement with the Maitland show. We wish her the very best for the future. I hope that everyone in my community takes the opportunity to enjoy one of the oldest shows in Australia this weekend in Maitland.

HARDEN SKATE PARK

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:26): I bring to the attention of the House the recent presentation to Hilltops Council of the highly regarded and sought after Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia Excellence Award recognising local government and public works projects. Harden Skatepark at Newson Park was named the winner of the category recognising excellence in design and/or construction of a local government project under \$500,000. I recognise the efforts of the entire community, particularly the Harden Skatepark Committee, in raising funds, securing grants, scoping designs and generally assisting council in guiding the project. The record number of nominations for the 2017 awards serves to underline the high level of inspiration, innovation and technical management involved in the development and construction of Harden Skatepark. I congratulate everyone involved in the project.

TRIBUTE TO DON MCDONALD, AM

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:27): I ask the House to acknowledge the sad passing of mental health advocate and lifelong defender of industrial rights Don McDonald, AM, who passed away in January. Don was a proud Member of the Order of Australia, having been recognised for his work as State Secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and co-founder of the Schizophrenia Research Institute of Australia. At his memorial service Don was remembered as the founding father of schizophrenia research in Australia, with his campaigning resulting in the establishment of the Schizophrenia Research Institute.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to all of Don's family, including his wife, Marilyn, and children Warwick, Craig and Lara, as well as his many grandchildren. Don was an impressive man. He was a doer who made a significant difference in the worlds of industrial relations and mental health. He leaves us with a strong legacy. Just last year Don organised a community forum on mental illness that attracted more than 500 people. I am working on realising outcomes from the forum and a foundation is being established in Don's name in support of schizophrenia research. Vale Don McDonald, AM.

KELLYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:28): On Monday 13 November I was honoured to visit Kellyville Public School, which, under the visionary leadership of principal Jenny Walker, has created a Place of Remembrance dedicated to all the men and women who served for Australia and marking the centenary of Anzac. It was a special moment unveiling the memorial that was a joint venture by students, staff, parents, Castle Hill RSL and Bunnings Rouse Hill and Castle Hill. The students were involved in all aspects of building the monument. I can truthfully say it was built with pride for this country and respect for its veterans. The Place of Remembrance has a beautiful pathway leading to a memorial wall, with a bench seat in the middle where one can sit, reflect and remember. Assistant Principal Petra Hocking delivered a moving speech about her son's service overseas. I commend the work of Kellyville Public School staff for their creative approach to learning in a hands-on and collaborative way that gains the complete involvement of students and encourages respect for our war veterans.

TRIBUTE TO HELEN WALKER, OAM

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:29): On 14 September 2017 Helen Walker passed away, leaving the Blue Mountains community, her friends, colleagues and family too soon. Helen was one of those people who restored your faith in the inherent goodness of humankind. Helen was the founder and General Manager of Mountains Community Transport, which began in 1986 before becoming Great Community Transport, for more than 30 years. She retired not long before her death. In this role her selfless contributions made such a positive difference to the communities of Penrith and the Blue Mountains. For many years she was a strong advocate for community transport, the frail, aged, and people with a disability and their carers.

Helen was a humble, generous woman. Her giving nature and unrivalled work ethic resulted in her receiving many awards, including the Centenary Medal, the University of Western Sydney Women of the West International Woman of the Year Award, the 2017 Blue Mountains Citizen of the Year, and the prestigious Order of Australia Medal. It is important that Helen's amazing work be acknowledged in this House. My thoughts go out to Helen's loved ones, who I know are still missing her dearly—in particular, her partner, Phillipa, and her children. May Helen Walker, OAM, rest in peace.

TRIBUTE TO SIR NICHOLAS MICHAEL SHEHADIE, AC, OBE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:30): I acknowledge the passing of Mosman local, Sir Nicholas Michael Shehadie, AC, OBE, who passed away on the evening of Sunday 11 February 2018. Sir Nicholas Shehadie is well known for his extensive contributions to New South Wales through public life, sport, media and the community. He will be greatly missed. His impact was felt greatly in my electorate of North Shore, where he and his wife, Dame Marie Bashir, made their home and where many of the family still reside. I extend my deepest sympathies to the entire family, including their three children, Michael, Susan, and Alexandra, and six grandchildren. Sir Nicholas made a remarkable contribution to rugby union in Australia, as a player and captain. He was President of the Australian Rugby Union from 1980 to 1987, and was instrumental in the establishment of the Rugby World Cup. He was also the Chairman of SBS, TAFE NSW, and the Migrant Employment and Qualification Board. For his extraordinary contribution he was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1971. He also served as Lord Mayor of Sydney. Vale, Sir Nicholas Shehadie.

BANKSTOWN LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:31): Last Saturday I attended the tenth Lunar New Year Festival in Saigon Place, Bankstown. I was delighted once again to enjoy this celebration with my family. In particular, I thank Mr Thuat Nguyen, OAM, and Dr Vinh Binh Lieu for their efforts in coordinating the event with Canterbury-Bankstown Council. I was proud to launch this festival in Saigon Place a decade ago. The festival has gone from strength to strength and remains an important date in the Bankstown local calendar. It was fantastic to see the Year of the Dog start with such a wonderful festival in the heart of Bankstown. I acknowledge also the Vietnamese Community of Australia, NSW Chapter, the many other organisations present on the day and the wonderful children who entertained the crowds. It was pleasing to see such a large number of people attend a great event in the heart of Bankstown.

ALBION PARK SHOW

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:32): I congratulate local Jamberoo butcher Peter McInerney who bought the champion steer at the recent Albion Park Show in mid-January, carved it up and won the champion carcass prize. Peter entered two carcasses and took out the runner-up ribbon in the same category. The Jamberoo butcher is most renowned for his sausages—selling them across Australia, and internationally in Hong Kong and Bangladesh. Congratulations Peter on this outstanding achievement. I congratulate the 2018 Albion Park Showgirl winner Rebecca Quinn, and Kiara Debas from Albion Park, who won the Tiny Tots competition ahead of Amelia Wilson from Jamberoo. I congratulate also Marilyn Connelly, who has been the show society secretary for many years and puts in an extraordinary effort, and all the committee members. Country shows are the heartbeat of regional communities. I congratulate the Albion Park Show Society on its outstanding efforts.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT AND SHARRON O'NEILL

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (13:33): I dedicate my first community recognition statement to Robert and Sharron O'Neill. Robert worked for the Australian Workers' Union, Greater New South Wales Branch, from 2004 to 2016 and attained the post of vice president. He looked after various industries and knew the value of effective negotiations in gaining the best for the workers, whilst delivering an outcome to provide job security and improvements in workplace safety. Dr Sharron O'Neill is an academic at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. Sharron holds numerous academic qualifications and gained a PhD in corporate accountability for workplace health and safety [WHS]. Sharron's research examines the non-financial indicators of WHS performance and advises government, investors and industry boards on WHS performance, measurement and reporting. Sharron and Robert make a formidable couple. Their passion is to represent people to ensure that fairness and social justice is a primary facet in everything they do. I thank them for their tireless work and inspiration to the local community.

PACIFIC SCHOOL GAMES MEDALLIST MATTHEW ENGESSER

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:34): It gives me great pleasure to recognise those exceptional athletes in my electorate who, through hard work, dedication and passion have achieved exceptional results in their sporting fields. Matthew Engesser of St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School is one such athlete. Matthew has represented New South Wales and Australia in athletics events, including the Pacific School Games held recently in Adelaide. Almost 10,000 students from 15 Pacific nations participated in the games, and its alumni includes numerous Australian Olympic champions. Matthew's extraordinary results include a gold medal in the relay, a bronze medal in long jump and a fourth place in the 200 metres sprint. What makes Matthew's achievements even more notable is the way in which he tackles challenges with perseverance. He is a role model for all students and aspiring athletes. His parents, Stephen and Alison, and his brother, Lucas, are very proud of his successes. On behalf of the Seven Hills community, I join them in congratulating Matthew.

MOUNT DRUITT ELECTORATE SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR HARLEY WINDSOR

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (13:35): I ask the House to join me in congratulating Harley Windsor from Rooty Hill—our first Indigenous Winter Olympian. Harley Windsor is making history in South Korea as he participates in the pairs ice skating competition at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. From his early days at Blacktown Ice Rink, he continues to achieve milestone after milestone, not only for himself but also for his family and his nation. Pleasingly, last Saturday Harley Windsor was announced as 2018 Blacktown Sportsperson of the Year. Athletes such as Mr Windsor continue to demonstrate what it means to be an Australian. Overcoming difficulties such as social, financial and emotional strain, Mr Windsor demonstrates what it means to be a role model to all young Australians. I wish Harley Windsor and his partner, Ekaterina Alexandrovskaya, all the best in the 2018 Winter Olympic Winter Games.

NORTH COAST ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION SHOWCASE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:36): I offer my congratulations to husband and wife duo Matt and Tanya Fisher who, late last year, took out two awards at the North Coast Entertainment Industry Association Showcase night. The duo, who were nominated for three Dolphin Awards, won the adult contemporary category with their song *When It's Cold* and the best rock performance category with their song *R.O.C.K.*, which they say pays homage to the hard rocking bands of the 1980s. The duo, who are working on putting out an album this year, are also wonderful schoolteachers in the public education system. I wish them every success with their new album.

TRIBUTE TO HANK VAN STUIVENBERG

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:37): On 30 January this year hundreds of family and friends gathered to farewell Hank Van Stuivenberg, or "Honky" as he was affectionately known. Hank's love of life, quick wit, enjoyment of a beer and talent as a photographer were all recognised, along with another of his great passions: surf lifesaving. Hank started his involvement with surf lifesaving in South Australia as a member of the Seacliff Surf Life Saving Club and he was a foundation member of Hallett's Cove Surf Life Saving Club. In 1979 he joined Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club, starting his 39 years of service to our club, including seven seasons as treasurer and a stint as president. Hank was awarded life membership of Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club in 2000-2001 and life membership of Surf Life Saving Illawarra in 2010. Last year he recorded a milestone that very few achieve: his 50-year service award for his incredible dedication to service. He was—to use a word he often said—a sensational member of Bellambi Surf Life Saving Club. My fellow members and I will miss him dearly. On behalf of our community, I extend our condolences to Eva and family.

HORNSBY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT JUDY HORTON

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:38): Today I recognise the remarkable Judy Horton. Members may have heard Judy on 2UE and ABC Radio giving advice on how to best maintain a beautiful garden. Judy first started as a teacher at Middle Dural and Busby Public schools before she decided to make her love of gardening a new career. After studying horticulture she started at a number of nurseries before beginning a career on radio. Her gardening show is extremely popular, with thousands of listeners ringing in to get her advice—I need a lot of that advice. Those too shy to ring her on air can still benefit from her knowledge. She edited the updated version of *Yates Garden Guide*, which has everything the budding gardener needs to know.

Among many other things, Judy is also Patron of the local Hornsby group, the Galston Garden Club. Judy hopes her work has encouraged others to get out and enjoy gardening. No matter what the size your garden—even if you have only a balcony—give it a go. I congratulate Judy on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia Day for her services to horticulture. It is a well-deserved honour, and all of us in the Hornsby shire are very proud.

BANKSTOWN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PROJECT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:39): I thank Tim, Kevin, Vyvienne, Josie, Kavita and the entire team at Bankstown Youth Development Service [BYDS] for the opportunity to share in the launch in Parliament House last Friday of their Stories of Strength project. Stories of Strength is an initiative to empower young people and to bring the community together in a united stand against hate, violence and fear. BYDS teamed up with youth broadcaster FBi Radio's All The Best and schools such as Chester Hill High School and Sir Joseph Banks High School to coach young people in developing professional interviewing skills that enable them to learn, share and celebrate stories of strength across the community. The project will expand to other Western Sydney schools over the course of the next three years. I acknowledge BYDS and thank it for its amazing work. It has worked tirelessly for more than 20 years in the Bankstown region supporting young people.

WINTER OLYMPICS SILVER MEDALLIST MATT GRAHAM

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:40): Last night Australia received its first medal in the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games, coming from the Central Coast's own Matt Graham. Matt took out the silver medal in the ski moguls, beating the current world champion from Japan. He scored an incredible 82.57, which was just 4.06 points off the gold medal recipient, Mikael Kingsbury from Canada. Matt's silver medal is yet another notch in his belt, having won the bronze medal in last year's moguls event at the World Cup games in Japan, which ranked him as number three in the world. Matt is a great sportsman and a great example for all aspiring sportspeople on the Central Coast, whether on or off the ski slopes. Next week another Central Coast local, Lachlan Reidy from Wamberal, will represent Australia in the four-man bobsleigh team. Good luck to Lachlan and the Aussie team, and congratulations again to Matt on his outstanding achievement.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:40): I congratulate those citizens recognised in Maitland Park on Australia Day. Maitland Citizen of the Year, Amorelle Dempster, is a strong advocate for the city of Maitland and has been the driving force behind the Slow Food movement in the Hunter and the first ever Australian Earth Market, which has assisted local farmers in recovering tonnes of lost harvest. Young Citizen of the Year Christopher Teasdale is a former school captain of Maitland Christian School, who represented his school and sport at the Christian Schools Sports Association Soccer State Championships. Christopher is a passionate advocate for diversity and equality in our community. I thank the other nominees for their contributions to our city—Tom Danilidis from Maitland Basketball; Dr Paul Moffitt, a diabetes specialist who started the first diabetes education centre in Australia and established a renal unit at the Newcastle Hospital; Paul Osland from Maitland Football Club; and Young Citizen of the Year nominees Lissa Sculthorpe and Brianna Peet.

GREAT LAKES SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:42): The Great Lakes Sportsperson of the Year award has been presented to Forster's Mary Yule. Mary was recognised for her achievements in distance running and her community support for runners in establishing the Forster Runners Group and Forster Parkrun. The Forster Parkrun takes place every Saturday morning and is a five-kilometre course at the Bicentennial Walk in the Pebbly Beach parkland. Mary, who is a professional massage therapist, also donates her services at running festivals for charity, including the Indigenous Marathon Foundation, which helps send Indigenous runners to compete overseas. On behalf of the Myall Lakes community, I thank and congratulate Mary Yule.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE YOUTHFEST

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:42): I thank all the community members and organisations that worked together to organise our first ever YOUTHfest in the Umina skate precinct during the school holidays. I thank the Regional Youth Support Service [RYSS], its manager, Virginia Walshaw, and her team of young people who continue to support young people in our community on the RYSS bus. I thank the police citizens youth club for bringing resources from the PCYC into the community, showcasing to young people the great opportunities we have in Umina.

I thank also Evolution Youth Services, Headspace, the State Emergency Service, Wesley Mission, Central Coast Council GenQ, Hope Church Central Coast, Cricket NSW, our local car club, the Rotary Club of Woy Woy and the team from Jasmine Greens Park Kiosk, whose "build-it-yourself" kebabs were popular at YOUTHfest. It was also great to see the taekwondo demonstrations, kids trying wheelchair basketball— thanks to Wheelchair Sports NSW—and our local police interacting with young people and showing off their footy skills. I am looking forward to follow-up youth events in both February and March showcasing our community delivering to young people on the peninsula.

BRAIN CANCER FUNDRAISING

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:43): Two young men in my electorate, Tom Boxall and Harry Scott, have had their friendship with the late Kian Mantle tragically severed through cancer. An undergraduate student of Macquarie University, Kian was diagnosed with brain cancer and battled against it for 18 months before his death, at the age of 20, in June 2017. Kian had previously attended St Paul's Catholic College in Manly and St Martin's Catholic Primary School in Davidson. He was also a keen cricketer, playing for the Wakehurst Redbacks Cricket Club. In the past three decades the survival rate from brain cancer has apparently improved only slightly from 1 per cent. The Sydney Neuro-Oncology Group [SNOG] supports brain cancer patients and families, and pursues research and education. I understand it was vital to Kian's care. I congratulate Tom, Harry, the Wakehurst Redbacks and all involved with the fundraiser for SNOG this Sunday 18 February—the KM Classic Charity Cricket Match. Held in honour of Kian's love for cricket, the occasion should bring people together while raising money for a thoroughly worthwhile cause.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:44): I congratulate 22 organisations throughout the Wollongong electorate that shared in more than \$300,000 in funding under the 2017 Community Building Partnership grants. They include: Windang Tennis Club, Wollongong Wolves Football Club, Illawarra Volleyball Association, Fernhill Football Club, Port Kembla Football Club, Unanderra Hearts Football Club, Cringila Children's House, the Flagstaff Group, the Northcote Society, Illawarra Stingrays Football Club, the Italian Social Welfare Organisation, the Wollongong Meals on Wheels Association, the Towradgi Surf Life Saving Club, the City of Wollongong Brass Band, the South Coast Rescue Squad, the St Elias Antiochian Parish Association, the Illawarra Live Steamers Cooperative and Surf Life Saving Illawarra. I acknowledge that the member for Keira and the member for Heathcote contributed to that grant. Other organisations that shared in the funding include the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra, the Illawarra IteC, the Wollongong Croquet Club and Illawarra Area Child Care—all great organisations that have benefited considerably.

GREAT ILLAWARRA WALK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:45): Once again, we are calling on local Illawarra residents to don their walking shoes for the annual Great Illawarra Walk, this year raising money for Saving Chloe Saxby. Chloe Saxby is a nine-year-old girl from the Illawarra who was diagnosed five years ago with an extremely rare and degenerative brain disease—vanishing white matter disease—for which no cure or treatment is available. Doctors are working on a cure, with promising research taking place. However, funding is required urgently to speed up this process. The Great Illawarra Walk, now in its eleventh year, is donating all moneys raised from its 2018 event to this incredibly worthy cause. The event runs over two days with participants walking up to 100 kilometres across Saturday 17 March and Sunday 18 March. Participants can choose to walk any distance between Shellharbour and Coalcliff, with many walkers opting for the full 100 kilometres over the two days. I acknowledge the founder, Mr Chris Lovatt, for his ongoing dedication and contribution to this fantastic and quintessentially Illawarra event.

BRISBANE WATER POLICE COMMANDER SUPERINTENDENT TONY JOICE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:46): Last year I paid tribute to Superintendent Danny Sullivan, who has served for five years as the Commander of the Brisbane Water Local Area Command but who moved to Lake Macquarie Local Area Command. Today I welcome Superintendent Tony Joice as the new Commander of the Brisbane Water police district. Tony, who was previously a commander of the Mudgee Local Area Command in rural New South Wales, has well and truly hit the ground running. One of the big changes Tony has already made is to assign a senior chief inspector to oversee specific geographic areas within the police district. I am sure that our local police will continue to perform exceptionally well under Tony's leadership. I look forward to witnessing their great work over the months and years to come. I acknowledge also the fantastic work of all the local police in the Brisbane Water police district and across the entire State. Our police work tirelessly to keep us safe from crime and dangerous behaviours for which we are grateful.

GREAT LAKES CITIZEN OF THE YEAR MARGARET COLLINS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:47): I congratulate Great Lakes Citizen of the Year Margaret Collins. Margaret is co-facilitator of the Great Lakes Mental Health Carer Support Group, which contributes long hours to provide respite activities, speakers and information days for carers, and many more activities. The Great Lakes Mental Health Carer Support Group held four major activities last year, including a family fun day, a music festival, a ladies pamper day and a doubles challenge for men. Margaret organised more than 200 presents for young carers and threw a Christmas party for more than 40 people. Margaret was completely gobsmacked and said, "It has been a big year and it is great for the group to get this recognition." I thank Margaret for her contribution and that of the Great Lakes Mental Health Carer Support Group.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Announcements***PHOTOGRAPH OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The SPEAKER: I inform members that in accordance with arrangements an official photograph will now be taken of members and officers of the House.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to Mr Colin Brooks, MLA, Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly and member for Bundoora, a guest of the Speaker. It was lovely to meet you at lunchtime. I hope you enjoy your stay in our place today while having a look around.

I also welcome to the Chamber a class of year 8 visual arts students from Mosman High School, who are accompanied by their teacher, Sarrah Shapley, guests of the member for North Shore.

I also welcome Mrs Mary Warren, who is the mother of the member for Campbelltown and has come all the way from Dubbo, a guest of the member for Campbelltown.

*Announcements***DEATH OF THE HON. GRANT ANTHONY MCBRIDE, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN**

The SPEAKER: I am sure that many members will remember the Hon. Grant Anthony McBride; many of us served with him. It is with great regret that I inform the House today of the death on 12 February 2018 of the Hon. Grant Anthony McBride, a former Minister of the Crown. On behalf of the House, I extend to his family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained. This will be the subject of a motion of sympathy on a future day.

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

NATIONAL APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATION TENTH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER (14:25): Over the course of 60 years, between 1910 and 1970, between one in 10 and one in three Indigenous Australian children were forcibly taken from their families and communities across the nation. In rural and remote areas across Australia this figure was undoubtedly greater than one in 10. The "Bringing them home" report states "at least 100,000" children—or between 10 per cent and 30 per cent of Indigenous children—were removed from their parents. We cannot forget our own history here. This policy, which allowed the forcible removal of children from families across our State, was debated and affirmed here in this Chamber, and for 50 years was administered by the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board.

