



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 8 March 2018

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 8 March 2018

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2017-2018

Debate resumed from 15 February 2018.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (10:13): I return to my speech on the Berejiklian Government's 2017-18 budget. My previous speech was truncated due to the restraints of time. I have spoken at length about this budget's failure to properly invest in the Maitland electorate, particularly in education. I acknowledge that the Minister for Education is present in the Chamber. On the last occasion I spoke I informed the House—about the many issues facing Gillieston Public School. I will not repeat my comments, but I inform the Minister that many more schools in my electorate are also suffering. Unfortunately, this Government's failure to invest in our community goes further than school and education infrastructure.

The new Maitland Hospital was one of the few infrastructure projects in my electorate that was included in the budget. At the time the budget was handed down, the hospital was to be opened as a public-private partnership. In January this year, after years of campaigning by the Maitland community, the Government back-flipped on this decision. The new hospital will now be a fully public asset, owned by and operated for the community for decades to come. However, the fight is not yet over. More than seven years ago the Coalition Government announced it would build this hospital. Since then only the enabling works have commenced. This is not good enough. The existing Maitland Hospital is an old building which is struggling to cope with the growth of our community.

I have received dozens of complaints about the state of the Maitland Hospital. Our hardworking medical staff are not to blame. Our doctors, nurses and ancillary staff are some of the hardest workers in our community and they are underresourced. Wide-ranging issues have been raised with me about the hospital. It hospital does not have enough beds to cope with the growing number of patients. Our nurses are constantly being forced to do more with less. There is not enough parking for patients at the hospital. Sick and elderly patients are being forced to walk great distances across busy roads to receive treatment. Our community requires the new Lower Hunter hospital to be built urgently. A modern facility is required to provide services and to meet the needs of Maitland's growing population. The new hospital must provide a wide range of clinical services which can support the entire Lower Hunter.

This hospital is vital and will support lives not only in the Maitland electorate but also Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Singleton, Greta and other Lower Hunter communities. The people of Maitland deserve the new hospital to be built as soon as possible to the highest standard. It must be big enough to cope with the growth of the Lower Hunter for decades to come. It is important to remember that Maitland is the fastest growing community in this State. The last census revealed it had grown by 15 per cent, and every day four to five people are moving to that community. Those growth projections are high and it is predicted that Maitland's population will be more than 100,000 in 20 years. To cope with this growth the hospital needs enough operating theatres, wards and beds to deal with an unexpected pandemic or flu outbreak. Last year's flu season proved that many hospitals across New South Wales were not prepared for a sudden spike in patients.

This Government has an opportunity to learn from other hospitals in this State to futureproof the new Maitland Hospital. I have spoken to many residents of Maitland who have had to travel to John Hunter Hospital regularly with their relatives. The issue that they raise consistently is a lack of parking. The new hospital is being constructed on a site that will allow for a large car park, which is important, but it must also be close to public transport. Accessible public transport to the John Hunter Hospital is a major issue. The new Maitland Hospital will be built on a rail line, which will make it more accessible. I will continue to hold this Government to account to ensure that it delivers a high-quality, modern hospital for my community.

The New South Wales Government has not only failed to deliver health and education outcomes for Maitland, but it has also failed to deliver for our police officers. When the Government announced that it would pursue re-engineering processes, I was hopeful that it would increase the number of police officers in Maitland.

For years our local police officers have been understaffed and overworked. They are unable to quickly attend to every incident reported by our community because there are not enough personnel to service the area. As the Maitland community has grown so has the number of criminal incidents. Our electorate has a large number of domestic violence incidents, which are difficult to address, and police officers do not have enough time to attend each one. When the Treasurer proclaimed that the Government was investing in frontline services to ensure they could cope with population growth, it rang hollow with our police officers. They have experienced the growth of our community firsthand.

Even though the Government allocated funding for an extra 10 police officers it has admitted that 20 police officers were needed to increase police numbers to the same level across the Hunter. Many more police officers are needed. Since the beginning of this year my community has experienced seven incidents of violence related to bikie gangs such as shootings and Molotov cocktails being thrown. These are serious crimes. I am grateful that police officers are committed to addressing outlaw motorcycle gangs in our community, but they cannot do more with less. Police officers have one of the hardest jobs in our community, if not the hardest. They put their lives on the line every day to service our communities to ensure that people stay safe. Police officers deserve to be adequately resourced and fully supported by this Government.