On 27 January 1915 in the second reading debate on the Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Bill 1915, which gave the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board the power to remove any Indigenous child at any time and for any reason, the then member for Murray described the practices as a form of "slavery". The member for Murrumbidgee then noted in the debate, "Improve the parent if you can, but you will not improve the child by taking it away from the parent". However, the amendment was carried 28 votes to three. Today we note that at 9.09 a.m. on Wednesday 13 February 2008 the Prime Minister of Australia delivered the national apology.

The apology not only acknowledged the wrongs of past practices, apologising for "the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians" but also expressed regret, sorrow and, most importantly, marked a milestone in reconciliation of all Australians. The heartbreak of so many victims still exists today. Together, we acknowledge their pain and note that today's anniversary of the national apology is by no means to forget the practices of the past but move towards healing. This journey is long, and continues to this day.

DEATH OF SIR NICHOLAS MICHAEL SHEHADIE, AC, OBE

The SPEAKER (14:27): This statement relates to the death of Sir Nicholas Michael Shehadie, whom many of us knew very well and had very close relationships with, for one reason or another. It is with great sadness that I inform the House of the death of Sir Nicholas Shehadie, AC, OBE, on Sunday 11 February 2018. Sir Nicholas was the husband of our much-loved former Governor of New South Wales, the Hon. Dame Marie Bashir. However, he had carved out his own imposing identity. Born in November 1925, Sir Nicholas grew up in inner Sydney and attended Cleveland Street Public School and Crown Street Commercial School. Sir Nicholas made his first rugby grade debut in 1941 as a prop at the incredibly young age of 15. It was no surprise that a man of his skill developed his rugby career quickly, emerging to play for New South Wales and later the Wallabies. In 1949 Sir Nicholas was a key player in the first Wallabies team to win the Bledisloe Cup in New Zealand.

Over his career he played more than 100 games for Australia, 30 of which were Test matches—a record number of appearances. He captained the Wallabies on four of these occasions. After his playing days, Sir Nicholas went on to leave an equally incredible mark in public life away from the rugby field. Sir Nicholas started his own business and in 1962 was elected an alderman on Sydney City Council. In 1969 he was chosen as Deputy Lord Mayor and in 1973 was elected Lord Mayor of Sydney. In the 1980s he played a very influential

role in the administration of rugby union on the international stage and was a visionary proponent for the first Rugby World Cup, jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand in 1987. In 2011 Sir Nicholas was most deservedly admitted to the International Rugby Hall of Fame. If that was not enough, Sir Nicholas served on the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust from 1978 to 2001 and was chairman from 1990 until 2001.

He also served as Chairman of SBS from 1981 until 1999. We will remember him as the outstanding leader, sportsman and community advocate that he was—a man who dedicated much of his life to the service of our State and our nation. Sir Nicholas will be greatly missed by all. On behalf of the House, I extend our deepest condolences to Dame Marie, their children and loved ones. The flags at Parliament House are currently flying at half-mast as a sign of respect, and a condolence book will be made available to members and the public in the Fountain Court. I ask all members and officers to stand in their places as a mark of respect to Sir Nicholas Shehadie.

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

SYDNEY HILTON HOTEL BOMBING FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER: I take this opportunity to remind the House that it is the fortieth anniversary of the Sydney Hilton Hotel bombing. Three lives were lost in that terrible act, including the life of a police officer. We continue to keep the loved ones of Alec Carter, William Favell and Paul Burmistriv in our thoughts and prayers.

Question Time

INNER WEST BUS SERVICES

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:32): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Last Thursday when the Minister was asked to confirm that Transit Systems will operate the inner west and inner south bus service he refused to do so. Today all staff have been handed a letter dated 17 January that tells them precisely that. Why was the Minister not honest and up-front with the House in his answer on the last sitting day?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:32): I am sorry, Madam Speaker, may I ask the Leader of the Opposition to repeat the question please? I just want to hear it again.

The SPEAKER: If that is all right with the Leader of the Opposition. It is up to him.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Last Thursday when the Minister was asked to confirm that Transit Systems will operate the privatised inner west and inner south bus service he refused to do so. Today all staff have been handed a letter dated 17 January that tells them precisely that. Why was the Minister not honest and up-front with the House in his answer on our last sitting day?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I deliberately asked the Leader of the Opposition to repeat his question. There was a very clear reason for doing so. At 12.30 this afternoon I was asked during a press conference about a letter dated 17 January 2018 handed out to staff, and quite appropriately—and I have a copy of the letter—I decided I would get my staff to contact the department to find out what was issued to staff today. It was a sensible process. It turns out the letter issued to staff today is dated 13 February 2018. It seems that the Leader of the Opposition has just asked me a question that deliberately misleads the House. I am happy to table the letter. The Opposition has deliberately misled the House and the press gallery.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will stop the clock to give the Minister his entire time if interjections do not cease.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let me be clear, last night a contract was executed. Appropriately, the Secretary of Transport for NSW, Rodd Staples, executed a contract for region 6 bus transport at arm's length from the Minister. Unlike those opposite, this side of the House does not interfere with coalmine contracts or cafe leases at Circular Quay. It does not have the dregs of the most corrupt Labor Government in the State's history on its front bench. It does not have a member who ran Sussex Street while Ian Macdonald, Eddie Obeid and Joe Tripodi ran amok. The Leader of the Opposition has come into this place and misled the Parliament.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. The member for Maroubra will be heard in silence.

Mr Michael Daley: The Leader of the Opposition's question was very clear. Last week the Minister for Transport was asked to confirm whether the Government had already decided to give the contract to Transit

Systems. Is the Minister telling the House that as of Wednesday last week he was undecided yet today he is not? That is unbelievable. The Minister has no credibility.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the first time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Leader of the Opposition asked a question citing 17 January as the date of a letter issued to staff. I have checked with the department regarding the date and I have been informed the date of the letter is 13 February. A contract was signed last night. It proves that the Leader of the Opposition is unfit for office and morally bankrupt. The member should be ashamed of himself.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Minister, have you concluded your answer?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Yes.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Minister has concluded his answer. I will wait for members to come to order before I call for the next question.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (14:37): I address a question to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government making it easier for people to buy their first home?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:38): It gives me great pleasure to update the House on the successful housing affordability package provided by this Government. In the first seven months of 2017 just 5,400 people took the opportunity of stamp duty concessions. From 1 July 2017 the Government introduced stamp duty concessions which allowed a first homebuyer to spend up to \$650,000 and pay no stamp duty and receive concessions for purchases between \$650,000 and \$800,000. There have been 19,000 entrants into the housing market who have taken advantage of that package. It is not just those individuals and families who benefit. I hear anecdotes from members of Parliament who tell me they are stopped in the street and thanked by parents and grandparents because their children or grandchildren are now able to enter the housing market.

This is the culmination of years of hard work. When the Coalition came to Government it had to reverse the trend established by Labor. Supply is important to housing affordability and on average those opposite approved 32,000 dwellings per year during its last term of Government. In relation to supply, this Government is averaging 70,000 new approvals per year. Another major driver of housing affordability, in addition to supply, is infrastructure. People want to live and work where they have access to good roads, transport and amenities. The former Labor Government cancelled projects that this Government is now delivering.

In a previous budget the foreign investor surcharge was introduced. It ensured that those who lived and resided in New South Wales were not disadvantaged by foreign investors outbidding them for properties. These three policies go a long way towards delivering housing affordability. On 1 July 2017 the Treasurer announced a budget that included these taxpayer-supported concessions and delivered a boost for first homebuyers. In those suburbs where people have traditionally struggled to enter the housing market there has been an uplift in first homebuyers. Liverpool topped that list. The member for Holsworthy and the Opposition member for Liverpool will be pleased to know that there has been a 140 per cent increase in first homeowners in Liverpool. That is more than double. Parramatta also had double the number of people.

I am pleased to report that depending on what kind of dwelling and where you want to live, inner-city suburbs such as Woolloomooloo, Waterloo, Alexandria and Darlinghurst have also benefitted. Presumably this is off a low base, but those inner-city suburbs experienced a 12 times increase in the number of first homebuyers. The Treasurer, the member for Camden and I visited Oran Park where we met a lovely couple, Keiren and Nicole. They explained that they had saved \$9,000 and, due to the concessions, were able to move into their home instead of waiting another six or 12 months. Camden saw a doubling of first homeowners into the market. This is not just a story for Greater Sydney, it is occurring across the regions. The member for Orange was interested to learn that in his electorate there was more than a quadrupling of people entering the market for the first time.

First homebuyers in regional cities such as Orange and Wagga Wagga probably do not pay stamp duty. In Queanbeyan the number of first home entrants tripled. It is not just Greater Sydney benefitting but also the regions. I was pleased with the results for the Central Coast. Some parts of the Central Coast experienced a nine times increase in first homeowners. That is staggering. Every time the Government moves towards increasing housing affordability those opposite have attempted to stop it. The member for Campbelltown is quietly happy because the number of first homeowners in his electorate has tripled. In Gosford it has increased nine times. In Blacktown it has almost doubled. [*Extension of time*]

In St Marys it has increased five times. In Ingleburn it has doubled. The Government is providing for the constituents of Labor electorates what the Labor Party in government was not able to do. It is a personal matter to own your own home and enter the market. This is a great reminder to the community that the Government takes its commitments seriously. When it announces it will do something to address a concern in the community it does so. When referring to housing affordability actions speak louder than words: 5,400 the previous year and 19,000 so far this year, with the tally climbing. I could not help but recall the contribution by the Leader of the Opposition during the previous election campaign regarding stamp duty—at sunrise he announced a policy regarding the deferral of stamp duty payments and by sunset he withdrew the statement. The critics came out and panned him, "Luke Foley's stamp duty folly". In government Labor failed to deliver and in opposition it has no plans. This Government is delivering for the families and workers of New South Wales and will continue to deliver.

SYDNEY FERRIES "NAME YOUR FERRY" SURVEY

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:44): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given that the Minister said the name *Ferry McFerryface* had been chosen by the public when it had not and in this place last week would not acknowledge that Transit Systems had been selected when it had, when will the Minister start telling people the truth about public transport?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:45): I will treat that question with the degree of contempt it deserves. An article in the *Betoota Advocate*, which was released at lunchtime, states:

NSW Labor Party Hold Press Conference Just to See If Anyone Remembers Their Names.

The leader of the New South Wales Labor Party, Liam Foley, has today hosted a press conference in the middle of the day just to see if anyone in the media knows his name, and any of his shadow ministers' names.

"Go ahead. Ask us anything", he said.

The lifelong state politician was met with crickets, before a spritely BuzzFeed journalist asked him if Bill Shorten was going to be joining him.

"No", he said.

"I am appearing before the media without Bill Shorten today. I am sorry if that's the only reason you came out. But seriously, any questions. Ask anything."

It goes on:

Alongside Liam Foley stood Deputy Leader Mitchell Daley MP, as well as Shadow Minister for Transport Jolene McKay ...

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And here he is searching for relevance.

Mr Michael Daley: I am not sure what question the Minister is attempting to answer, but it is not mine. This letter, dated 17 January, came to us via one of his drivers.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Opposition has already asked a question about that. That was not part of the member's question. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: The Minister's department has let him down once again.

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

Mr Michael Daley: This came from one of your drivers—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: —and it is dated 17 January.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. If the member continues to be disorderly he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The member for Maroubra is changing his points of order according to his questions. It is interesting that the Labor Party has not come up with any policies that relate to transport. It has nothing. Members on this side of the House will forever focus on the customer. We have done so with today's announcement about Region 6, which will increase the number of bus services by 270 between 1 July and the end of the year; we will start on-demand transport; and we will deliver an additional 4.8 million kilometres in bus services to the people of the inner west.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We will deliver a turn-up-and-go service for people like the member for Drummoyne, who fights for his constituents. We will deliver more and better bus services. We have a world-leading operator in Transit Systems—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. The member for Swansea will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —which is delivering bus services not only to three other Australian jurisdictions but also to places such as London and Singapore.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This is what we are getting on with doing.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Members opposite can ask as many silly questions as they like.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: One thing this Government is not ashamed of—

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —is its record on public transport and roads across this State. We have an \$80 billion infrastructure program, half of which is going into transport and roads.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: After 16 years of those opposite in office not a thing was delivered.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the second time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We will not shy away from continuing to fight for public transport and roads investment across this State.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time. She will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We had the guts to recycle capital assets to invest in new and productive infrastructure to turn this State from number eight to number one.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time. He will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Members opposite want to ask silly questions because they have been caught out. The people's choice will be demonstrated clearly come March 2019 when we tackle the Labor Party in the next election.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:49): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What opportunities are available through vocational education in New South Wales and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative systems?

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members are interjecting even before the Minister has begun his answer. I will stop the clock if members continue to be disorderly. The member for Cessnock is not listening. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the third time. The next time the member for Cessnock opens his mouth he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr Clayton Barr: Am I on three calls for not listening or am I on three calls for talking while you were talking?

The SPEAKER: The member can take his pick; it could be either. For whatever reason, the member for Cessnock is on three calls to order. The member is lucky he is still in the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

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 Cootamundra for a fantastic question. The member, who was a florist before coming to this place, was a successful small business

owner. I always talk about small businesses being part of the engine room of the economy. Her question goes to the fundamentals of government and shows where we use taxpayers' subsidies to support people in becoming part of the economy and our community. The best we can do is give individuals the skills and training to gain employment. There is nothing better than getting up each day to go to work. I want to encourage people when they are considering jobs and training to not discount vocational education and training. Before Christmas, many young people received their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank or Higher School Certificate result which may have meant that university was not an option for them. In those circumstances, we encourage people to look at TAFE and vocational education and training as a genuine pathway for a real career.

The data and reports show that nine out of the top 10 growth jobs and future opportunities have a vocational education pathway. That is what this Government is all about. The Smart and Skilled program, which had problems when we first rolled it out in 2012 to 2015, provides a taxpayer subsidy to young people in training so that they can gain employment. If a young person chooses to be a joiner or a carpenter—which, as a former chippie, I fully encourage—and they undertake a carpentry TAFE course, which costs approximately \$14,000 to deliver, the New South Wales Government will subsidise it by \$12,000. For a contribution of \$2,000 over a three-year or four-year apprenticeship—which equates to less than two coffees a week—that young person has the opportunity to gain skills in a career and have a fantastic future. That is an example of the subsidies that are available. Up to 75 per cent of course costs are covered through Smart and Skilled. The program is not subsidising training for the sake of training; it is targeting future jobs in the economy. If we do not build a skilled workforce today for the future, we will be applying a handbrake that will slow down the economy and result in a loss of jobs.

Through the Smart and Skilled program's targeted and focused approach of Smart and Skilled to subsidised vocational training, we have seen an increase in enrolments and opportunities. We are working with industry to create the workforce of the future. We are not only focusing on traditional jobs in today's market but also setting up the workforce of the future. This Government accepts it is responsible for those who are disadvantaged. We want to ensure that the most disadvantaged in our community have the greatest opportunity to gain employment. Last year, working with Sydney Alliance, the Asylum Seekers Centre and Settlement Services International, we opened up Smart and Skilled funding for refugees. We are empowering people and giving them the skill sets to become part of this Government's story on jobs growth. We are training them in important jobs. We heard some great stories, and I am sure the members opposite would want to hear this story.

Diana is a woman 30 years of age who is an experienced information technology professional and a former university lecturer. She is not the type of person who normally would be looking for a government subsidy or taxpayer support. She arrived in Australia in September 2016 as a refugee who fled from war-torn Syria. She is a wife and a mother. She struggled to find child care, new friendships and secure employment. Like many refugees and others who come to this country who have qualifications and skills that could contribute to our economy, support business and create jobs, Diana chose to take a job that has a low entry level. That is an example of the barriers we have to work with. The Liberal-Nationals Government provides every opportunity for those who can afford it to contribute to their training but the Government will pick up the tab and support those who cannot afford it. [*Extension of time*]

That is exactly what we did with Diana. Diana gained work with Thermal International and through the Government's Smart and Skilled received the training, skill sets and support she needed. Following that, she applied for and attained a job with the New South Wales then Department of Finance, Services and Innovation as a cybersecurity developer. This is a growth area and she has the skills. We empowered and trained her and, as I said, she attained a job with the New South Wales Government's former Department of Finance, Services and Innovation as a cybersecurity developer. It is a fantastic story. This side of the Chamber will help those who want to help themselves. We will back those who are prepared to put in the hard work and make sacrifices to re-skill.

Many of us have a migrant story. My parents did not leave a war-torn Italy, but many people have left a war-torn country to start a new life in a new nation. We have an obligation to support those people so that they can become part of our community and contribute to our economy. That is exactly what we do. The support and training leads to jobs, community benefits and social harmony. At an event with Sydney Alliance we heard about the changes that have been made. A young bloke who came here with his wife is now undertaking an apprenticeship to become a bricklayer. Not many people will put up their hand to become a bricklayer, but the building industry is a growth industry as a result of our housing boom, as the Premier referred earlier. This Government is committed to making sure that people have the opportunity to obtain a job and to provide for their family and children. Most importantly, I see this as an opportunity for our community and this nation to work together for the future. I can hear the interjections from those opposite. They do not care about the outcome; they play politics with this issue. This Government is committed to vocational training in this State.

TRAIN TIMETABLES

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:57): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. On 10 January the Minister said that the report on the train debacle would be delivered by 24 January. Given that the report is now three weeks late, what will it take for the Minister to tell the truth?

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution Opposition members about the wording of their questions, which contain clear imputations. I caution them also about their juvenile and stupid interjections.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:58): Every time the member for Strathfield asks a question, it reminds me about those opposite who were Ministers in the most corrupt government in the State's history.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will not be present in the Chamber for much longer if he continues to interject. The member for Maroubra will remain silent.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The member for Strathfield, the member for Liverpool and the member for Maroubra were three of the Ministers on the front bench. The member for Strathfield comes in the Chamber and starts throwing rubbish around.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Cessnock that he is already on three calls to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In the past couple of weeks Howard Collins and Rod Staples have had a couple of things to deal with in relation to trains, not to mention the enterprise bargaining agreement with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. For the benefit of the member for Strathfield, they have nearly completed their work, and the report will be released in due course by the operators. Last week the member for Strathfield was asked to withdraw the use of the word "lie". Her behaviour was unparliamentary then and it was unparliamentary before. She has no respect for the Parliament and she should spend more time sitting down.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is fine for the Minister to have a go at me; I have no issues with that. I ask that he direct his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms Jodi McKay: Is that the best you've got, Minister?

The SPEAKER: The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

JOB SECURITY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:59): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How is the Government ensuring job prosperity and security for all? Is the Minister aware of any other alternative economic approaches?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will remain silent. Members who are already on one or two calls to order are now placed on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:59): Hooray for Coure. Never has a member brought so much prosperity to their electorate than the member for Oatley. St George Hospital, local roads and significant transport infrastructure are all happening in Oatley. The question is about jobs. There has been plenty of speculation in Federal politics on jobs. They say a member of Parliament down there has lost his way, his image has been tarnished and he is on the way out. Of course, I am referring to Wayne Swan who, as we know, announced his retirement this week.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. Some members are on shaky ground. The member for Granville will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: All the Labor luminaries, as he has moved on from his job—

Mr Ryan Park: The best Treasurer in the world.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The shadow Treasurer just said he was the greatest Labor Treasurer in the world.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Keira for the last time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Bill Shorten on social media said, "There are few people more Labor than Wayne Swan". Truer words have never been spoken—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Kogarah that he is already on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —six budgets and six deficits; \$235 billion worth of deficits.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation on the Government benches.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As the shadow Treasurer said, Wayne Swan has done what every good Labor Treasurer does: spend the surplus, increase taxes, rack up debt. He wrecked the budget and ruined the economy. There is no-one more Labor than Wayne Swan.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is my final warning to the member for Bankstown. Eight members are on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The tributes continue to flow. I have never seen more honest tributes from Labor about Wayne Swan.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Treasurer's personal reflections on members outside this House are irrelevant. I ask that he be drawn back to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am quoting your people. Tanya Plibersek said, "We are in his debt". Yes, we are. Every child, every grandchild is up to their neck in Swannie's debt. It goes further. Labor staffers were trolling me on Facebook yesterday, as usual. They said it was "poor form" that I was going after Wayne Swan at the time of his retirement. It is because his retirement affects my retirement. Because of Wayne Swan we can never retire.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. How is any of this relevant to what is going on in New South Wales? The Treasurer should talk about things that affect people and what the Government is doing wrong, not about Wayne Swan.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is being relevant to the question he was asked. There is no point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The taxpayers of New South Wales will never be the same because of that Labor Treasurer. Unlike Labor Treasurers, whether State or Federal, Liberal Treasurers actually care about the budget, the economy and jobs growth.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Cessnock talks about what we have done. More jobs are being created in this term of Government than ever before. We inherited the highest unemployment rate.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: Deputy Premier, this is how you are meant to do it. You are meant to go after us, not your own Prime Minister. Listen to him.

The SPEAKER: Does the Leader of the Opposition have a point of order?

Mr Luke Foley: It is relevance.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There is no jobs growth under Labor. There is more jobs growth in New South Wales under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government than ever before. Part of that, as I announced in the half-yearly update, is due to the significant contribution that our infrastructure agenda is having on jobs. There has been significant investment in health infrastructure, under the greatest Minister for Health in the State's history.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Kogarah from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

[The member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 15:03 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They do not like the truth. We are building hospitals in the Tweed. Many jobs are being created in the Tweed. We know the member for Maitland loves the new hospital coming there. We are also investing in Goulburn, Armidale and Concord and at Prince of Wales Hospital, just to name a few. *[Extension of time]*

The SPEAKER: Order! Who will be next? The member for Prospect will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Under the Minister for Education we are undertaking the biggest school building program in the State's history by investing \$4.2 billion in new and upgraded infrastructure. As a result of this construction jobs—

[Interruption]

At stadiums too, including Parramatta Stadium. A lot of jobs are going into Western Sydney.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Why does the member hate infrastructure? Why do members opposite hate new jobs in Western Sydney?

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Rockdale and the member for Cessnock to cease interjecting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As a result of the construction boom caused by the Government spending \$80.1 billion on infrastructure over the next four years, individuals have opportunities, families have security and communities have prosperity. We know—just like the member for Newcastle knows—that every one of our infrastructure projects has been opposed by members opposite.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Members opposite cannot keep claiming to be the party of the worker when all Labor wants to do is put people out of work. Members on this side of the House know that to create jobs governments need to work with the business community, not against it.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That means looking at the right levels of regulation and taxation because we know that when businesses do well workers do well. As I said, we have seen that in the United States with company tax cuts leading to a 3 per cent increase in wages growth. The evidence is clear, the science is settled, the debate is over: tax cuts equal wage growth. This is why this Government cuts tax in every budget. *[Time expired.]*

TRANSIT SYSTEMS BUS CONTRACT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:07): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. When was Transit Systems first notified by the Government that it had been selected as the operator of the Minister's newly privatised bus region?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:08): The answer to that is simple: it was in advance of the contract being signed. That is how it works. Unlike what happened under members opposite, the department manages the tender process, usually after an expression of interest process, and interested parties bid for the work. Then, of course, the contracts are assessed at arm's length. That is how members on this side of the House do things. I am pretty sure members opposite have a different model.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This is quite interesting. First of all, the Leader of the Opposition stood up and asked me one question and then quickly sat down. Now he has managed to get the member for Strathfield to stand up. Let us go to the heart of this, which is about the member for Strathfield. At no point in the 15 years I have been in this place have I had the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser write to me and say that I have a conflict of interest—such as asking four questions in the House about WestConnex when I owned a property next door.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked. I will hear the point of order if it relates to something different. The Minister will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jodi McKay: Is this the best you've got? Bring it on.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It goes to the heart of integrity and you don't like it. You didn't declare your properties.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. She will not argue with the Minister. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What happens when a member does not declare their properties and then asks questions about integrity? We are entitled to ask about the actions of the member for Strathfield.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on relevance. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: It is relevance.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I make this point: the member for Strathfield failed to declare property interests when asking questions about infrastructure. This is serious. Members opposite think that this is laughable. They think that it is okay to fail to declare property interests and then ask four questions about WestConnex and have the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser write to them. We do not need to go far to ask some questions about very large donations made to the member for Strathfield as well.

The SPEAKER: Order! If members ask contemptible questions in this place they sometimes get the answers they deserve.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If the member for Strathfield wants to compare my integrity against hers, I will debate her any day of the week. I am waiting to hear the Leader of the Opposition apologise for misleading the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister has concluded his answer.

NATIONAL HEALTH AGREEMENT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:11): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. How is the Government guaranteeing funding from the Commonwealth to ensure that the number of frontline health jobs continues to grow and patients receive the best possible care?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:11): I thank the member for Kiama for his question. He has been very committed to ensuring that each of his constituents receive the very best health care. He has also fought for his local community and made sure that is exactly what they got. Government members are of the view that the most important thing we can do is to ensure that all of our constituents across New South Wales have access to first-class health care. That is why last week we negotiated with the Federal Government to finalise a heads of agreement for a national health agreement which will give us certainty in our Federal funding until 2025. Following the Premier's negotiations with the Prime Minister, we know that up to \$40 million will come from the Commonwealth over the next four years. That certainty cannot be underestimated.

Every day nearly 115,000 staff are at the coalface working with patients across New South Wales. We want to ensure that we are able to give them certainty of funding going forward, which is critical to ensuring that we have the very best health services. I remind members that the New South Wales Government is spending close to \$23 billion on health, which is approaching one-third of the State budget. Included in that \$23 billion are unprecedented amounts of capital commitments. Very little was done for hospitals over the 16 long years of the Labor Government. More than 50 per cent of our hospitals were more than 50 years old. Now new infrastructure and new hospitals are being built across the State, as the Treasurer said earlier. Western Sydney is a beneficiary, with Westmead Hospital receiving \$900 million.

Dr Geoff Lee: Thank you, Minister.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is a pleasure to deliver that for the member for Parramatta and other members who advocate on behalf of their local communities. Nepean Hospital, on behalf of which the wonderful Minister Ayres has advocated, has received \$576 million. At his request, I have been meeting regularly with the Nepean Hospital medical staff council. They understand that the funding is a valuable step forward in securing the future of the hospital and that it would not have been provided under a Labor government. I note also that the member for Mulgoa has been helping the people of Penrith and Nepean with this funding. Another \$341 million for Concord hospital—

Mr John Sidoti: Thank you, Minister.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am hearing "thank you" a lot on this side. Is the member for Campbelltown going to thank me? The member for Wollondilly and the member for Camden fought for it, but the member for Campbelltown is riding on their backs to get the benefit. For years nothing happened at Blacktown and Mount

Druitt hospitals under the former Labor Government—they were not worried about Labor electorates—but under this Coalition Government they get \$700 million. Indeed, only last week the Premier and I had the pleasure of seeing some of those new developments. It is not only the people of Western Sydney who are benefitting from this funding but also the people in the regions. Around one-third of all the money we are spending is going to the regions. Where is that fantastic member for Tweed? Where is 100 per cent for the Tweed? Funding of \$534 million has been allocated for a greenfield site at the Tweed. Where is that very strong advocate and noisy member for Wagga Wagga? Funding of \$280 million has been allocated for stages one and two of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and we are now up to stage three. Wyong hospital—I have not heard a word from the member for Wyong.

Mr David Harris: The other day I stood up in here and thanked you.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: On behalf of his constituents he thanked the Coalition for delivering \$200 million in funding for his constituents. In all honesty, the member for Wyong is pleased that the Coalition Government—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber. I cannot hear the Minister.

Mr Guy Zangari: What about Fairfield Hospital?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am coming to Fairfield. It is not only the Wyong Hospital but also the Gosford Hospital. What a fantastic development by Health Infrastructure NSW and the builders to enable the hospital to continue working. I assume the member for Gosford is keen to thank the Government for the funding of \$348 million on behalf of her constituents. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Liesl Tesch: Maybe when you come up.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Thank you for that. A government has to have not only capacity but also honesty and trust. Last week we made an agreement with the Federal Government to give us that certainty, namely, \$40 billion over the life of the agreement. What did the Opposition's spokesperson on Health have to say about that? The New South Wales shadow Minister said the Premier had rushed to do a deal on health well ahead of other States and Territories. That is an absolute lie because both Western Australia and New South Wales saw the benefit—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I ask the Minister to withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I withdraw it. The Hon. Walt Secord was being mendacious. He could not lie straight anywhere in this universe and tell the truth. What he said was a straight out lie. I acknowledge that the Western Australia and New South Wales governments will share an extra \$50 million because we managed to negotiate a good deal while the other governments were asleep at the wheel. New South Wales has certainty for its health system as a result of the amazing work of Premier Berejiklian. Well done Premier. We are doing very well in negotiating certainty for New South Wales.

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE TRAVEL

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:18): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister confirm that in addition to sending his officials overseas at a cost of hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Ian Macdonald spent more than that on lunches—Sir Lunalot—and you backed him.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the question. The Minister will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: Will the Minister confirm that in the past two years he took trips to the United States of America, China, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore at a cost to taxpayers of \$136,651.78?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:19): The good member for Heffron should realise that when Ministers travel they have to disclose it.

Mr Brad Hazzard: We do. They didn't.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Speaking of disclosure, we disclose our diaries. They do not. I am a bit perplexed by this question. When I travelled to the United States I appeared before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure at Capitol Hill. I gave an address on what we are doing with infrastructure in New South Wales.

Mr Ray Williams: They loved it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: They did love it. One of the things they were particularly interested in was the recycling of capital to invest in more productive infrastructure. I was able to disclose to the Congress committee that we have grown the State's asset base as we have leased our assets and invested in more productive infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blue Mountains will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Interestingly, the Democrats were opposed to what we are doing, just as the Labor Party is opposed to what we are doing. Here comes the kicker: There is no doubt that New South Wales is a global sweet spot. There is a lot of interest in what is happening here. We are open for business. We are very proud that this State is leading the nation. We are also very proud to have the international spotlight on what we are doing and how we are building infrastructure for the future of our citizens. What comes with building infrastructure and issuing contracts and tenders, which is something those opposite are not familiar with—

Mr Brad Hazzard: They never did it for 16 years.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: They did not do it. We have international interest in what we are doing. I do not know if anyone has noticed, but there is only a small number of players in Australia that can do this type of development and construction [D and C] work. We are very keen to make sure that our citizens get infrastructure quickly because we want to improve their quality of life. Naturally, international consortiums will come and bid for our work. I have been advised by the transport department that in the final rounds for the light rail project only international players wanted to do the work.

When we sign up for this type of work there might be competitive tension in the bids. So to safeguard taxpayer dollars we may have to travel abroad for meetings and to inspect what is happening when the product is being delivered—for example, in the construction of trains and making sure that D and C contracts are being negotiated commercially. Those opposite do not like hearing about our having not only the largest infrastructure spend in the history of this State—we are currently building three light rail projects and a fourth metro project is under planning—but also the largest urban road project in the history of this nation, which is WestConnex.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: This is the longest answer I can remember to a yes or no question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's answer forms part of the confirmation of yes or no.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We on this side of the House have Ministers who can manage their budgets so that we can live within our means and invest in more services and infrastructure. When the member for Maroubra was a Minister he blew his Roads budget by about \$300 million.

Dr Geoff Lee: And did not build anything.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And did not build anything. I remember what the Princes Highway and the Pacific Highway were like under those opposite. The only road project they built was the Cross City Tunnel, which went broke twice. Those opposite failed at every step. They do not like hearing the infrastructure story. They do not like the fact that we have to send people to meet with international players. They do not like the fact that we not only have the largest infrastructure program in the history of this State but we also proudly have the largest train procurement in the history of this State: 24 brand new Waratah trains, more than 500 carriages in the new inter-city fleet, brand new light rail vehicles and brand new metro trains—driverless trains.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newcastle will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Those opposite fail to understand that we are very proud of our investment and we will continue for the people of this State. [*Time expired.*]

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOBS

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:24): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning. How is the Government's record investment in infrastructure impacting the construction sector, and are there any related matters?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:25): We are the party of the worker. It is a well-known fact that New South Wales is the engine that drives the Australian economy. Some States are the wheels; Western Australia is the back-seat driver telling us what to do all the time; Victoria is the bumper sticker; and the Territories are like an old tip trailer that slows us down a bit but we do not get rid of it for sentimental reasons. New South Wales, the first State, drives the entire operation. We have the highest employment rate, the highest consumer confidence, the highest record investment in infrastructure—schools, hospitals, roads and public transport—the highest number of homes under construction, and the brightest waistcoats.

Everywhere in New South Wales, we see beautiful cranes on the skyline building homes and facilities for the future of this great State. The crane index is off the charts. We are keeping crane builders across the world in business. In fact, these days there is a waiting list for a decent crane in New South Wales. Sydney has the second-highest number of cranes in the world—indeed, in the entire universe, as far as we are aware. Residential cranes in Sydney represent 43 per cent of all cranes in Australia. Forget the kookaburra as the State's bird emblem; I say it should be the crane. When members opposite were in power, the only cranes they knew were the paper cranes that decorated the lazy Susan at the Golden Century. There are now more cranes over Sydney than those opposite had at a banquet fundraiser at the Golden Century.

The cranes and the hordes of hi-visibility jackets we see all over this State mean one important thing, that is, jobs. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, construction jobs in New South Wales grew to more than 1.4 million by the end of 2017; that is a 28 per cent increase. It gives me great pleasure to inform the House that since 2011 when the Liberal-Nationals Government came to power, some 310,000 people now have jobs in the construction industry. As a flow on, a record 500,000 jobs are in rural and regional areas. That is a 23 per cent increase since 2011. As members on this side know, those extremely encouraging figures do not tell the full story. These hundreds of thousands of jobs support hundreds of thousands of families.

A considerable portion of the wages of those construction workers flows through the economy as they and their families become consumers—spending at local shops, buying dinner at the local pub or restaurant or coffee at a cafe, taking a family holiday. In so many ways, the general economy benefits. Only a few days ago it gave me great pleasure to announce that housing approvals across this great State continue to soar, with more than 70,000 home approvals granted in 2017, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. That is the third consecutive year that New South Wales recorded more than 70,000 building approvals. The rate of building approvals and completions in New South Wales is continuing to power the New South Wales economy and provide vital employment opportunities across the building and construction industries.

It gives me no pleasure to remind the House and those opposite once again of their failed record. Under those opposite—the losers—housing completion flatlined at just 13,000 in 2009, almost beating the record from 1957. Further to that, they left a deficit of 100,000 homes for young people and families who could not even enter the Sydney housing market. The only jobs that those opposite were interested in were jobs for their mates—the thugs—at the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. Under Labor, the only way to get a development off the ground was to visit the crane at the Golden Century and to do a deal around the lazy Susan, over a bit of san choy bau. On this side, however, we cheer on those great workers. [*Extension of time*]

On this side, we cheer on the construction worker. We cheer on the mums and dads working to build this economy. Meanwhile, the only cheering from members opposite is when they are cheering on a leadership challenge. Why? Because they do not have a leader. Labor is the party of the unemployed worker. Under Labor, hardworking people who just want a pay cheque and the chance to enrich themselves and their families have two choices: they can join a picket line or join a dole queue. Under the Liberals and The Nationals, hardworking people have another option, that is, a job that pays well, buys them a home and sends their kids to school.

Our policies are about the young bloke in a hi-visibility singlet building the skyline of tomorrow who, when he graduated under those opposite, never would have imagined he would have such a great gig. He is buying a cold carton of Oak milk from a shopkeeper who never believed she would be able to hire more staff because of the Australian Labour Party's culture of tax, tax and more tax. The Oak milk is delivered by a bloke who came to Australia nine years ago and thought he never would be able to buy a new home for his family, until this Government came along with a first home buyers plan that worked. What is even better is that he drives his delivery van on the roads that those opposite could not afford and would not build because the only place they wanted to drive New South Wales was into further debt and deficit. This Government has created a better New South Wales from the State that those opposite left behind. The building blocks are jobs. We are the party of the worker; Labor is the party that New South Wales has left behind.

Committees

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL

Report: Report on the Eleventh General Meeting with the Valuer General

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: As Chair: I table the report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General entitled "Report on the Eleventh General Meeting with the Valuer General", report No. 2/56, dated February 2018. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION**Inquiry**

Mr ADAM CROUCH: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission has resolved to conduct the following two inquiries, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page:

- (1) Review of the 2016-17 Annual Report of the Health Care Complaints Commission.
- (2) Cosmetic health services complaints in New South Wales.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Pet Shops

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

Companion Animals on Public Transport

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

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

Elizabeth Street Development Proposal

Petition calling on the Minister for Planning to reject the proposed development of a 52-storey building in Elizabeth Street, Sydney, and to ensure that future development of the site does not overshadow Hyde Park and the Anzac Memorial, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2286 to 2320 and 2322 to 2342 have lapsed.

*Motions Accorded Priority***HOUSING AFFORDABILITY****Consideration**

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:35): My motion deserves to be accorded priority because it should be noted that more than 19,000 people have bought their first home since the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government introduced generous stamp duty concessions—more than triple the number of first home buyers than for the same time last year—and the New South Wales Government's plan to address housing affordability should be supported. Housing affordability directs every single family across New South Wales. It is this Liberal-Nationals Government that is delivering on its promises to improve housing affordability thanks to its housing affordability package announced as part of last year's budget.

This Government has abolished all stamp duty for first home buyers on new and existing homes costing up to \$600,000 and has introduced stamp duty discounts on homes costing up to \$800,000. But it does not end there. The Government is abolishing stamp duty on lenders mortgage insurance, which would save a first home buyer around \$2,900 on a home with an average cost price of \$800,000. Statistics released this week show that the new measures are being very widely used and ultimately are having a very positive effect right across New South Wales. For example, in the Gosford region on the Central Coast, the number of first home buyers taking up stamp duty relief in 2017-18 is nine times higher than in 2016-17—an increase from only 35 first home buyers in 2016-17 to 316 in 2017-18. That is the sixth biggest increase across the entire State.

Further north, in the Wyong region, the number of first home buyers taking up stamp duty relief has increased by more than 250 per cent. I am sure the member for Wyong will be very happy with that announcement. It has gone from 78 homes in 2016-17 to 224 in 2017-18. These new affordability policies are having an effect right across New South Wales, both in metropolitan and rural areas such as in Western Sydney, the Central Coast,

Wagga Wagga, Orange and Queanbeyan. They are all massively benefiting from this Government's good policies. It is only the Liberal-Nationals Government that truly understands the need to address housing affordability.

For 16 years of a Labor government, the people in this State were neglected when it came to home purchasing. Our Government's record over the past seven years stands in stark contrast to the 16 years of dithering by those opposite. Time and again Labor let down the people of New South Wales. Labor has an appalling record when it comes to housing affordability. In Labor's last five years in government it managed only 2,700 housing approvals per month. We have almost doubled that to 5,300 housing approvals per month. That is why this motion should be accorded priority.

INNER WEST BUS SERVICES

Consideration

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:37): My motion should be accorded priority because the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is incompetent and incapable. He misled the community about the Ferry McFerryface debacle and now he has fibbed to the inner west community about the privatisation of their buses. Last week I asked the Minister a very simple question. I asked whether the Government had made a decision about Transit Systems taking over the inner west bus service. The Minister said the contract had not been signed. We know that that deal had been done. The deal with Transit Systems was the worst-kept secret in town.

This Minister has disrespected my community and he has disrespected the thousands of bus drivers in New South Wales who expect so much more from their Minister. This Minister cannot be trusted. I have a letter dated 17 January. This Minister walked into the House today and said that this letter did not exist, that it was not sent to drivers. I will read an email from Transit Systems that confirms that the letter was in fact sent to drivers. Why would Transit Systems issue an apology if that letter did not exist? This Minister cannot be trusted. He delivered a disastrous and unworkable timetable, he privatised Newcastle buses, he oversaw a \$600 million blowout in the South East Light Rail project, and he ordered trains that do not fit the tracks.

This Minister has disrespected business owners who have been impacted by the South East Light Rail project. He shows no respect for his workforce and he shows no respect whatsoever for the people of New South Wales. This Minister is belligerent, he is incompetent and he is utterly incapable of doing his job. He cannot even deliver a report on time. The report on the timetable disaster that is now some five weeks overdue. Today's announcement is a kick in the guts for my community. Twenty thousand people in my community signed a petition saying that they oppose the privatisation of inner west bus services. But the Minister, who will not listen, pursued his ideological agenda in his arrogant way and we now have a bus system that no-one wants.

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

The House divided.

Ayes47

Noes35

Majority.....12

AYES

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Provost, Mr G
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

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

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

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Finn, Ms J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T F
 Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Anderson, Mr K
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Roberts, Mr A

Haylen, Ms J
 Lalich, Mr N
 Aitchison, Ms J
 Cotsis, Ms S

Motion agreed to.

*Senate***SENATE VACANCY**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER,

The Legislative Council, having taken into consideration the Legislative Assembly's message dated 6 February 2018, agrees to meet the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator the Honourable Sam Dastyari, in the Legislative Council Chamber, on Wednesday 14 February 2018 at 3.45 p.m.

Legislative Council
 13 February 2018

JOHN AJAKA
 President

I direct that the joint sitting be set down as an order of the day for 3.45 p.m. on Wednesday 14 February 2018 as appointed in the Legislative Council's message.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 49/56**

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 49/56, dated 13 February 2018. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: I table also the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 48/56, dated 6 February 2018.

*Motions Accorded Priority***HOUSING AFFORDABILITY****Priority**

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:48): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes more than 19,000 people bought their first home since the Government introduced generous stamp duty concessions.

- (2) Recognises this is more than triple the number than the same time last year.
- (3) Supports the Government's plan to address housing affordability.

Between now and 2036 our State's population is expected to grow by more than 100,000 people every year. For my community of the Central Coast the prediction is that an extra 75,000 people will decide to call the Central Coast home by 2036. This means that the Central Coast will need housing supply to grow by approximately 2,075 new homes per year just to keep pace with projected population growth. This is no small task and is the reason the Government has taken strong action to increase housing construction and ultimately improve housing affordability.

In fact, this policy area is such a core focus of the Liberal-Nationals Government that one of the Premier's priorities is aimed at delivering, on average, 61,000 housing completions per year. This is being achieved by speeding up housing approvals and undertaking rezoning work. Unfortunately, in my electorate of Terrigal and across the Central Coast Labor councillors have hijacked council meetings to dramatically decrease the number of objections required for development applications to be reviewed. This is a very ill-conceived change. It is concerning that Labor's lack of vision on housing and development issues could pose a real threat to the future of the Central Coast.

It should be noted that those opposite have been strangely quiet about the attempt to put a handbrake on vital housing development on the Central Coast. Government members know that housing supply growth needs to be supported by infrastructure investment. That is why I am pleased that the Government is investing unprecedented amounts into our local schools, roads and healthcare facilities. On the Central Coast and right across New South Wales the Government is delivering new hospitals, new and upgraded schools and new roads to ensure that no community is left behind and that every region receives its fair share.

Part of the Government's record infrastructure funding includes \$3 billion in targeted funding to support growing communities. This includes \$600 million from the Restart NSW Fund to contribute to the Housing Acceleration Fund, \$369 million allocated to councils for local infrastructure under the Local Infrastructure Growth Scheme and an expansion of special infrastructure contributions to provide millions of extra dollars over the next four years. Each of these measures is targeted at supporting growing communities, which shows a consistent approach to addressing housing affordability.

I now remind members of some of the remarkable results the Liberal-Nationals Government has achieved. Just a few weeks ago the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures showed that housing approvals continue to soar, with 70,000 approvals granted in 2017 alone. As outlined by the Minister for Planning in question time, this is the third consecutive year that New South Wales has recorded such a fantastic result. This proves that the Liberal-Nationals Government's policies continue to deliver for every community across New South Wales, including my region of the Central Coast and that of the Government Whip, the Camden electorate.

This high level of housing approval has many flow-on effects. Across the State we are witnessing a growth in vital employment opportunities, particularly in the building and construction industry. Unemployment is now at a record low rate of 4.8 per cent, the best of all the Australian States. Only a Coalition government can deliver such an impressive result. Indeed, in 2010, the last full year of the Labor Government, barely 37,000 homes were approved. That is almost half the number of approvals of this Government. Labor left us with the lowest number of new dwellings per capita in the nation. Labor deprived Sydney and the State of much-needed land releases and infrastructure projects, which has led to a backlog in supply that is contributing to high house prices.

Labor has left a shameful legacy. As the Premier stated during question time, last year's budget included significant measures to eliminate stamp duty from new and existing properties valued up to \$650,000 while stamp duty has been reduced for homes valued between \$650,000 and \$800,000. Every community across the State is reaping the rewards of this Government's good policies. Metropolitan, rural and regional areas like Western Sydney, the Central Coast, Wagga Wagga, Orange and Queanbeyan are all benefiting. Indeed, more than 19,000 people have directly benefited from the Government's stamp duty concessions. On the Central Coast 814 first home buyers have benefited from the stamp duty incentives. In Western Sydney the number of first home buyers claiming stamp duty exemptions has increased from 2,861 in 2016-17 to 7,000. This is why members should support this motion.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:52): Last week I had the pleasure of speaking to a couple who were trying to buy their first home. It was a funny conversation. They said, "Ryan, we have been hearing a lot about stadiums." I said, "Yes." They said, "Surely the Government is not spending \$2.6 billion on stadiums when I am struggling to get into my first home in an area that was once affordable." I said, "Tragically you are right." This Government is spending \$2.6 billion to pull down a stadium that is less than 20 years old but first home buyers cannot get a foot in the door to buy a basic first home in a suburb that is not Vaucluse but the suburbs that many Labor members represent.

When this motion was introduced I thought, "This is true." This is the fourth day of the first parliamentary sitting period for 2018. If I had been stupid enough as Treasurer to allocate \$2.5 billion for new stadiums I would want to talk about it. I would make sure that the Minister spoke about it every day. Today we have not heard the Government referring to the "s" word—I am talking about stadiums, not stamp duty. I have been around governments for a long time. I have never known a Treasurer to allocate \$2.5 billion for stadiums and then say, "Do not talk about it. I do not want to talk about that allocation. I do not want to talk about stadiums for which I have approved \$2.5 billion." It is not stamp duty that the Government does not want to talk about; it is stadiums.

First home buyers want to talk about stadiums because they are struggling to enter a market that requires them to spend more on a property than young people in Tokyo, London or New York. On the world housing affordability index Sydney is second only to Hong Kong for unaffordable housing. I know that the system is simple. The map is given to those on the list for a tick of approval. I say to Government members, "Every now and then when you receive the list from the Premier's or Treasurer's office, read it."

I accept the views of members representing the electorates of Swansea, the Illawarra, Wollongong, south-west Sydney and the Hunter, but I do not think too many people on the Central Coast are saying, "Yippee! The Government has solved the housing affordability crisis. I am so delighted that I am spending 13 times my income to buy a home. I am delighted that I live in a city that is now the most unaffordable in the world". People are not talking about stamp duty; they are talking about stadiums. Every time the Government attempts to divert this place from discussing wasting money on stadiums that should not be built, the Opposition will remind the people of New South Wales.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (15:58): Last Sunday the Treasurer and Premier visited Oran Park and met Keiren Busch and Nicole Bonino. Both Keiren and Nicole were appreciative of and excited by the first home buyers grant as it reduced by six months the time they had to wait until they owned their own home. I will quote some figures which will reveal that some people are saying, "Yippee!" This year in Liverpool 406 people have utilised the concession package, which is 2½ times the number of people who utilised it last year. In Kingswood 399 people utilised the concession package, which is nearly three times the number of people who used it last year. Camden is third on the list with 387 people, which is double the number of people who utilised the package last year.

As the Premier stated during question time, Campbelltown has triple the number of people utilising the concession package than they did last year. Other electorates that had an increase in the take-up of the concession package—19,000 first home buyers this year compared to fewer than 6,000 last year—are Riverstone, Gosford, Leppington in my electorate, Westmead and Blacktown and in the regions Wagga Wagga, Orange, Wyong and Queanbeyan. In Dubbo, four times the number of first home buyers are availing themselves of this opportunity compared to this time last year, and the number in Tamworth is 4½ times higher. It is not a perfect world: some people are missing out and there are issues.

The Government wants the numbers to increase and the program is working. The number of first home buyers has increased from 6,000 last year to more than 19,000 this year. We should not be negative just for the sake of being negative. It is not all right for members opposite to attack the Government just because they are in Opposition. They should cooperate and work with the Government to encourage constituents. What could we achieve if Opposition members did not criticise something that works, supported it and became involved in its progress? The statistics speak for themselves. Opposition members should not stand in the way of progress. They should support the Government's program which is putting people in homes.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:01): The median house price in Sydney is more than \$1 million. Sydney is the second-worst city for housing affordability in the world. Hong Kong is the only place less affordable than Sydney. In the past five years, as a direct result of this Government's failure to do anything about housing affordability, house prices in Wollongong have increased twofold. In some suburbs in Wollongong house prices have increased by 90 per cent. These are the facts that are facing first home buyers. The Aussie Home Loans list of the 20 most popular suburbs in Wollongong cites house prices as ranging from \$600,000 to \$1.6 million. In the past Cringila was an area that was rich with first home buyers. This Government's housing affordability policy failure in Sydney is impacting on house prices paid by the Wollongong community.

Today members listened to a long list of areas that were allegedly benefiting from the Government's housing policy. Two areas that were not mentioned were Wollongong and the Illawarra. Over the next 20 years West Dapto will have 50,000 new homes. One would think that would be an area ripe for first home buyers, but it does not rate a mention because this Government failed to address and to take seriously housing affordability in Sydney. Housing prices in Sydney affect house prices in the Illawarra. Another fact that the Premier failed to mention during question time—it has conveniently been left out by members opposite in their contributions to this debate—is that the Premier ignored Treasury advice concerning first home buyers, that is, to push negative gearing reform. Everyone, including the Turnbull Government, knows that a failure to reform negative gearing is

driving up house prices. It works against any action taken relating to housing affordability and it works against the so-called generous stamp duty concessions referred to in this self-aggrandising motion. Despite that advice, the Premier went quiet when it came to taking that up with the Prime Minister because she was more interested in protecting the Prime Minister's poor Newspoll approval ratings than she was in addressing housing affordability.

The member for Camden suggested we take a bipartisan approach to this issue. I give Government members the opportunity to adopt Labor's plans on housing affordability. We have detailed them. Our plans not only address housing affordability for first home buyers, they also address rental reforms, which 40 per cent of the Wollongong electorate welcomes. That community knows that it needs help because there are no affordable rental properties in the regions. Our plans also address social housing, which has been vacated by this Government because it has no ideas. It leaves properties vacant throughout the State. It is more interested in putting money into rebuilding great stadiums in Sydney than it is in addressing housing affordability. Get on with it and adopt Labor's plan.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:05): In reply: I thank the member for Keira, the member for Camden and the member for Wollongong for their contributions. We know that families struggle with the costs of living, and that is why housing affordability is a priority for the Liberal-Nationals Government. I am proud to be a member of this Government which has prioritised this policy. We will not be lectured by the luminaries opposite whose plan for property affordability is to introduce a vendor tax. Members have not forgotten the vendor tax. As has been mentioned, 19,000 individuals or families have now secured their first home with the help of our stamp duty incentive. A young couple, Alex and Tarsh, thanked me because they were able to purchase their first home thanks to this Government's initiatives.

The number of first home buyers across the State taking up the stamp duty relief has grown significantly in the past year alone. In the Lower Hunter, the number of applications in 2016-17 is up from 166 to 827 in 2017-18. In Lake Macquarie East there were 102 applications in 2016-17, which is now up to 345. In Liverpool, the number of applications in 2017 is up from 166 to 406 in 2017-18. In Campbelltown, the number of applications is up from 114 to 345. One year ago the Central Coast—the electorate of the member for Wyong—received 78 applications. That number has increased to 224 applications. Those numbers matter. Those figures could be better if Opposition members did what good State members should do and tell their constituents to take advantage of this opportunity rather than criticise it.

Every number is an individual or a family that has taken the first steps in acquiring a home. Getting a foot into the property market is a big step for first home buyers. The member for Kiera is a multiple home owner; he has taken full advantage of the investment opportunities. In Shellharbour, the number of applications has gone from 16 to 52, which is another significant increase. Housing construction is also going exceptionally well. In Labor's last term of office, building approvals averaged less than 32,000 per year. Labor left us an appalling legacy. This Government is delivering 70,000 housing approvals every year. This has occurred not just over the past year but also for the past three consecutive years. Effective housing policy is a key priority for this Government. Labor hung the home owners of New South Wales out to dry.

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

The House divided.

Ayes47
Noes33
Majority..... 14

AYES

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E

Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr A
George, Mr T
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G

AYES

Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mrs L

Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Wilson, Ms F

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

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L (teller)
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Gibbons, Ms M
Roberts, Mr A

Aitchison, Ms J
Cotsis, Ms S
Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N

Motion agreed to.*Condolences***DEATH OF THE HON. JAMES CAIRD BRUXNER, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN AND MEMBER FOR TENTERFIELD****Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (16:17):** I move:

That this House extends to the family the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained by the death, on 22 August 2017, of the Honourable James Caird (Tim) Bruxner, a former Minister of the Crown.

It is great to see Angus and Marjorie in the public gallery and I know that their children, Kate and Tim, would have loved to have been here. I place on record the obituary notice that was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

Passed 22 August 2017, late of Bellevue Hill and formerly of Tenterfield and Inverell. Dearly beloved husband of Margaret (deceased). Dearly beloved father and best mate of Angus, loving father-in-law of Marjorie and devoted and immensely proud grandfather of Kate and Tim. Devoted uncle of Lindsey and Christina and Great Uncle of Anne. A loyal and generous friend and mentor to many people.

A true gentleman in every sense of the word, Tim was widely admired for his high principles, integrity and wisdom. We are all grateful for the significant and distinguished innings which he has played in the game of life. He was indeed an honourable man.

Angus said to me that he strongly believed the second paragraph of that obituary summed up his dad perfectly. He was indeed an extraordinary person in his own way. I am pleased that Peter Duncan is in the public gallery. I informed Peter that this condolence motion would be moved today and asked him to put some words together. I will read them onto *Hansard*:

Tim Bruxner and his wife Margaret were very great friends to the Duncan family. Tim was a colleague to Bruce Duncan, the member for Lismore, for 16 years from 1965. Bruce passed away in 2007, however Tim always kept in contact with Bruce (until 2007) and subsequently his wife Marlene and family up until the time of his own passing.

Bruce's son Peter remembers meeting Tim Bruxner in Richmond Villa, a cottage that stood to the east of these chambers in the grounds of Parliament house until it was demolished and moved block by block in 1975 to Kent Street, Millers Point. All the Country Party members of the time shared the villa as both offices and accommodation.

Soon after the 1965 election Peter as a schoolboy recalls coming to Sydney from the North Coast with his father and meeting Tim and other colleagues in Richmond Villa. Peter said, as has been reported, Tim was not only a man of great integrity and wisdom

however one that could relate to all including impressing with his ability to roll his tobacco and fill his pipe over an extended period of very engaged and interesting conversation.

Tim always remained friends with Bruce despite Bruce resigning from the Country Party after a contentious decision to rename the party to the National Party in 1982 that Duncan and others believed was an attempt to broaden its base to city electorates.

Bruce resigned from the party and sat as an independent until he retired in 1988.

Tim Bruxner was with his wife in London at the time. When advised by his son Angus it was said that: "Bruxner was bitterly disappointed and later sent Duncan a note to say if he was still in Parliament he would have joined him as an Independent."

The two remained friends with long lunches from time to time and only for those from their era and ... "rattling good lunches they were too!"

The Hon James Caird "Tim" Bruxner, MLA, was the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways when he penned this foreword to a book, *The Roadmakers*, detailing a history of main roads in New South Wales. He stated:

NSW had provided much interest to historians during its dynamic development since settlement.

I am certain that this story—The Roadmakers—will prove to be worthwhile and a welcome addition to the publications which chronicle the fascinating history of this state.

It will certainly ensure that those who have forged the links of road communications across our rugged landscape, and to whom we owe so much, will not be forgotten nor their work ignored.

With 61 years of continuously representing the people of Tenterfield—a seat once held by Sir Henry Parkes—the Hon. James Caird "Tim" Bruxner and his father Sir Michael Bruxner will not be forgotten. Indeed, in 1959 the Bruxner Highway in northern New South Wales was named after Sir Michael. It is also significant that like his father, Tim went on to be the transport and highways Minister overseeing our State highways. Last year, the Hon. Duncan Gay and I had the pleasure of having a beautiful lunch with Tim. Duncan said: Tim Bruxner was a legend of the Country Party, I valued his friendship and advice, which wasn't always what you wanted but mostly what I needed. It was so good to catch up with Tim, his son Angus and Jenny Gardiner at a lunch Thomas recently hosted during one of his very rare visits to Parliament. The lingering memory from that lunch was that that wicked, irrepressible sparkle remained in his eye.

I could not speak on this motion without contacting Val Gardiner from Tenterfield, who said:

Tim, the perfect example of a gentleman, was the member for Tenterfield for 20 plus years. Not only was he our member he was a friend to all. Those of us lucky enough to work with him, as I did, as his Campaign Director, on two occasions, found a man who knew what he wanted, when he wanted it and was grateful when you did it for him. Tim was ever mindful on two fronts; of his love for Margaret and Angus and Mum and Dad, Sir Michael and Lady Bruxner, and his continuous friendship of past Parliamentary Colleagues till his last few months. Farewell Friend!

I had the pleasure of first meeting Tim together with the then member for Lismore, Bruce Duncan, in 1974. Our friendship grew from that meeting. Val Gardiner corrects me every time I mispronounce "Bruxner". I have finally convinced her that I travel on the Bruxner Highway to Drake and then the "Brooxner" Highway to Tenterfield. She is happy with that. Even today people retell stories of what Tim achieved during his time as the member for Tenterfield, from 3 March 1962 until 28 August 1981. In 2011, I became the representative of the Tenterfield shire area. I was proud to ring Tim and tell him that I would continue his legacy of representation. As I said, last year we had a lunch here with Tim. It was a great thrill for all of us who were able to see him. Tim has left a legacy we can all be proud of. I know that Tenterfield is as proud of the Bruxner name as the Bruxner family is of Tenterfield. Angus, you know I was saddened by the loss of your dad. Please be assured that our prayers and thoughts are with you all. I know this has been a difficult time for you. Vale, James Caird "Tim" Bruxner.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:27): To give the family in the gallery some context, I am the Labor Party member for Cessnock. It is not quite as far away as Tenterfield, but it is far enough from Sydney for me to consider myself a country boy. Hence I speak on this motion on behalf of the Opposition. James Caird "Tim" Bruxner managed to leave this place with his reputation well and truly intact. In fact, he was referred to as Gentleman Tim. I wonder how many of us who sit here today aspire to that but might fall some way short of it. "Gentleman Tim" has a quite a nice ring to it, and it was apparently a name very well deserved.

When Tim retired, the Governor made a recommendation about him to the Queen. Her Majesty agreed and allowed him to retain the title "the Honourable" for the rest of his life. One of the last links to the formative years of the Progressive and Country Party ended last August when Tim Bruxner passed away at the age of 94. He was the son of Mick "the Colonel" Bruxner, who led seven Progressive Party parliamentarians known as the True Blues in the creation of what is known today as The Nationals. Tim Bruxner was born in 1923 in Tenterfield as James and was given the name Tim as it was an old family nickname. He died at Bellevue Hill.

Tim served in wartime in the Army and the Royal Australian Air Force and—in the career that defined him—as the member for Tenterfield. Tim was elected to the seat when his father died, by all accounts against the

advice of his father and family. But together they had a remarkable record—father and son serving the electorate for 61 years. Some records say 62 years, but I guess the family will better know the truth of that. Tim only retired when there was a boundary change and the electorate expanded to become the Northern Tablelands. That makes Tim the last member for Tenterfield, a seat once held by Sir Henry Parkes. In government, the former Cranbrook school captain held several ministerial positions under Sir Robert Askin and Sir Eric Willis. He also served in shadow ministries, one of which was decentralisation. Some 45 years later we still seem to be having that conversation. His first big promotion came in 1973 when he was returned in Tenterfield with an incredible 68 per cent of the vote.

His father having been one of a very small group who broke away from the Progressives to form the Country Party, Tim proudly took up the mantle and the honour of representing regional and rural New South Wales. During his career Tim made it to the position of party deputy leader. To rise that high and still be known as a gentleman is quite a feat. Tim adopted in life and in politics his father's firm belief, "We can't please everyone. Let us go like the devil—straight ahead." I hope that quote is accurate. It was their mantra. A grazier from Inverell, Tim was a man of principle and integrity. His advice and wisdom were sought by a wide group, as we have heard. Today Tim Bruxner is being missed by many of his friends. He is a true gentleman, now resting in peace.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (16:31): I offer my condolences and best wishes to Marjorie, Angus and the Bruxner family. The member for Cessnock said that Tim was the last direct link to the formative years of the Country Party. As the leader of The Nationals, when I travel the State and sit in branch meetings to share a cup of tea I am often reminded of the great names behind the party. We often talk about the great internal and external battles that have given our party the brand as local champions fighting for what is right for regional New South Wales. Tim was the son of Mick "the Colonel" Bruxner, who led a breakaway group of parliamentarians known as the True Blues.

I and a number of my colleagues, including the member for Dubbo, have often referred to the story of the True Blues. At times as backbenchers in the comfort of our rooms on level 12 we spoke about how we would break the Coalition and relive the times of the Country Party past. When we read the history of our party, it is people such as Tim and his father who make up its DNA. I am lucky to lead a party with a strong history and story and which has been in existence in New South Wales for almost 100 years. We are very proud of that. Like all regional members, we fight with absolute passion for country areas. It is extraordinary that Tim succeeded his father in the seat of Tenterfield, between them representing the region now known as the Northern Tablelands for 61 consecutive years. That is a fantastic legacy for any family. Tim was born in Tenterfield and has the same story as many who grew up in regional New South Wales. Some of his schooling was undertaken in the city and he went on to complete a law degree at the University of Sydney.

Time joined the 2nd Australian Imperial Force in 1941. He later transferred to the Royal Air Force Operations Training Wing as a pilot officer—yet another great example of someone from the bush stepping up to represent their country. On 18 April 1945 he married Margaret Ann McLeish. Back in civilian life Tim eventually took over the running of the family property, Old Auburnvale, near Inverell, where he bred Aberdeen Angus cattle. As I said earlier, when "the Colonel" retired Tim contested and won the seat, which he held until 1981. Tim held a number of ministries, including shadow ministries. The National Party has always been proud of decentralisation and development—and the term "development" refers to regional growth. Tim was tasked with the idea of developing regional growth in centres such as Orange and Bathurst and Albury-Wodonga. From the outset he was sceptical. He said:

You couldn't really expect Orange/Bathurst to be a big success. There weren't enough people and we had chosen an extremely cold area and we are asking people to move there from the coast. Neither Orange/Bathurst nor Albury/Wodonga can be classified as a great success considering the investment that we put into them.

People will move to areas with cold climates such as Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo and the Central West—the great spine of regional New South Wales—when you build the infrastructure, hospitals and schools, and create jobs and, more importantly, promote how wonderful it is to live in regional New South Wales. Last year Senator Nash, the former Minister for Regional Development, made decentralisation part of the story of The Nationals. She received a lot of flak from the bureaucrats and the Labor Party federally. Some people think that those in regional New South Wales do not deserve high-paying, quality government jobs. Guess what? The New South Wales Nationals want the investment in regional New South Wales to continue. Ms Jenny Gardiner, former General Secretary of the NSW Nationals and a former member of the Legislative Council, knew Tim well. She said: "Tim was so special in so many ways. He was a true believer."

Last weekend the NSW Nationals held its regional conference at Orange where we talked about the future. But we will never forget the names of those who have made The Nationals the great party it is today. Our party members carry the weight of our history as a mark of respect to those who gave so much to the party. As

I said, there are many great champions in regional New South Wales. Late last year when I visited the electorate of the member for Lismore, I asked the member for Lismore why was the Bruxner Highway not pronounced the "Brooxner" Highway. The member explained to me, as he did in his contribution earlier today, that both names are used. I again offer my condolences and best wishes to Tim's family. Today is a sad day because we are talking about the passing of a legend of the party, but we celebrate his life with joy.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (16:38): I offer my condolences to Marjorie, Angus and family. More than 27 years ago when I was elected a member of this Parliament one of the first people I met in Sydney, at the urging of Jenny Gardiner and others, was Tim Bruxner. He was an absolute gentleman. Tim appreciated the opportunity to represent people from regional New South Wales and he studied politics. On more than one occasion I had lunch with Tim at the Royal Sydney Golf Club, and he could tell me the number of votes every seat was won or lost by—even in Western Australia. He also gave good, solid advice on how to treat constituents. We share a somewhat similar history in coming into this place: Tim came in with a vote of 50.75 per cent and when he retired it was more than 68 per cent. That shows the stamina of a true representative of the people.

Tim and I shared a love of golf. When he had his knees reconstructed he basically gave golf away, but I am told that when he was in his eighties he scored below his age at the Royal Sydney Golf Club. I would like to be able to do that any time. Tim was a tall, good looking man. In the National Party room we still have a photograph of Mick "the Colonel" Bruxner on his horse. I fought for many years, both as the member for Coffs Harbour and previously through my connections with the National Party, to have people pronounce Bruxner Park as "Brooxner" Park. Tim lobbied for the establishment of the nature reserve, which is a two- or three-minute drive out of Coffs Harbour. It was named Bruxner Park by Tim in honour of his father, Mick. When Barry O'Farrell opened the skywalk at Sealy Lookout, which is part of Bruxner Park, I told him the history and made sure he pronounced it as "Brooxner" Park.

Tim Bruxner was a gentleman and a very wise person. In the 1970s I lived at Moree and my territory included the tableland area. Even then, the people I spoke to held him in the highest esteem. In the 1980 redistribution the seat of Tenterfield was abolished and Wal Murray took over much of the territory. That was the first National Party campaign I worked on. Tim was well regarded and was well utilised in that campaign. I again offer my sincere condolences to the family. I did not find out about the lunch at Parliament House with Duncan Gay, Jenny Gardiner and Thomas George until after it was over, and I was quite miffed that I was not invited. I have Tim's signature on a couple of old menus from some returned members' luncheons. I will remember Tim fondly for the rest of my days. Vale Tim Bruxner.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

Committees

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

Reports

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

Madam SPEAKER

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

That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly conveying that in accordance with clause 12 (3) of Schedule 4 to the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the Legislative Council forwards the Standing Committee on Law and Justice's report No. 63, entitled, "Statutory review of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015", to the Legislative Assembly for tabling in that House.

Legislative Council
13 February 2018

JOHN AJAKA
President

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Accordingly, I table report No. 63 of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice entitled "Statutory review of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015", dated December 2017.

*Bills***VEXATIOUS PROCEEDINGS AMENDMENT (STATUTORY REVIEW) BILL 2017****Returned**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****Membership**

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

Madam SPEAKER

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

1. That Mr Fang be appointed as a member of the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Ms Cusack, discharged.

Legislative Council
13 February 2018

JOHN AJAKA
President

*Bills***PROPERTY, STOCK AND BUSINESS AGENTS AMENDMENT (PROPERTY INDUSTRY REFORM) BILL 2017****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 21 November 2017.**

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:44): I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in response to the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017. The property industry is one of the most critical industries in the State. It provides shelter and accommodation for us all. Secondly, it is a powerful segment of the State economy. In his second reading speech the Minister acknowledged this, noting that the buying and selling of property brings in a staggering \$11 billion in stamp duty each year. Property industry operations affect all of us. Yet for decades, the Government has taken a very light-touch approach to the regulation of the broader property industry. One of those aspects has been the regulation of real estate and property estate agents.

As the Minister noted, consumers place a tremendous amount of trust in and expectations on the actions of these agents who deal with what is normally one of the largest and most important decisions a family or an individual can make—the buying and selling of one's home. Yet the actions and behaviour of some of these agents betray this trust: I note that almost 10 per cent of all complaints received by NSW Fair Trading concern real estate and property matters. The bill seeks to lift the bar when it comes to the regulations and, importantly, the training and accreditation of property, stock and business agents. It is incremental reform and I note the Minister intends to bring subsequent changes to the House later this year. The Opposition supports any effort to raise the bar in terms of licensing, training, and ongoing professional development of property, stock and business agents—and supports the bill.

In turning to the contents of the bill, the Opposition clearly sees a need for action and for lifting of the regulatory bar. I will start with the new licensing framework. The central component of the bill is the creation of a new licensing framework to oversee the industry. The new licensing framework is sound and will hopefully lead to a higher degree of expertise and professionalism across the board. There is a genuine concern both within the community and the industry that the educational and training requirements to practise in this field are way too low. The three classes of licence contained within the bill reflect the various skills, proficiencies and competencies required across the field. Class 1 licence, the highest level, will be required for those in charge of a business and will require at least two years of work experience. The holder of a class 1 licence will have to hold either a diploma from the national Property Services Training Package or a certificate IV, as well as an equal qualification in business management.

The second class, equivalent to the full agent's licence, will apply to licensed agents requiring the current certificate IV qualifications as well as 12 months of industry experience. The final, third class of licence for new entrants or certificate of registration holders will require a total of seven competency units from the certificate IV qualifications—an increase of three from the current four units required. The bill provides that any licence or

certificate of registration can be granted for a period of one year or five years. The bill also makes exemptions for those working within the industry who do not undertake any real estate functions, such as graphic designers, receptionists and the like.

The bill updates the Act to reflect the fact that, these days, transactions often occur while the licensee in charge is not physically present. This accounts for modern technology and the internet, which can enable a licensee in charge to supervise more than one office without being physically present. The new licensing framework is welcomed, as is the bill's intent to streamline and simplify the framework and reduce the number of licences required. This makes it clear to both industry and the consumer what is required of someone operating within the real estate and property industry at a particular level. The Opposition notes that the qualification and specific competency units will be subject to further industry consultation.

The Opposition notes the bill's intentions towards continuing professional development. This is a critical part of the industry—ensuring ongoing professionalism. There are some aspects of this that the Opposition would like to see strengthened, which I will refer to later. The bill also introduces new restrictions on gifts and subsequent penalties of up to \$2,200, which seek to avoid situations in which the agent may not or may not be seen to be acting in the best interests of their client. Practical exclusions are foreshadowed—such as gifts from clients—and this is supported.

The bill requires all trust accounts to be lodged with NSW Fair Trading. The Opposition supports this and believes it should not create a significant burden on the industry, particularly given the extra transparency that will be delivered. I note the Government's intention to develop an online audit lodgement portal, which should further reduce any administrative burden. Finally, the bill gives the secretary of the department more discretion in suspending a particular licence, allowing a suspension for as long as the secretary reasonably considers appropriate to investigate any matter and removing the artificial limit of 60 days. Given the seriousness of some of these matters, the Opposition supports these enhanced powers.

There are a number of clarifications I seek and some commitments I will make on behalf of the Opposition. I will start with business agents. The Opposition has been contacted by a number of business agents who have concerns about the impact of this bill—unintended or otherwise. I know that my colleague the shadow Minister for Small Business, who actually has experience in the work and complexity of buying and selling businesses, has also raised these concerns. The member for Strathfield has also raised these concerns on behalf of local business agents in her electorate. I understand the bill will remove the concept of business agents and incorporate them into the second class of licence. I would like the Minister to clarify that the concerns of business agents have been considered and, if not, that they will be taken into account during the making of the regulations. We must ensure the legislation and regulation distinguish the unique complexities of business agents compared with the broader sector.

The Opposition has received representations from onsite managers who manage short-term holiday lettings. Generally, these are up and down the coast. There is a concern that the unique circumstances of these agents have been lost in the bill. I seek clarification from the Minister over the impacts on these type of agents, as well as a commitment that the department will consult with this group moving forward. As I said, the Opposition supports the intent of the bill and will support it. However, we will move an amendment on a rather simple, but important, issue pertaining to continuing professional development in the other place. Our consultation with the industry has revealed great support to lift the bar when it comes to ensuring ongoing professionalism within the industry. Rapid changes in the industry require that practitioners must remain up to speed with these changes, as well as the regulatory environment.

The Opposition is concerned by anecdotes that the current requirements are woefully inadequate, to a point where units that technically require 4½ hours to compete can be completed within 3½ minutes. This is not what we mean by continuing professional development. The Opposition is concerned that aspects of continuing professional development are driven by financial considerations rather than the ongoing professionalism of the industry. As such the consumer interest may not be central to the status quo. The Government intends to overhaul the continuing professional development guidelines and enshrine them in commissioner guidelines. However, the Opposition believes that the guidelines should be enshrined in regulations, which would ensure ongoing consultation with industry and ensure that the sentiments expressed by the Minister in his second reading speech are translated into practice.

As I said at the outset, the Government has used a light-touch approach to the regulation of the property industry in New South Wales and the losers have been the broader New South Wales public. The bill is supported as it addresses inadequacies in the property service agent industry. As such, overall, the bill enjoys the support of the Opposition. But there are other areas in which the Government has either lagged or failed to respond: affordable housing, short-term holiday rentals, kicking the excellent Lambert review into the long grass, and

shameful delays in an appropriate response to flammable cladding. Those are just some of the areas in which the Government has failed to respond appropriately or, in some cases, at all.

I believe the Minister understands many of these issues and the need to respond, but he is hamstrung by the right-wing cowboys on his side—those who do not want to see tighter regulation of the property industry, those who would prefer a laissez faire, let-it-rip approach. The Minister should stand up to those on his own side to ensure that consumers, homebuyers and renters get a fair deal. But time is running out for the Minister and it will fall upon the Foley Labor Government to sort out the mess left by the eight years of inaction, delay and neglect of this Government in relation to a balanced regulation of the building and property industry.

For the past decade New South Wales has experienced a building boom, but, unfortunately, our regulatory tools have been insufficient, weak or too hopeless and out of date to ensure New South Wales has the housing stock we deserve. Many in the profession and the industry believe we are sitting on a time bomb and that the impact will be hardest felt by everyday families across New South Wales. A cowboy approach by this lot in Government has given a green light to a cowboy approach in many parts of the industry—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Perhaps the member for Drummoyne should learn the rules.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! That judgement should be left to the Temporary Speaker.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I was just offering my assistance to you, Mr Temporary Speaker.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I appreciate the offer of assistance, but it is not required. Thank you.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: A cowboy approach by this lot in Government has given a green light to a cowboy approach in many parts of the industry, and my concern is that we all—community, government, and industry—will pay a longer term cost that will dwarf the short-term gain of the past several years. Labor understands the fundamental importance of certainty around the construction, sale and purchase of the family home. For most of us, the buying and selling of a home is the single biggest economic decision we will ever make. We support this bill, as it raises the bar when it comes to agents acting on behalf of buyers and sellers. We encourage the Government to do much more when it comes to the broader industry, because it is not just the buying and selling where stronger consumer protections need to be considered. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! I call the member for Wollondilly and I draw the attention of the House to his footwear. Being a property, stock and business agent, he certainly fits the bill this evening.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:57): Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker, and I congratulate you also on your fine footwear over the years in this place. I speak in support of the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017 and I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for bringing this bill to the House. I also commend his fantastic staff who do a great job day in, day out. I am very confident that the measures in this bill will go a long way to protecting consumers against potential risks by better regulating the industry. The reforms will improve professionalism and standards by enhancing the qualifications of certificate and licence holders.

During the development of the reform package, a review of the licensing model was undertaken using the Licensing Framework and Guide that was developed by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART]. The IPART Licensing Framework and Guide was one of the results of IPART's 2014 comprehensive review of New South Wales Government licences, in which a considerable amount of work was undertaken. The Government committed to applying the IPART Licensing Framework and Guide when developing or reviewing regulatory or licensing systems to ensure that they are efficient and to facilitate removal of any unnecessary regulatory burden. The assessment of the current licensing system concluded that, while a licensing framework was warranted, the design of the framework could be streamlined. In this regard, the bill will provide for the integration of the buyer's agent licence, onsite residential property agent's licence and the business agent's licence into the real estate agent's licence.

The current holders of the licence types to be merged will not be inconvenienced as their licences will be grandfathered onto real estate agents' licences. That means it will be business as usual for them, which has to be good news. The qualifications for these licences that will be merged have some commonality with the qualifications for the real estate agent's licence. In fact, for some licence types they are a subset of the real estate agent's qualification. This reform means that future real estate agent licence holders will be able to undertake more

regulated functions. The qualifications that will be required to obtain a real estate agent's licence will be revised to ensure they provide for these expanded functions.

I am aware that some onsite residential property managers who manage smaller strata schemes in Merimbula have expressed concerns about the impact of the new licensing framework on their ability to sell their businesses. The Government is well aware of this specific situation and I am advised that senior departmental staff have spoken directly with a number of these property managers to clarify their circumstances. The current real estate industry laws make allowance for exemptions to be implemented, and this can be used to deal with the situation. These property managers have been provided with written clarification of how the exemptions can operate so as to mitigate the impacts on their businesses. That is what this side of the House does: It consults relevant stakeholders, it listens to the community and it comes up with great policy. As some members may be aware, the original real estate reform package proposed to delete the corporation licence. However, it has since been determined that the corporation licence should remain.

Further examination of this issue, in liaison with stakeholders, has indicated that if the corporation licence were deleted there would be some unintended consequences and possibly disruption to the workings of real estate and property businesses, and confusion for their clients. However, there will be consideration of reducing the fee for a corporation licence to help cut costs to industry. It does not matter what portfolio it is, as the Premier and the Treasurer continually say, this Government cuts taxes and delivers infrastructure for the people, and this is another example of that. The bill will introduce a new licence class with higher qualification requirements for licensees in charge, to be known as a class 1 licence. Licensees in charge have overall responsibility for supervising business operations, and these changes acknowledge the extra responsibilities of licensees in charge. The current licence category will be retained as a class 2 licence. Class 2 licence holders will be known as "licensed agents".

The current entry-level requirement of a certificate of registration will be retained. Certificate holders will be known as "registered agents". Qualifications reforms for the registered agents, licensed agents and licensees in charge will be introduced by changes to the property, stock and business agent's qualifications order. The qualifications reforms will ensure that persons working at each level have appropriate knowledge for the task they will undertake, because we know how important their role is in our community. Under existing requirements, an individual must complete four competency units from a relevant certificate IV course to be eligible to apply for a certificate of registration. Under the new framework, an individual will have to complete seven competency units from a relevant certificate IV course.

Key stakeholders have already provided Fair Trading with advice on which specific competency units should be required. Further industry consultation will be undertaken to determine exactly which competency units are the most appropriate. In order to progress to obtain a class 2 licence, individuals will still have to complete a relevant certificate IV qualification. In addition to a certificate IV, licence applicants will need to have 12 months' work experience in the industry. Generally, people undertaking their certificate IV studies are also working in the industry, so it is most likely that they will have met the experience requirements by the time they have completed a certificate IV.

In order to progress to obtain a class 1 licence and qualify to work as a licensee in charge of a business, individuals will need to hold either a diploma from the national Property Services Training Package or a certificate IV and an equal qualification in business management. Furthermore, class 1 licence applicants will also need to have two years of work experience. The responsibilities of licensees in charge are significant and as such warrant higher qualification and experience requirements. There will be more flexibility, as one licensee in charge will be allowed to supervise more than one office of the same business. Of course, grandfathering arrangements will also apply to current licence holders working as licensees in charge to ensure that there is no interruption to business operations when the new framework comes into force to minimise potential industry disruption.

To reduce the regulatory burden, a specific exemption from the requirement to hold any qualifications will be introduced for people working in agencies who do not undertake any regulated functions. For example, this would include reception, administration and graphic design work. Of course, employers can still choose to employ only qualified people regardless of what duties they perform. I understand that Fair Trading will continue to work closely with industry associations ahead of these measures being implemented fully. I am confident that the licensing and qualifications reforms will lead to a positive outcome for the industry and consumers.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the real estate sector in New South Wales is worth more than \$15 billion per annum to our economy. New South Wales collected more than \$11 billion in stamp duty during the last financial year, which certainly goes a long way towards supporting our schools, hospitals and roads. The Government wants to ensure that the industry is relevant, people are adequately qualified and we have world's best practice, which is why we have a fantastic Minister who is doing considerable work and reform in that space. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:06): I speak on behalf of The Greens on the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017 and express The Greens' support for the bill. Anything we can do to address protections for renters in this State is a very good thing. All renters would know the many challenges involved in dealing with real estate agents. Unfortunately, the Minister and members would be aware of the many reports of dodgy deals and problems associated with real estate agents so it is pleasing that this bill aims to increase training and licensing requirements for property and real estate agents to reduce the risk to customers. The bill includes a number of other reforms to effect change in this space.

Renters in many areas throughout New South Wales now outnumber those with a mortgage. That is a huge generational shift. I urge Government members, especially Ministers and the Premier, to look at statistics in their own electorates where, for the first time, the number of renters in blue ribbon Liberal-held electorates may now outnumber people with mortgages. Older people may own their homes, but a whole generation of younger people are now completely cut out of the property market; it is not a realistic prospect for them. I acknowledge that home ownership rates have gone up for first home buyers, but we must recognise that owning a home is not a reality for many young people and we must do everything we can to protect the rights of renters. I have been a strong advocate for reforms to protect the rights of renters since being elected to this place in 2015.

We see a power imbalance between some real estate agents and renters that has placed huge pressures on renters. We know also that in many cases the property managers in real estate agencies are themselves renters. They usually occupy a junior role and receive more complaints and have more responsibilities within a property portfolio than they can actually manage. A renter living in Enmore or Redfern whose oven or window breaks or who has a problem with the door lock—

Mr Damien Tudehope: Point of order: I accept that the member for Newtown is very passionate about the rights of renters, but she should address the leave of the bill.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newtown is straying from the leave of the bill. I ask her to return to the leave of the bill.

Ms JENNY LEONG: I state in summary that one of the purposes of the bill is to address the high rates of complaints in the property and real estate sector, as they accounted for 9 per cent of all complaints to Fair Trading in the last financial year. My understanding is that in his second reading speech the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation stated:

The reform package will put consumers first by improving educational and professional standards across the industry, improving accountability and transparency.

I was simply pointing out the problems the bill was seeking to address in one small part by highlighting the challenges renters face if their oven or a lock is broken, and if they try to report something else to the real estate agent. However, because of challenges and issues around the real estate industry and real estate agents, these reforms are very welcome. Also welcome is the banning of gifts and donations. The bill seeks to prohibit licence holders from receiving certain gifts. This is imperative to the integrity of the office and should also apply to political parties. Donations can corrupt the integrity of the office. Members would all agree that this is true whether one is a politician or a real estate agent.

We support the provision in the bill to allow licences to be suspended for up to 60 days. This is an important measure to give teeth to the rules. In addressing housing affordability and the housing crisis in this State we should look not merely at the needs of first home owners, those currently living with mortgages or those who own their home outright; we must deliver reforms for renters because it is through those reforms that the fundamental premise of housing as a human right will be delivered in this State. It is good to see these changes. Anything that strengthens regulation in the real estate and property industry is welcomed. The Greens are happy to commend the bill.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:11): In 2016 the Department of Fair Trading provided the Government with the "Real Estate and Property Services Industry Reform Paper", and as a result of that paper this bill, the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017, was introduced into the House. I note that both the Opposition and The Greens support the bill; indeed, it would be hard to see how the scope of the bill would not be supported. Having been in a suburban legal practice for the best part of 32 years I am intimately acquainted with the practice of real estate agents and the manner in which they conduct business. My experience is that 95 per cent of real estate agents do a remarkable job of acting in the interests of their clients.

However, in the same way that there can be problems with lawyers and the way they look after their clients, so too there can be problems with the manner in which real estate agents behave. The circumstances in which real estate agents conduct business is fundamentally the scope of this bill. Real estate agents hold trust

accounts for money they receive for properties that are part of the rental market for which they are accountable to the landlord for whom they act.

Real estate agencies receive money on behalf of vendors when deposits are paid for real estate transactions. This bill makes it a requirement that those accounts be separated. It also introduces requirements relating to the auditing of accounts and agents' accounting to landlords in respect of moneys that they receive on a regular basis on behalf of the landlords. Those sorts of provisions have been in place for many years. Lawyers are now subject to a regime relating to the manner in which they conduct their business. They are subject to regular inspections and trust account audits, and they have to submit annual audits to the Law Society as part of obtaining their certificate.

No-one realistically suggests that similar provisions should not apply to real estate agents who hold money on behalf of others. In circumstances where money is held on behalf of others it is only reasonable to expect that there would be provisions for those accounts to be properly audited and for systems to be put in place to ensure that the money in those accounts is properly protected. We live in a complex and changing world. When I first became a lawyer a contract for sale of a property generally comprised a two-page document. A zoning certificate was then added to that two-page document. Most contracts for the sale of property now comprise hundreds of pages because of the obligations to disclose to a potential purchaser anything relevant to their decision to buy a property.

Vendors are required to disclose the zoning of the property, the location of the sewer line and anything that may affect the purchase of the property. When a property is purchased off a plan a copy of the strata plan is required to be included in the contract. More recently, pest and building reports are also the subject of disclosures by vendors. The sale of properties is now much more regulated. That reflects the Minister's observation that the purchase of a property is the single most important transaction that any person. That places an obligation on vendors to tell purchasers everything they need to know relating to a property.

Real estate agents are the people who are making representations on behalf of vendors. They have a duty to purchasers not to say anything about a property that is potentially untrue. For example, an agent might be aware of an asbestos affectation in respect of a property and he or she does not disclose it. It is the duty of vendors to disclose that affectation when dealing with a property. Similarly, there may be an obligation to disclose to a purchaser a realistic price range for a property. The manner in which agents conduct themselves when dealing with properties for auction is pertinent. Purchasers who go to an auction are often required to provide before auction a series of reports, such as pest reports, building reports, strata inspection reports and bank approvals.

On many occasions people have told me, "I have run second at 10 auctions." The cost for purchasers potentially is \$1,000 for each auction. Often they come second because they are led to believe that they might be successful at auction because of the behaviour of the real estate agent. The agent says, "We think it will go for such and such a price", which is within the borrowing capacity of a purchaser, and the purchaser bids at that auction. Agents should be informed of the requirement to ensure that they are fit and proper persons to be real estate agents in the same way as practising lawyers are obliged to demonstrate that they have been involved in continuing legal education.

These provisions will now apply to real estate agents so that they know and understand their ethical obligations and they are aware of potential insurance obligations. Lawyers are always concerned to ensure that they are not sued. Continuing professional development [CPD] is a tool for agents to protect themselves from litigation as a result of the way in which they conduct their business. Real estate agents should embrace continuing professional development and welcome it for their staff. The member for Swansea was concerned about whether CPD requirements would be included in regulations or guidelines. There is merit for CPD requirements to be included in guidelines as it will enable the Department of Fair Trading to deal with issues that arise from time to time. *[Extension of time]*

Real estate agents must continue to ensure that they do not become the subject of legal action. If CPD requirements are included in guidelines it will assist the Department of Fair Trading to deal with a raft of complaints. It will be able to say to real estate agents, "These are the sorts of complaints that we received in the past 12 months. We developed our modules for continuing education on the basis of real life examples of the things that we are facing within your industry." Of all the service industries the real estate industry is complained about the most. When there are lots of complaints about the behaviour of agents, the department and those running continuing professional development courses must be able to deal with issues as they arise. It is too heavy handed to change the regulations to equip bodies with modules that need to be updated. It is a much better tool in the hands of the department which can look at trends in the industry and remain agile and flexible enough to address them.

I understand the member's concern about regulations and enforcing them on the industry. However, I favour the adopting of regular guidelines. It is hard to argue with any of the CPD requirements. A regime and point system must be attained by agents of specific industries. It is clear that different modules must be completed by people in the rental industry, strata management and sales. It is also necessary to have a degree of flexibility in the development of trading modules as they arise.

The member for Swansea was concerned that one module covering a particular subject that could potentially be taught over 4½ hours lasted only 3½ minutes. It is a matter for discussion with the Minister. However, I agree with her and question the value of a module that is capable of being completed in 3½ minutes. The training review is being developed and has stakeholder support. Recently I had the opportunity to visit the website of the Department of Fair Trading and it demonstrates the manner in which the training modules are being developed. The department is having significant input because it is keeping watch on the issues that are facing the industry. Different issues relate to the sale of property, strata management and how it is dealt with. This is worthwhile and sensible legislation. I commend the Minister for accepting the recommendations contained in the report prepared by the Department of Fair Trading and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:26): I support the measures contained in the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017. As members have heard, this bill is the first step in the implementation of the Government's real estate and property services industry reform package. I echo the Minister's commendation to the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, the Estate Agents Co-operative, the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association, and Strata Community Australia for their significant contributions to the reform package. The amendment bill provides for many elements of the reform package, but other matters will be dealt with through the Property, Stock and Business Agents Regulation, which includes the rules of conduct; the Property, Stock and Business Agents (Qualifications) Order; guidelines for continuing professional development; and supervision guidelines for licensees in charge.

The reform package will introduce important measures dealing with audit processes and trust accounts. Licensees often hold large amounts of money on behalf of clients, either in a general trust account or a separate trust account held exclusively for the benefits of a single client. Trust money can include rent receipts and sales deposits. I understand that the majority of real estate agencies use separate trust accounts for sales deposits and rental income. In the case of sales deposits, the money should be transferred to the vendor by the end of the settlement period, which is usually six weeks. In the case of rental trust accounts, there is no due date or deadline for agents to transfer rental incomes to a landlord. An agency that manages a large number of rental properties would routinely collect significant amounts of money from rental payments. Failure to account occurs when a landlord requests the money owed and the agent fails to comply. By the time this happens, a substantial amount of money may be owed.

Most thefts of trust money are associated with rent not being passed on in a timely manner. An agent's failure to account for money held in trust remains a major risk area for the industry and a major source of consumer detriment. In 2017, following a Fair Trade investigation, a Sydney real estate agent was sentenced to three years imprisonment for stealing \$400,000 of his clients' funds. During the past financial years the Property Services Compensation Fund paid out approximately \$436,000. Other significant consumer repayments from businesses have occurred when Fair Trading has appointed a manager. Clear measures are needed to better address such problems. All real estate and property industry licensees are already required to have their trust accounts audited. However, only qualified audits must be lodged. An audit would be qualified when there is a limitation of scope in the auditor's report or if there are issues with a business's accounting policies.

However, the data obtained from unqualified audits can be useful in identifying risks to trust money and could facilitate proactive compliance action by Fair Trading. Examination of trust account audits are an effective means to ensure compliance and to detect potential problems where action may need to be taken. Greater security and protection for consumers' funds held in trust could reduce claims on the Property Services Compensation Fund. This could provide for licensees' mandatory contributions to the fund to be reduced, which will be a benefit for the industry. For those reasons, the bill will introduce a requirement for all audits to be lodged with Fair Trading. Fair Trading is developing an online portal, which will be in operation before the new audit requirements are introduced. This will minimise the administrative burden on industry.

The bill also introduces additional means for Fair Trading to take quick enforcement action on specific grounds. Currently, if there is a reasonable cause for taking disciplinary action that could involve a breach of any lawful obligation, a licence condition or the rules of conduct, Fair Trading would issue a show cause notice to a certificate holder or licence holder. The show cause notice includes grounds for why disciplinary action may be taken and gives the person a minimum of two weeks to respond. Even if adequate grounds exist for an immediate suspension, it can last for only 60 days. The new power to extend the maximum 60-day suspension will provide a stronger disincentive for specified breaches. It will also provide more time to investigate the issue and will be

an effective way to minimise potential consumer harm. Specific additional grounds for immediate and extended suspension will be failure to submit audits and in cases of high consumer risk.

To strengthen procedural fairness, the bill also amends the disciplinary process to ensure that certificate and licence holders under suspension have an opportunity to be heard after an initial suspension of 60 days. The importance of effective disciplinary powers in the real estate and property industry cannot be understated. The new measures in the bill will assist the activities of Fair Trading, which will help to deter repeat illegal conduct and will send a clear message to the industry that the Government is serious about compliance. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:33): I am pleased to support the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017. To understand the importance of the bill, we must appreciate the size and scale of the industry. The New South Wales real estate and property services industry is regulated under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002. The last statutory review of these laws was conducted in 2006. The last major amendment introduced enhanced underquoting laws in 2015. It is essential that the legislation regulating the industry balances a need for appropriate levels of consumer protection with the need to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the industry.

A reform package was set out in the Government's "Real Estate and Property Services Industry Reform Paper" that was released in November 2016. The Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017 is the first step in the Government's real estate reform package. The real estate reform package will put consumers first by improving educational and professional standards across the industry, improving accountability and transparency, streamlining the licensing framework and strengthening Fair Trading's compliance and enforcement powers.

Apart from the amendment bill, other key elements will be introduced by amendments to the Property, Stock and Business Agents Regulation, which includes the rules of conduct; the Property, Stock and Business Agents Qualifications Order; the guidelines for continuing professional development; and the supervision guidelines for licensees in charge. These aspects of the reform package will be the subject of consultation with industry associations and the community in coming months. The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, the Estate Agents Co-operative, the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association and Strata Community Australia have made significant contributions to the development of the reform package. The Government will continue to work closely with these key industry associations during the implementation of the reform package.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the real estate sector in New South Wales is worth more than \$15 billion per annum to our economy. The New South Wales Government collected more than \$11 billion in stamp duty in the last financial year, underscoring the importance of these reforms. Currently, under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 there are six licence categories as well as corporation licences—that is, business licences. To enter the industry, people need to get a certificate of registration, then they can study and work towards a full licence. The licence categories are real estate agents, stock and station agents, strata managing agents, business agents, onsite residential property managers and buyers' agents.

To become an auctioneer, an individual must hold a licence as a real estate agent or stock and station agent, then obtain further accreditation to be an auctioneer. I think many members in this place would be great auctioneers. The number of people entering the real estate industry is increasing, further underscoring the importance of these reforms. In recent years there has been a steady growth in the number of people entering the real estate industry. For example, as at February 2018, there were 21,793 real estate licensees, 26,825 certificate holders and 7,814 corporations.

Demonstrating the underlying need for this reform, unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, Fair Trading data shows that there were 4,077 complaints about real estate and property matters in 2016-17, accounting for 9 per cent of all complaints during the period. While this is an improvement on the preceding financial year, it still represents a very high proportion of complaints received. In recent financial years, the Property Services Compensation Fund had paid out up to \$2 million or \$3 million per year. In the last financial year approximately \$640,000 was paid out. Much of this loss of consumers' money involves agents taking amounts from trust accounts, especially rental trust accounts. Requiring agents to account to landlords at the end of each month for all money received from tenants would provide an earlier warning of a failure to account and thereby reduce losses. This may also help to reduce the amounts paid by the compensation fund. New auditing requirements will also help identify any questionable activity and may serve as an early warning system of questionable dealings.

While there is no prescribed standard for fees charged by licensees, consumers pay on average from 2 per cent to 5 per cent of the sale price of a property to the selling agent, which may or may not include marketing fees. However, commissions can be higher in areas with low property turnover. Fees to manage rental properties also vary but can be between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of weekly rent and can include the first week's rent as a

letting fee. A recent targeted audit of 24 real estate premises in Sydney's west found more than 75 per cent failed to comply with real estate and property laws. Thirty penalty infringement notices totalling \$31,900 were issued. Particularly concerning was one business that was found to be operating without the necessary licence, and three that were using a trust account that had not been audited. The operation also targeted compliance with signage requirements, professional indemnity insurance, and renewal of a licence or certificate of registration under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002.

I turn now to reforms to the licensing and training framework. The current licensing framework under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 has six licence categories. They include real estate agents, stock and station agents, strata managing agents, business agents, onsite residential property managers and buyers' agents. To get a licence as an onsite residential property manager or a buyers' agent, people must complete a smaller number of specific competency units from a certificate IV course in property services. Business agents must also complete training from a certificate IV course in property services that has some overlap with competency units for real estate agent training.

The new licensing framework will have three levels of licences: licensees in charge, licensed agents and registered agents. The highest level will be a class 1 licence. This licence will be required for anyone working as a licensee in charge of a business. The framework will also provide more flexibility, as one licensee in charge will be allowed to supervise more than one office of the same business, but he or she will still have to ensure that business operations are being properly and effectively supervised. The next level will be a class 2 licence, equivalent to the current full agent's licence. Class 2 licence holders will be known as licensed agents.

Importantly, the bill also considers continuing professional development [CPD] guidelines which will be revised to introduce new requirements for each qualification level. The compulsory topics will cover key matters such as laws and compliance. They will be chosen by an industry-government advisory group and will be reviewed regularly. The bill will provide for key responsibilities to be limited to appropriately qualified persons. For example, only licensees in charge will be able to approve trust account withdrawals, whereas certificate holders will have more limited responsibilities.

Importantly, the bill contains a number of prohibitions on inducements. Under strata laws, strata managers are already subject to disclosure requirements regarding commissions and training, and are also subject to restrictions on gifts and benefits. Similar obligations will be imposed on other property industry licences. The restrictions are aimed at potential inducements that could give rise to conflicts of interest. The bill also considers trust accounts and audits, providing new provisions which will require all trust account audits to be lodged with NSW Fair Trading. To minimise the administrative burden, an online audit lodgement portal is being developed. Failure to account for money held in trust is a major source of consumer detriment. Over recent years the Property Services Compensation Fund has paid out several million dollars. Agents will have to keep separate trust accounts for sales and rent. Agents will also have to clear rental trust accounts monthly. This will enhance accountability and transparency.

The reforms will provide for extended licence suspension while a licensee's conduct is investigated. This will provide additional consumer protections in cases where a dodgy agent could otherwise continue to work in the industry. Extended licence suspension will apply also for failure to submit an audit. These measures will improve the effectiveness of Fair Trading's compliance activity. I am aware of the energy and effort expended by the Minister and I am aware of the good work done by his staff and his department. It is clear that this well-considered bill has the support of the Opposition and The Greens. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:42): I support the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017. The Act regulates the real estate and property services industry and establishes a mandatory licensing system for real estate agents, buyer agents, strata agents and business agents, among other professionals. The bill amends the Act in a number of ways: first, to provide for two classes of licence, one of which is required to be held by a licensee in charge of a business, and to permit regulations under the Act to specify which functions may be exercised under each class of licence; secondly, to permit a licence or a certificate of registration to be granted for one or five years; thirdly, to provide that the offence of an agent failing to disclose a material fact is limited to material facts of a kind prescribed by the regulations under the Act; and, fourthly, to prohibit the holder of a licence or a certificate of registration from receiving certain gifts. The bill also requires the lodgement of auditor's reports and provides for the suspension of licences and certificates of registration.

The bill is part of a broader reform package that will consist of an amended Property, Stock and Business Agents Regulation 2014, rules of conduct, and various guidelines for continuing professional development and the supervision of licensees in charge. The package was detailed in the "Real Estate and Property Services Industry Reform Paper" published in November 2016. The reform paper was informed by a review, released in June 2016, commissioned in response to concerns regarding the lack of training of real estate agents and other property

services professionals. The real estate and property industry and the community have sent a clear message that reform to the regulatory framework for agents is required. Although the majority of agents strive to conduct their duties according to the highest ethical and professional standards, Fair Trading data in the 2016-17 financial year showed that 9 per cent of all complaints to Fair Trading related to real estate and property matters. There is a clear need for government action, and this reform package will help address the situation.

I am confident that these changes will significantly improve consumer protection and strengthen the compliance and enforcement powers of Fair Trading. The bill will introduce a new, streamlined licensing framework. The buyer's agent licence, the onsite residential property agent's licence and the business agent's licence will be merged into the real estate agent's licence. A new licence class for the licensee in charge will also be created. Currently, a licensee in charge supervises the business operations, which include supervising employees, ensuring compliance and monitoring the operation of the business. However, under the current licensing framework, a licensee in charge is not required to obtain a higher level of training and qualification.

Given the significant level of responsibility of licensees in charge, it is appropriate to require that higher level of training and qualification. The new licensing framework will enhance industry professionalism and help minimise consumer detriment. The bill also provides for prescribed responsibilities of each level of qualifications. This means that areas of significant responsibility, such as having principal authority for the operation of trust accounts, will be restricted to those holding higher qualifications. Employees who do not undertake any prescribed activities will be exempt from the qualification requirements, potentially reducing the red tape burden on individual businesses.

The bill will introduce restrictions on gifts and benefits. It is reasonable to expect that agents should not be accepting gifts or benefits that are potential inducements. Such gifts or benefits could create a conflict of interest or act as an inducement to encourage agents not to act in their client's best interests. However, the restriction will not stop payment of employees' bonuses or rewards for high performance or for gifts from clients. Those types of gifts and benefits do not involve potential conflicts of interest. Additional compliance measures in the bill will allow Fair Trading to impose extended licence suspension on unscrupulous agents while under investigation, significantly reducing the potential risk to consumers.

The bill also introduces additional safeguards for trust accounts. All trust accounts must already be audited, but only qualified audits must be lodged. The bill will require licensees to submit all trust account audits, not just qualified audits. Failure to submit an audit will also be grounds for extended suspension of the licence while the failure is investigated. The new audit requirements will facilitate the early detection of potential financial issues in trust accounts. That is important as insolvent trust accounts are detrimental to a consumer's financial situation. The new safeguards will reinforce the already robust existing consumer protection measures. I am confident that the reforms in the bill will improve the experience of consumers dealing with the real estate industry and promote professional conduct of real estate and property agents in New South Wales.

As I said, Fair Trading data shows that 4,077 complaints were made about real estate and property matters in the 2016-17 financial year, accounting for 9 per cent of all complaints during the period. While that was an improvement on the preceding financial year, it still represents a high proportion of complaints received. In addition, the number of licence holders has grown over the past few years. For example, as at February 2016 there were 21,793 real estate licensees, 26,825 certificate holders and 7,814 corporations. In comparison, in 2015 there were 19,908 licensees, 21,988 certificate holders and 6,632 corporations.

As the number of people in the industry has increased significantly there is a need for greater accountability. People running businesses must have higher qualifications and a better understanding of their requirements. As an example, trust accounts hold significant amounts of money—a 10 per cent deposit on a \$1 million property is \$100,000. An agency could be doing dozens of such transactions, and that is money purchasers can ill afford to lose. However, a number of complaints has been made about real estate agents using trust accounts to fund their lifestyles or meet their costs of living. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:52): It is a pleasure to speak in debate on the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017, which the good Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation has introduced. This is a classic, quality bill from the Minister. The Minister is providing the right balance between reducing red tape and protecting the good people of this State, as was evident from his activities relating to show bags at Easter and dangerous toys at Christmas. On a number of occasions I have joined the Minister at forums about senior fraud to help protect those sometimes vulnerable members of our community and alert them to fraud that can take place. The Minister has introduced legislation concerning ticket scalping and assisting consumers with gift cards. This is another classic piece of legislation that the good Minister has brought forward. I certainly commend it to the House.

The New South Wales real estate property service industry is regulated under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002. It concerns important things such as the buying and selling of one of the most expensive and most important assets in the lives of most families—their home. The Act governs the conduct of real estate agents. The sale of a home—whether in the western suburbs of Sydney, on the Central Coast or in the blueberry capital of the electorate of the Assistant Speaker—is very important and it requires good contact with those involved in the industry.

The last statutory view of these laws was conducted in 2006 and the last major amendment was the introduction of enhanced underquoting laws in 2015. In commenting on the underquoting laws, the member for Epping mentioned that some of his constituents had gone to up to 10 auctions—they had undertaken due diligence, obtained building reports and pest inspections—and had made bids but, unfortunately, were unsuccessful. It was brought to the attention of the Minister that this was occurring and amendments were then made to the underquoting laws. That is an excellent example of this Government helping to protect the people of this State from unscrupulous members of certain professions who are involved in that type of activity. It is essential that the legislation regulating the industry balances the need for appropriate levels of consumer protection with the need to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the industry.

A reform package was set out in the Government's "Real Estate and Property Services Industry Reform Paper", released in November 2016. The Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017 is the first step of this Government's real estate reform package. The package will put consumers first by improving educational and professional standards across the industry, improve accountability and transparency, streamline the licensing framework and strengthen NSW Fair Trading's compliance and enforcement powers. I turn now to continuing professional development. The member for Epping also commented on the need for those in the legal profession to maintain continuing professional development. This also applies to teachers and doctors. Indeed, anyone involved in professional activities, particularly those the public put a high level of trust in, need to continually undergo professional development to maintain their knowledge. This will enable them to provide the most honest and ethical service they can for the people of this State.

The continuing professional development guidelines will be revised to introduce new requirements for each qualification level of the real estate industry. Licensees in charge and licence holders will have to undertake six hours of continuing professional development annually—three hours of compulsory topics and three hours of elective topics. This is an increase on the current requirement of 12 continuing professional development units, which takes four hours to complete. The compulsory topics will cover key matters such as law and compliance. They will be chosen by an industry-government advisory group and will be reviewed regularly. The compulsory topics will be delivered by key industry associations, approved industry groups and government agencies.

Licensees in charge will have to complete an extra three hours of continuing professional development dealing with business skills. Certificate holders will have to complete competency units from the relevant certificate IV training course. This will establish a clear career pathway for certificate holders to advance to a full licence. It will be a strict and robust system where a person can join the industry at a level of day-to-day contact and service with clients and work their way through appropriate educational programs, with continuing professional development, to become a full licence holder.

Today we heard the great news about first home buyers entering the property market with stamp duty concessions. Those people have spent a lot of time saving their deposits and it is a matter of great interest to them that the transfer of those deposits into the hands of other people is done appropriately. The bill also touches on trust accounts and audits, with new provisions that will require all trust account audits to be lodged with NSW Fair Trading. To minimise the administrative burden, an online audit lodgement portal is being developed. Failure to account for money held in trust is a major source of consumer detriment and distress. Over recent years the Property Services Compensation Fund has paid out several million dollars. Agents will have to keep separate trust accounts for sales and rent. Agents will also have to clear rental trust accounts monthly. This will enhance accountability and transparency.

Apart from the amendment bill, the other key elements to be introduced by these amendments are the Property, Stock and Business Agents Regulation, which includes the Rules of Conduct; the Property, Stock and Business Agents (Qualifications) Order; the guidelines for continuing professional development; and the supervision guidelines for licensees in charge. These aspects of the reform package will be the subject of consultation with industry associations and the community in coming months. The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, Estate Agents Co-operative, Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association and Strata Community Australia have made significant contributions to the development of the reform package. The Government will continue to work closely with these key industry associations during the implementation of the reform package. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (18:01): I speak to the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017. This bill was prepared under the guidance of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. It is a sensible bill that brings together a combination of regulation and education. Property rental affects the vast majority of people in our State, not only in the city, which has been the focus of most contributors to this debate, but also in rural areas. For those in the electorate of Murray, the purchase of a home is probably the biggest investment they will ever make. That may not be on the scale of city properties—and I encourage everyone struggling with that to move to the country—but it is still a significant investment. As I said, a large number of people who rent are also affected. The bill will help to streamline the current licensing arrangements and provide for the integration of the buyers agent's licence, the on-site residential property agent's licence and the business agents' licence into the real estate agent's licence. That does not mean that current licence holders will be inconvenienced. The bill contains grandfathering provisions so those currently doing that work will have a smooth transition.

The bill will streamline the qualifications people require to enter the industry and allow for a more functional system. A lot of consultation has been undertaken with industry associations and communities, including the Real Institute of New South Wales, Estate Agents Co-operative, Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association and Strata Community Australia. The huge number of licences held in this area include: 7,814 corporation licences, 21,793 real estate licensees, 2,788 stock and station agents, 1,847 strata managing agents, 2,252 business agents, 78 on-site residential property managers, 147 buyers agents, and 26,825 certificates of registration.

This enormous industry has positive aspects and the vast majority of people when dealing with this industry have a good experience. But there needs to be improvement in the way that agents manage their trust accounts to lessen any negative impact on clients. In the past, we have seen action taken against real estate agents, largely when money that is held in trust by agents has disappeared in one form or another. These reforms aim to reduce such action by introducing more regular accounting, particularly to owners of property, so that there is less likelihood for problems to develop, and when problems do develop the impact is lessened. Importantly, this bill requires the continuing professional development of agents so that the industry continues to improve. It enables Fair Trading to tailor that continuing professional development to meet the needs of and identify the gaps in the industry. This requirement to improve educational standards is a particularly positive aspect of these reforms.

The bill includes a prohibition on inducements. Under strata law, strata managers are already subject to disclosure requirements regarding commissions and training, as well as restrictions on gifts and benefits. Similar obligations will be imposed on other property industry licences. The restrictions are aimed at potential inducements that could give rise to conflicts of interest and lead agents to make decisions that are not in the best interests of their clients. The restrictions will not apply to items such as gifts provided by employers to employees as a form of bonus or to presents from grateful clients.

With respect to trust accounts and audits, the new provisions will require that all trust account audits be lodged with NSW Fair Trading. When regulation is introduced into an industry, there is a risk that people will be tied up in red tape. To minimise the administrative burden, an online audit lodgement portal is being developed. Failure to account for money held in trust is a major source of consumer detriment. Over recent years, the Property Services Compensation Fund has paid out several million dollars. Agents will have to keep separate trust accounts for sales and for rent. They will also have to clear rental trust accounts monthly, which will enhance accountability and transparency. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:08): It is my privilege to speak in debate on the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017. We have heard from a number of speakers on the detailed provisions of the bill, so I do not intend to go into great detail. I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for introducing this package. It is a valuable reform from a reforming government, which has been much anticipated. Last year I was privileged to attend, on behalf of the Minister, a Real Estate Institute of New South Wales [REI NSW] awards dinner and to speak with industry members, who said that they were welcoming and looking forward to the better regulation of their industry. Some industries and private sector organisations perhaps are not as welcoming or as embracing of sensible reform. I commend the real estate industry for working with the Minister and his department and relevant reformers within government to ensure positive consultation and a proper process. That can take some time, but I commend the industry on embracing the essence of what this bill delivers.

This reform package represents the outcome of a recent independent training review, in addition to those discussions with the industry that I have mentioned—not just the REI NSW but also others in the industry and relevant stakeholders—and an assessment of licensing using the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal framework. The purpose of the bill, which I hope will pass with the welcome support of those opposite, is to improve educational standards and professional measures in the real estate industry and to introduce measures

relating to accountability, governance and disclosure requirements that, most importantly, put consumers first. The industry, the Government, and the public interest are all served when we put consumers first. This Government aims to ensure that the people of New South Wales are properly protected and are able to rely on a real estate industry and a property industry that have in place proper controls and training and appropriate measures that help to create quality outcomes.

We all rely on the real estate industry at different times. We all live in homes. Some of us are fortunate to own those homes, but at some stage we will sell them. Some of us rent and some of us have other arrangements. The real estate industry permeates society and is a very important industry for everyone. It is also important in generating employment and economic activity and in terms of the efficient disposal of valuable resources within our society. These reforms are intended to ensure the licensing of real estate agents, buyers' agents, business agents, strata managing agents, on-site residential property managers and stock and station agents in a sensible way. As has been noted by previous speakers, the Act regulates the operation of trust accounts, prohibits underquoting, sets out rules of conduct, and provides for a fund to compensate consumers when a small minority of agents misappropriate trust money from time to time. With this bill, the Government is working with the real estate industry, which also is interested in protecting consumers where there is an exposure.

I pay tribute to the real estate agents and property professionals who operate within my electorate. There are a large number of real estate agents in my electorate which support all sorts of community activities, such as fun runs, as well as schools and sporting clubs. Real estate agents support a wide range of valuable community grassroots initiatives. That is indicative of the ethical, community-based and public interest-based approach taken by the vast majority of people in the industry.

I am sure I speak on behalf of my colleagues when I express our appreciation to the industry for everything it does to make our community a better place. In passing this bill we are supporting the industry. I again commend the Minister for an excellent consultative process and for taking an appropriately disciplined approach to ensure that all stakeholders are on board. I believe that is reflected in the universal support for the bill in this Chamber. I have been delighted to say a few words in support of the Government's excellent initiative in passing this legislation today.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (18:14): I have listened intently to debate on the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017 and I have 10 minutes in which to make my contribution. I acknowledge that those members who have spoken before me have covered very eloquently the reason we are debating this bill today. I acknowledge that the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation is in the House. As the member for Davidson said, the Minister and his staff have put a lot of thought into this bill. I spoke to the Minister this morning in the party room and he said, "Chris, people think I do all the work in the office, but I just want you to know that my staff and department do a lot of work."

I want all those people who have worked on this bill to know that the Minister pulled me aside today and said what hard workers they all are. I thank those in the Minister's office and in the department for bringing such quality legislation to the House—it really is appreciated. To the Minister I say well done: It is a great bill and something that the grandkids are going to be very proud of. The member for Davidson made a point about real estate agents. I too have some excellent real estate agents in my electorate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Name them.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I could. They know what they do for our local community. They always seem to be at charity events and sponsoring sporting and community groups. I am sure they are very successful within our local community but they are a group that gives back to my local community. As did the member for Davidson, I acknowledge that industry that gives so much back to my community. The bill has been covered adequately by other speakers in the debate, and I am sure the Minister will sum it up in his reply. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:20): In reply: I take this opportunity to thank all those members who have made a contribution to this debate: the shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and member for Swansea, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Newtown, the member for Epping, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Manly, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Murray, the member for Davidson and the member for Camden. I thank those members for their interest in this important area. Obviously they all have real estate agents in their electorates and are committed to seeing those agents meet the highest professional standards. I particularly acknowledge the passion of the member for Newtown and her commitment to improving the rights of renters.

As members have heard, the purpose of the Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017 is to introduce measures to improve educational and professional standards across the

industry; improve accountability and transparency; streamline the licensing framework; and strengthen Fair Trading's compliance and enforcement powers. Every year Fair Trading receives a very high volume of complaints from consumers about their dealings with the real estate and property industry. In the past financial year the Property Services Compensation Fund paid out more than \$4 million. That does not include the repayment of other significant amounts to consumers after Fair Trading appointed managers to several real estate businesses.

Fair Trading data shows there were 4,077 complaints about real estate and property matters in the 2016-17 financial year, accounting for 9 per cent of all complaints during the period. Concerns have been raised by both the industry and the community regarding these problems. There is a clear need for government action, and this reform package will help address the situation. The proposed changes reflect the outcome of the recent independent review of industry training, lengthy discussions with key stakeholders, an assessment of licensing using the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] framework, and identification of key matters by Fair Trading's real estate and property division. The primary aim of the package is to improve industry professionalism and skills and to deliver better consumer outcomes.

I will comment briefly on issues raised during the debate. The member for Swansea raised a concern about the licence integration process for business agents. Under the reforms, the buyer's agent licence, onsite residential property agent's licence, and the business agent's licence are being rolled into the real estate agent's licence. These licences were combined following an assessment of the current licensing arrangements using the IPART framework, which found that a revised licensing system could set appropriate industry standards and prevent consumer detriment. This follows other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, where business agents hold real estate agents' licences. As a holder of a real estate agent's licence, business agents would not be prevented from advertising themselves as business agents or advertising that they are licensed to undertake business agents' activities. Industry and community education will also accompany the new framework when it is introduced, to ensure that all the relevant licence holders are fully informed of the changes.

The member for Swansea raised a concern on behalf of onsite residential property managers at small strata complexes that, in particular, the new licensing framework and higher qualification requirements will reduce new entrants to their sector of the industry and that it will impact on the resale value of their management rights and ability to sell them when they retire. Those licensees generally manage small strata schemes of 20 lots or less. The Government is aware that the circumstances for onsite residential property managers who manage small strata buildings for holiday lettings are different from those who manage large strata buildings in urban areas. As large strata buildings involve significant management responsibilities, it is considered appropriate to require a higher level of qualifications to undertake this role. However, the circumstances of licensees managing small strata buildings solely for holiday letting are under close consideration, and these licensees have spoken directly to senior departmental staff.

The removal of the requirement for onsite residential property managers to own a unit in the strata building they manage will also reduce barriers to entry that are currently in place, resulting in reduced costs and greater flexibility in business models. In addition, the real estate and property laws already provide for regulations to prescribe appropriate exemptions. The New South Wales Government will provide an exemption to onsite residential property managers at small strata complexes. We are currently working through the scope of such an exemption. This approach will allow us to develop a simple and specific means to deal with this situation, following consultation with all the affected parties, and to support these small businesses without impacting untowardly on the reform package.

The member for Swansea also raised the issue of continuing professional development [CPD]. Under existing provisions in the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002, conditions can be attached to certificates or licences regarding professional development. This provides for agents to be obligated to undertake CPD, and guidelines clearly set out how agents can meet their CPD obligations. CPD is part of the operational and administrative details of the regulatory framework. It is not appropriate to include such operational and administrative details in primary legislation or in the regulation. The primary legislation holds the head of power to impose such requirements, and the details of such matters are dealt with appropriately in subordinate legislation or, as in the case with CPD, by departmental guidelines.

Parliament approved the arrangement for CPD when the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 was approved originally. There is no demonstrated need to change the current arrangements. The existing arrangements provide flexibility. They allow Fair Trading to move quickly to improve the guidelines over time. Such changes must occur quickly to adapt to changes in the industry caused by developments—for example, new technologies. Licensing reforms have been discussed already. Currently the licensing regime has six licence categories plus an incorporation licence. An assessment of the current licensing framework using the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] framework concluded that while there is a need for licensing to address

the potential for consumer detriment and set appropriate industry standards, the design of the licensing system could be revised.

The qualifications for the licences to be merged already have some overlap with the real estate licence qualifications. In some cases they are, in effect, a restricted version of a real estate agent's licence. Holders of licences to be merged will be grandfathered into the real estate agent's licence with appropriate restrictions so that their business operations will not be affected. Appropriate consumer protections will be maintained. The required competency units from Certificate IV in Property Services that must be completed to obtain a real estate agent's licence under the new framework will be revised to ensure that they reflect the wider functions that these licence holders may undertake.

The Government is also creating a new licence class for licensees in charge with high qualifications. Although businesses must already have a licensee in charge to supervise the business operations, this role currently does not require higher qualifications than a standard agent's licence. Given the significant level of responsibility of licensees in charge it is appropriate to require a higher level of training and qualification. These proposals fit with the Government's commitment to better regulation and appropriate licensing through the IPART framework.

As I mentioned earlier, there will be a brand new system for continuing professional development to establish a professional training pathway. Annual CPD for certificate holders will be competency units from the certificate IV qualification. In combination with the seven competency units required to enter the industry, this will ensure that certificate holders will complete enough competency units within three to four years to obtain a certificate IV qualification. This will mean that they will increase their knowledge while gaining on-the-job skills and experience, and will obtain all the qualifications to be eligible to apply for a full licence.

By establishing a clear training and career pathway this aims to reduce the significant churn rate of new industry entrants who never progress beyond a certificate of registration and do not stay long in the industry. Full licence holders will be required to complete six hours of CPD instead of the current 12 CPD units that take four hours to complete. Half of the CPD hours will be compulsory topics covering key legislative and compliance issues. The compulsory topics will be identified by an industry and government advisory panel, and will be revised regularly. The other three hours will be made up of elective CPD topics chosen by licensees.

Licensees in charge will also have to undertake six hours plus an additional three hours of CPD focusing on business skills. Agents' failure to account for money held in trust is a major risk area for the industry and a major source of consumer detriment. During 2017 the Property Services Compensation Fund paid out almost \$640,000 plus other significant consumer repayments from businesses where Fair Trading was appointed the manager. Licensees are already required to have the trust accounts audited, but only qualified audits need to be lodged. However, the data obtained from unqualified audits is also very useful in identifying risk to trust money and may facilitate more proactive compliance action. To minimise any extra administrative burden Fair Trading is developing an online portal, which will be in operation before the new audit requirements are introduced.

The new regulatory framework will provide better compliance outcomes by standardising auditing requirements and automating large parts of the administrative process. This will allow Fair Trading to dedicate more time to investigate major and minor issues. The new online portal will also help standardise the audit requirements for trust accounts in the real estate sector. The online portal will also allow Fair Trading to match the audit results of each known bank account to ensure that there is an audit for each account. Additionally, major and minor issues flagged by auditors will be posted automatically into a dashboard that can be accessed by investigators. Altogether this will make a significant improvement to compliance activity.

I will conclude where I began. The Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment (Property Industry Reform) Bill 2017 is all about improving educational professional standards across the industry, improving accountability and transparency for real estate agents, streamlining the licensing framework, and strengthening Fair Trading's compliance and enforcement powers. A lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes to bring legislation into the House and to introduce reforms to the community that will actually improve outcomes for consumers across the State. Fair Trading and I, as the Minister, are determined to put the consumers of New South Wales first. To that end I am supported by an outstanding team of professionals, particularly in my department. I acknowledge particularly Alanna Linn, Katerina Pavlidis and the indefatigable—and one of the nicest people one will ever meet—Warren McAllister. I thank them for what they do. I thank Warren for making me look good—I know that is a very difficult job. I thank them all for their public service: It is greatly appreciated.

I mention also Nancy Gangi and Ernie Chan from the department. I am fortunate to be served by some extremely dedicated staff, none more so than my policy adviser, Julia Steward, who has overseen this bill. She has done a great job working with Richard Hodge, who is always available on the other end of the phone for any members of Parliament and organising what needs to be done. They are led by the incredibly capable Ben Coles, supported by my media team, Brooke Eggleton and Lisa Mullins. Overall it is a team effort that gets these things

done. It would not have been possible for me to introduce these reforms to improve outcomes for New South Wales consumers and lift standards for real estate agents across the State without the help of this wonderfully supportive team. 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 MATT KEAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

TUGGERAH RAILWAY STATION ACCESSIBILITY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:31): I have raised a number of times in this House the issue of lifts to improve accessibility at Tuggerah railway, which is a major concern for my constituents. In November last year I submitted a petition to this House bringing to the attention of the House the lack of accessibility at Tuggerah railway station. The petition asked the Legislative Assembly to make the installation of lifts at Tuggerah station a priority of government to be implemented as soon as possible. The Minister responded in December and I shall read onto the record the Minister's response in full because the tone is important. He wrote:

I write in response to the petition lodged on 22 November 2017 by Mr David Mehan MP, Member for The Entrance, regarding the construction of lifts at Tuggerah Railway Station.

Contrary to comments made by the Member for The Entrance, Tuggerah Station is accessible. The ramps on both sides of the station and to the platforms comply with gradients for wheelchair accessibility.

The NSW Government will continue to deliver accessibility upgrades across NSW under the \$1 billion Transport Access Program.

I trust this information is of assistance.

I can hear the Minister when I read those words so I know it is his genuine response. What it says to me is that the Minister is less than concerned about this issue, which is a big concern to my constituents. I want the Minister to know what the constituents of The Entrance think. On Facebook Adam Hart wrote, "MPs should push themselves up the ramp and walk down it so they remember how shit the experience is. The ramp is huge." Wendy Davies said:

That's one hell of a ramp to push someone up in a wheel chair! And for elderly with walking sticks, walkers, dragging suit cases up the ramp, pushing babies in prams with mums juggling toddlers etc. Really the minister should get out of his office, come stand at Tuggerah Station for a few hours and see for himself. But what can we expect from people who never use public transport. I am not sure that is entirely true but he should come and have a look at the station for himself. Caroline Baker from Killarney Vale copied me in on a response she sent to the Minister:

I am one of thousands who regularly use Tuggerah station. I am 77-years-old and, yes, I have joint and hip problems and I can reassure you that trying to negotiate the dangerous steep stairs at Tuggerah station are the bane of my life.

...

I notice that your letter to David Mehan MP says that the ramp gradients comply for wheelchair accessibility. Could I ask you to get in a wheelchair and try to negotiate the ramps while sitting in the wheelchair? It's extremely difficult to climb the gradient on wobbly legs let alone manipulate a wheelchair.

Andy and Rina Coetzee from Bateau Bay copied me in on their response to the Minister:

I would keenly invite both the State Premier and the Hon. Andrew Constance to experience this episode to get themselves onto the train. The modus operandi would be Mr Constance in the wheelchair and Ms Berejiklian pushing him on the ramps. It would be a very interesting experience.

Kaye Buni from Killarney Vale copied said:

You cite Tuggerah station's ramps as complying with gradients for wheelchair accessibility but as one of the 21 per cent of the area's population who are over 65-years-old, I invite you to ask your own mother to try to push an adult in a wheelchair or wheel herself up, across and down that access ramp.

There are many others, and there will continue to be many others. This is an important issue for my constituents. This railway station is the last remaining major railway station on the Central Coast without lifts. It is used by constituents in my electorate commuting to work and by a large number of constituents in my electorate who are retirees over the age of 65. We know that the Department of Planning and Environment has analysed the State, and the Central Coast has the greatest number of over 65s, proportionally, in New South Wales. They want to use public transport to get around and enjoy their retirement, but they find it difficult to do so at Tuggerah railway

station. This issue will not go away simply by the Minister ignoring it or referring to criteria used to assess projects. The people in my electorate feel it in their bones. The matter will not go away. We will have our lift and we will have it sooner rather than later.

AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:36): The Australian political landscape encompasses a broad spectrum of ideas that reflect our diverse population. The vocal far-right and far-left extremes often provoke robust discussion on important issues, regularly capturing the attention of the media and the public. The moderating middle ground can sometimes be lost in the clamour of voices. It is vital to genuinely engage with centrists in consensus making, as people in both my electorate of Davidson and the broader community identify with the moderate mindset on a number of issues. This process is also likely to improve the quality of decisions. On the international stage, it is clear that some Western democracies are moving further away from the centre. Dr Mathew Davies, Department Head of International Relations at the Australian National University's Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, observed that "the centre of politics across the democracies is being hollowed out by a combination of anger, impatience and fatigue".

This sentiment is echoed by former United States Senate majority leaders Republican Trent Lott and Democrat Tom Daschle, who lamented in their book *Crisis Point* that "the common ground has been stripped and scorched, leaving no community" due to bitter political partisanship in America. Fortunately, the structure of Australia's voting system does encourage consideration of the middle ground through preferential voting, which provides an electorate with the means to punish perceived extremisms of any ideology. Preferential voting provides incentives to gain secondary support and cooperate with people who hold different perspectives, driving the formation of coalition agreements such as the Liberal-Nationals Coalition. The search for the middle ground of politics in major policy discussion flourishes under these collaborative conditions, benefiting numerous members of the community who hold moderate positions.

An eminent example of the moderate Australian politician is former Prime Minister, the late Malcolm Fraser. A longstanding Liberal Party member, Fraser balanced his socially progressive mindset towards refugees and environmental matters with more economically conservative policies. Though his legacy is somewhat shadowed by his rise to power and the demise of Whitlam, it is appropriate to respect moderate positions in office. Much of the media rarely accords proper value to the middle ground. Controversial, attention-grabbing newspaper headlines and their modern equivalent, clickbait, generate considerable page views, advertising and sales revenue for media conglomerates. In a hypercompetitive 24/7 news cycle, the drive to capture reader attention can transform media into a vehicle for extremist interpretations.

Not only does sensationalist coverage obscure facts and potentially mislead the public but it also has the effect of polarising public debate when there should be reasoned deliberation. At critical points, the middle ground can serve as an arena to rally individual interests to a common goal. There are areas where the people of New South Wales hold vastly different views and some positions will remain irreconcilable. The mark of good governance is the ability to appreciate each perspective for its own merits and pool ideas to form well-rounded decisions. Former United States President Barack Obama once remarked:

The strongest democracies flourish from frequent and lively debate, but they endure when people of every background and belief find a way to set aside smaller differences in service of a great purpose.

Through listening to diverse perspectives, and their moderating influence, we can collaborate on complex issues and discover comprehensive solutions that will broadly benefit the public, including in New South Wales. I make this statement from a perhaps naïve but hopeful view that this Parliament will adopt such an approach more so in the future.

BATHURST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOBS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (18:41): It is with great pleasure that I take the opportunity of making a private member's statement to draw to the attention of the House the wonderful things that are happening in the Bathurst electorate. I will speak very quickly because so much is happening across my electorate. The biggest investment ever in the Bathurst area has been made by the New South Wales Government. It does not matter which area one visits in my electorate, one cannot escape the conclusion that many roads are being built, a great deal of construction is taking place, and jobs are being created. Those matters are so important for regional communities across the State.

In October last year the Government announced the allocation of \$1.1 million towards opening an eight-kilometre section of the Kandos-Rylstone rail line. The project will include replacement of 3,500 old timber rail line sleepers and the addition of 1,000 tonnes of stone to the track. It is expected that the project will be completed by mid-2018, which will mean increased prosperity. Additional trains travelling to Kandos-Rylstone

will promote tourism and provide a great boost to the local economy. In addition, \$2.8 million will be spent on the Sofala Road upgrade. Unfortunately, a number of years ago some very serious vehicle accidents occurred, including a fatality. That roadway upgrade is typical of so many areas where roadways are being improved by the Government. The Sofala Road upgrade will include the widening of roadway shoulders, installation of concrete kerbing, and removal of trees that obstruct motorists' vision. I cannot wait for completion of the project, which is expected to occur in April this year.

In Blayney, upgrading of the Southern Cadia Access Road is a \$10.5 million project to which the Government has contributed \$5.17 million. The project will include replacement of a bridge at Dirt Hole Creek, new road alignments, widening and sealing of five kilometres of Errowanbang Road and the sealing of Cadia Road. This is an important route for farmers, locals and saleyard workers in the area. They will save 45 minutes by travelling approximately 44 fewer kilometres, which means money is going back into the pockets of farmers and landholders in that area.

I visited Lithgow recently, which is another great area in my electorate. An announcement was made that \$240,000 will go towards the \$480,000 upgrade of the blast furnace which was built in 1907. It was the beginning of the iron and steel industry in Australia. The money will go towards building an amenities block and lighting up the structure and walkways. The Government has invested more than \$1 million in improving this area as a tourism destination and it has the support of the local council. There is also great news for Bathurst, which is a recipient of the Fixing Country Roads program. Colo Road will receive an investment of \$1.75 million. I appreciate the \$200,000 contribution from council to improve that road. The road upgrade is important for this area, which has a large timber industry. Over the next eight years, 700,000 tonnes of timber will come out of the Pennsylvania State Forest. We will see the clearing of roadside vegetation, improvements to sight distance, acquisition of land for realignment of the road, nine kilometres of pavement upgrades and 38 new culverts as well as the installation of stock grids along that road.

Oberon will receive \$1.5 million in funding, which will go towards the Blenheim State Forest. Meadows Road will also receive funding from the Government. It is another area in which forestry operations occur and the investment will make a difference to the safety of its residents. The Oberon RSL Club will receive an investment of \$160,000 to improve its bowling green. The bowling green was in need of repair and the Government stepped in so the residents could continue to enjoy this recreational activity. More than 30 projects in my electorate have received funding from the Community Building Partnership program, which has been well received by the community.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:47): I congratulate the member for Bathurst on his outstanding work for his community. Bathurst has not seen such a dedicated, hardworking and talented member since 1991. The results in roads, construction and jobs in Oberon, Lithgow and Bathurst speak for themselves. Record amounts of money are being invested in the Bathurst region and across New South Wales due to the efforts of a Coalition Government. We have paid down Labor's debt and the budget is in surplus; we are rebuilding New South Wales. I congratulate the member for Bathurst on his hard work for putting Bathurst on the map. The people of New South Wales are better off because of this Coalition Government.

TRIBUTE TO MARK SLEIGH

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:48): It gives me great pleasure to talk about Mark Sleigh, who leads the work of Destination Wollongong. He promotes tourism in our region which enhances the economic opportunities the region can provide. Mark Sleigh and I go back a long way and have worked together for a number of years. Last Saturday is another example of how Mark Sleigh and his team at Destination Wollongong have secured great results for our region. The Wigan and Hull football clubs played their first Super League match outside of Europe for competition points at WIN Stadium. I have worked with Mark on Mount Keira Summit Park, which enhanced the region as a vibrant place for tourists to visit.

I acknowledge the work of Mark Sleigh, who always puts the region before himself. He takes little credit, but he and his team work hard to ensure that we continue to be at the forefront of the visitor economy and the opportunities that the growth in tourism brings. He advocates for tourism infrastructure. He is right behind the upgrade of the WIN Entertainment Centre, a campaign that the member for Wollongong and I have advocated for, and right behind the redevelopment of the Mount Keira Summit Park. He supports many events such as the super slides, major sporting events and cultural events. Mark puts the Illawarra and Wollongong first. Many members on both sides of the House have worked with Mark, who is interested in improving our region. On behalf of my community, I thank Mark and his team from Destination Wollongong for the work they do to transform our regional economy to ensure that we are well positioned for a huge influx in tourism. I encourage Mark and his team to keep up the great work.

RICHMOND RIVER CONTAMINATION

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:52): One of the most important icons in my electorate is the Big Prawn on River Street at the western entrance to Ballina. The prawn represents the once thriving prawn industry of the Richmond River. Like the oyster industry in Ballina, the prawn industry no longer exists to the extent it once did. The primary reason is the poor state of the health of the Richmond River. In 2014 the Richmond Ecohealth Project revealed that the Richmond River has an overall health grade of D. The grades range from grade F in the Wilsons River and upper Richmond River estuary to grade C in the headwater streams of the catchment.

In the three years since becoming the member for Ballina, I have worked extensively and productively with stakeholders across the electorate, including OzFish. I support their Tuckean project, which restores fish habitats in the estuaries. University of New England scientists, who reported on the Richmond River, and Southern Cross University scientists, as well as Conservation Volunteers Australia, are doing incredible work. I am working with the mayors of the five councils responsible for the Richmond River. We know what to do and members will hear much more about it over the next 12 months. The reasons for the lack of fish and shellfish in the Richmond River are complicated, but a new cause has been found: the impact of a pesticide class known as neonicotinoids.

This pesticide class has been linked to bee deaths in Europe, America and the European Union. Some people in this House laugh about matters like this, but bee disease is a big deal for food production worldwide. The European Union imposed a temporary ban on the use of three key neonicotinoids on some crops in 2013, and a total ban on all crops not grown in greenhouses is being considered. Sadly, in Australia these pesticides are still being used. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, the body responsible for regulating pesticides, says on its website, "Given that Australian honey bee health is good, there is no cause for similar restrictions here."

My future son-in-law is a bee expert at the University of Sydney. Bee experts right across the country will be disturbed to hear that a pesticide that is being banned in the European Union because of its impact on bee populations is being whitewashed in Australia. CSIRO data generated by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and funded by the Australian Prawn Farmers Association shows that neonicotinoids have been detected in river catchments and are affecting prawn numbers and their ability to catch food. As with most things in our natural ecosystems, it has a flow-on effect.

I have passed on the data about pesticide effects on prawns to the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Regional Water and neither has investigated the issue. Instead they have passed the buck to the Federal Minister for Agriculture to provide a response on this issue, which is of huge concern to residents in Ballina. To date there has been no response. We have proof that these pesticides used in sugarcane and horticulture for pest control are leaking into rivers at concentrations that are growing and are above safe limits for many aquatic organisms. These pesticides are impacting on bees, on fish habitat and on the health of the river.

The pesticides authority needs to reassess the safety of these pesticides and better educate farmers and horticulturalists about their use. Last year Emigrant Creek Dam was sprayed with diazinon—an organophosphate pesticide from a macadamia farmer spraying in high winds. This matter should be dealt with swiftly and prosecutions should occur. The Greens would like to have an urgent debate about the use of pesticides, and severely restrict or ban those that cause the most harm to humans, animals, fish and bees. We would like more research into methods that will assist farmers to minimise or eliminate the use of harmful pesticides and fertilisers. The future of our river depends on it.

SHOALHAVEN SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (18:57): Most people in this place would know that, as a former teacher, I am extremely passionate about education. I was a teacher at Ulladulla High School for approximately 27 years. My worst memory of that school was of watching the escalation and the growth of that high school until it reached 32 demountables, which spread onto both the top and bottom playing fields. We knew that it was not a long-term solution but we had to wait until somebody decided that Ulladulla High School should be redeveloped. Thankfully, that has happened and we now have a beautiful new and redeveloped high school.

Once I was elected to this place I vowed that schools in my electorate would never reach the stage where they were looking at 32 demountable classrooms. Most of us know that one, two or three demountables are necessary when there are fluctuating enrolments, but it was a travesty for all the kids at Ulladulla High School. Whilst schools on the South Coast no longer require that sort of redevelopment, they are growing, in particular, in the southern Shoalhaven area. Last year I commenced a campaign in the southern Shoalhaven to purchase the Shoalhaven Anglican School site in Milton—a beautiful private school which closed down a couple of years ago.

The Shoalhaven is one of the fastest growing regional areas in New South Wales, if not Australia. People who have visited that area would know why it is growing so quickly. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Shoalhaven local government area population forecast for 2018 is 103,201 and it is forecast to grow to 123,168 by 2036—a massive 19.35 per cent growth in under 20 years. A boom area in the Shoalhaven is in the southern part of my electorate and is made up of the Milton, Mollymook and Ulladulla regions. The same ABS statistics show that 15.35 per cent of the population increase for the Shoalhaven is represented by growth in the Milton, Mollymook, Mollymook Beach, Narrawallee and Ulladulla townships. I think the Minister in the Chamber, Ray Williams, will be in that area next week to visit some important and interesting aspects of the area. In towns north of Ulladulla, population over this period is forecast to grow by more than 30 per cent, whilst Ulladulla figures are expected to grow by 14.50 per cent. It is important to note that this growth includes many young families.

Gordon Clark, Shoalhaven City Council's Strategic Planning Manager, recently stated, "Milton-Ulladulla is absolutely a growth-patch for young families, a general trend which is happening across the entire Shoalhaven." Given this fact, it is more important than ever that we have the right educational facilities now and in the future, so that we never again have a school with 32 demountables. The purchase of the Shoalhaven Anglican School site by this Government presents a unique opportunity to futureproof the educational needs of the southern Shoalhaven. Currently, the region is served by two public primary schools and one public high school.

Ulladulla Public School is the largest primary school in the South Coast electorate, with 735 students. Enrolments at the school have increased year on year since 2011 and overall enrolments have increased 8.89 per cent over the past 10 years. Milton Public School is the second largest primary school, with 681 students. An additional 114 students have joined the school community over the past 10 years. Ulladulla High School is now the only high school in the southern Shoalhaven and currently has the largest enrolment of any school in the Shoalhaven. Given the increasing figures at both local primary schools, it is anticipated this school will continue to grow.

I thank community members for their ongoing efforts over past months as we continue to build the case for purchasing this facility. Almost 6,000 signatures have been collected on petitions, and countless telephone calls, emails and letters have been received by my office in support of the purchase of the site. From time to time we debate issues that are important to communities across the State, but at the moment this is the only issue being discussed in the southern Shoalhaven. School enrolments in the area are growing rapidly and community members are urging the Government to purchase the site. There have been conversations with the community, parents and teachers, and it is clear that everybody is on the same page on this issue.

Last week I met with the Minister for Education. There have been mixed messages from his office, but I am pleased to say the Minister has not ruled out the purchase of the site. Obviously, it would have to stack up, which I understand because this purchase would require a large investment by the Government. However, purchasing the site would mean that in five years we would not have 32 demountables being used as classrooms while we decide where to build additional classrooms or another school. I urge the Government to purchase this site and to futureproof our schools.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (19:02): I acknowledge the contribution of the member for South Coast, who is a former schoolteacher and a remarkable advocate for her area. Importantly, she works diligently on behalf of her area and to ensure that facilities are provided for schoolchildren who require educational facilities. I also acknowledge that this Government has invested in an additional 600-odd classrooms for schools across the State. I represent the fastest growing area in New South Wales, in the north-west of the State, where two schools are currently being built at an investment of \$25 million for just one of those schools. Like the member for South Coast, I know the importance of this investment in schools and I acknowledge this Government's commitment to quality education. This Government will continue to invest in providing education for the schoolchildren of New South Wales.

TEMPE RAILWAY STATION ACCESSIBILITY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:03): Relatively recently, at one of my mobile offices, I was approached by a resident of Tempe, a lady by the name of Carole. Despite the inclement weather, Carole had made her way from her home to meet me outside Tempe High School to raise an issue with me on behalf of many of her neighbours. Carole was very concerned about the current state of Tempe train station—in particular, its accessibility to those of an older age, who may be encumbered by a physical disability, or parents burdened with prams. Carole had braved the winds and wet weather on behalf of a number of her neighbours, who were unable to meet me on the street corner because of their age, or physical disability of one form or another. It is those residents who struggle the most with accessing Tempe station.

So many of us take using public transport for granted, but a significant number of people in our community struggle each day to access that basic service. Residents of Tempe will know precisely what I mean. The station is notoriously difficult to access. A relic of a time before ticketless travel, both platforms are accessed by a central raised concourse where once upon a time commuters would purchase their tickets from a booth. It now serves as an impediment. While a few flights of stairs might not seem much to the able-bodied, it is a daily test for less able travellers. With no lifts, wheelchair access to the station is impossible. Wheelchair users instead have to travel to Sydenham, Marrickville or even across the Cooks River at the Princes Highway to Wolli Creek. It is not much better for the many young families in Tempe who contend with lugging shopping and prams up and down the stairs on a daily basis. Then, of course, there are the elderly and infirm.

Tempe is a crucial station servicing not only my residents in Tempe but also inner-western and south-western commuters from the electorates of Summer Hill and Canterbury. As population numbers in our communities explode, we three members agree completely that Tempe is in desperate need of an expanded commuter car park. The station services two growing schools and if the Mirvac proposal for 2,600 units on Carrington Road proceeds—and we hope it does not—it will buckle under the strain of thousands of new rail commuters every day. My many representations to successive transport Ministers have been responded to with advice that Tempe station will be examined for an upgrade. Even my basic suggestion of opening the platform access at Griffiths Street, which is level with the footway, was not agreed to. That commonsense change would dramatically improve access for residents travelling from the city or southbound. It would be as simple and easy as unlocking the gates and installing Opal card readers.

Tempe is surrounded by a number of stations such as Sydenham, Marrickville, Wolli Creek and Arncliffe that have full accessibility, including lifts and street-level access. The community is crying out for an upgrade, and I am on their side. I am requesting the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to commit funding for an upgrade to Tempe station. If funding is not immediately available I ask the Minister to examine allowing access to platforms directly from Griffiths Street or, alternatively, on the western side of the station by installing an Opal card reader. That would at least provide an immediate rectification whilst we await priority funding for the lifts that must be installed.

TRIBUTE TO LAWRENCE ALWYN TODD

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (19:07): I advise the House of the sad passing of my former constituent and former boss of nearly 20 years, whom I admired greatly. On 4 June 2017 Lawrence Alwyn Todd—or Laurie Todd, as he was affectionately known—passed away at 96 years of age. In 1984 Laurie gave me a job that, it is fair to say, very much changed my life and contributed greatly to my role as a parliamentarian and Minister of this State.

Laurie was born in Wagga Wagga on 18 August 1921. He was one of six children born to David and Sarah Elizabeth Todd and grew up during the Depression. Laurie's dad worked on the railways, eventually settling in Granville in the 1930s where he operated a taxi business. Laurie left school and worked for a company in Redfern, but on weekends he worked with his dad in the taxi industry—despite being too young to drive. That early experience in public transport would set the scene for his life in business in later years. In Granville during that time Laurie met his life partner, Sprig, who, sadly, passed away in 2009. At the commencement of World War II he joined the Royal Australian Air Force with two of his brothers and trained as a rear gunner on a Lancaster. At the end of the war Laurie returned to Australia and immediately married Sprig.

Laurie and his brother Keith used their severance pay after the war to buy their own taxi, which they worked 24/7. Through sheer hard work and determination, they continued to buy more taxis and build up the business. In the 1950s Laurie became a founding director of Cumberland Cabs Co-operative, now known as Premier Cabs, and was instrumental in establishing one of the first two-way radio networks. Laurie's two sons, Keith and Alan, were born in 1947 and 1949 respectively and also grew up surrounded by taxis. In 1960 Laurie moved on from taxis and purchased the Cumberland Bus Company, operating between Parramatta and Eastwood. A decade later, in 1970, the family moved to Dural and purchased the Glenorie Bus Company.

It was here that I first met Laurie when he and his sons gave me a job driving buses in 1984, while I was still operating my small business. Twenty years later, with several employees, I was running one of the largest heavy vehicle repair workshops in the country, maintaining a fleet of more than 300 buses at Glenorie Bus Company, which became known as Hillsbus. Many of the Glenorie Bus Company employees ran small businesses and worked at the bus company to supplement their income, as I did. The flexibility of working hours at Glenorie Bus Company was instrumental to the success of these small local businesses, including my own. Without this flexibility we could not have continued to operate and provide employment to other people in the community. It is testament to the generosity of both Laurie and his son Keith that they supported their employees in this way. It was like a big family business.

Typical of Laurie's great work ethic was that if we were ever short of a driver, everyone in the workshop and the office would jump into a bus to ensure kids got home from school. In the first week I started at Glenorie, Laurie was still driving buses in the afternoon when the need arose. He was the driver of last resort: If Laurie was driving there was simply no-one left in the entire company. This was the secret of the success of the Glenorie Bus Company: Everyone pulled together to get the job done and service was our business. Laurie and his son Keith were also incredibly innovative. It was one of the first bus companies to embrace two-way radios in our buses, in 1986, followed by electronic ticketing machines with our own Faresaver cards, which were a prelude to the Opal cards—but we had them in operation in 1987—with thousands of our regular customers benefiting from discounted fares.

In 1995 we installed electronic destination boards to better inform the public. This was followed in 2001 by global positioning system [GPS] satellite navigation technology in every bus. In 1995 Keith and Laurie would lead the way for the private bus industry to manage public transport for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. At the time, Keith was President of the Bus and Coach Association and he rallied the private bus industry and the State Government in coordinating this initiative. The overwhelming success of the private transport bus industry played a huge role in ensuring that Sydney had the best Olympic Games ever. Laurie was a humble person who never once forgot where he came from and the struggle he endured throughout his life.

Testament to his greatest achievement are the two sons, 10 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren he leaves behind and whom he loved and adored. Family was everything to Laurie. Laurie once told me the biggest event he could remember as a young person was the completion of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which he dearly wanted to attend but could not because he did not have a penny for the train fare. It certainly puts into perspective where Laurie started and what he achieved throughout his life, which was nothing short of immense. I had the great pleasure of seeing him four days prior to his passing away. He said, "G'day, Minister." I think he was very proud of the people he had helped along the way. Laurie and the Todd family certainly helped me, and I will never forget that. Vale, Laurie Todd.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:13 until
Wednesday 14 February 2018 at 10:00.**