Instead of investing in our police or more education infrastructure, this Government is choosing to spend more than \$2 billion knocking down and rebuilding two stadiums in Sydney. Nearly 200,000 residents have signed Peter FitzSimons' petition calling on the Premier to abandon this disastrous policy. This decision says all we need to know about the priorities of the Coalition. I have been speaking to women in my community and from around this State and all of them have commented on this Government's failure to address the need for important social infrastructure so that our communities can survive.

We have a problem when the largest number of tragedies in history in out-of-home care occurs in this State; when women and children who are escaping domestic violence every day cannot access refuges; when young women at university are being sexually assaulted in their campus dormitories, which is one place they should feel safe; and when people in my electorate complain to me not only about the lack of care they receive in hospital due to a lack of staffing but also that they are being sent home from hospital because there is a lack of beds not because they are medically fit.

Being in government is not all about cutting ribbons or wearing a hard hat and high-vis vest. It is about putting systems in place so the community can survive. Under this term of government we have seen a massive cut in the delivery of services to many areas, including family and community services, health, education, women, and domestic violence and sexual assault services. Late last year I visited the Wallsend Health Campus to witness the sexual assault service it provides. I asked about the waiting list and was told that someone who had experienced a sexual assault would have to wait one year before they could access those services. That is too long; it is not acceptable. I was told there are 22 people in the Hunter on that waiting list. I was also told there is only one counsellor working with those 22 people. If there were just one more counsellor providing that service that would reduce the waiting list. It would mean those 22 people who have been subjected to the most vile and debilitating crime that anyone can experience would not have to wait so long for help. They have to wait for one year because this Government will not spend money on another counsellor. That is an example of how this Government has its priorities wrong and it must be addressed.

This Government must investigate how to support small businesses. The Government's infrastructure program has created a huge disruption to small businesses in George Street. Similar disruption has also occurred in Newcastle. The Premier visited the Hunter in December last year and announced that the businesses that are affected might receive some rent relief. Some of those businesses have operated in the area for 40 years and suddenly they have to relocate or lose their business. Some businesses have failed and the Small Business Commissioner slammed the door in their face and told them they would receive no relief. They were told the infrastructure project would not be a problem because it would not exceed the scheduled completion date. This project was started in December 2014. Those businesses in Newcastle that have been affected by the infrastructure interruptions deserve to be supported by the Government.

The only people in this State who think it is okay to knock down and to rebuild two operating sports stadiums are the Premier and the sports Minister. It is disgraceful. The Nationals say in this place that they are standing up for regional New South Wales, yet they are letting this issue slide. I have had many consultations with constituents throughout the State. The Government could resolve a number of issues by investing money in services and regional infrastructure, but all the money is being invested in Sydney. Many of the policies that this Government has put in place have impacted poorly on our community. The debate on greyhounds was a waste of energy. It started with the whimsical decision to ban an entire industry, which resulted in this Government tying itself in knots and being paralysed for months. The fire and emergency services levy and council amalgamations put small businesses, councils and the community in chaos. [*Extension of time*]

Those ill-fated policies were opposed by the public and Labor. The Government had no mandate for those policies and its arguments were not valid. A mandate must exist from the people of New South Wales if \$2 billion or \$3 billion of taxpayers' money is to be spent on projects such as knocking down and rebuilding stadiums. It is an unacceptable waste of public money. We on this side of the House will not allow the Sydney-centric Berejiklian Government to install air conditioning in luxury boxes at sporting stadiums while schools in our electorates do not have it. Even though one school in my electorate received a major expansion, the Government failed to provide air conditioning for the students. The Parents and Citizens Association was told it would have to raise \$100,000 to pay for air conditioning. This community experiences 44 and 45 degree temperatures in summer. This Government's priorities are wrong.

When the Treasurer delivers this year's budget, I will be expecting the Government to deliver the investment that the Maitland community and many others in the State deserve. A large number of people are living in abject poverty and they cannot afford to pay their energy bills, which continue to increase. We remember that the privatisation of poles and wires was going to bring prices down; it has not. People are now working on Boxing Day because this Government thinks it is okay to spend Christmas away from their families. Both workers and small businesses are feeling the pressure. Government members say that working on Boxing Day is voluntary, which is nonsense. They do not understand the pressure that particularly young people and women experience when they are requested to work. Many of them need the extra money at that time of year.

The retail trading figures for the months of December and January have gone down. One might ask why. The Federal Government's policy means that penalty rates have been cut by 25 per cent. Last Christmas retail workers worked on Boxing Day and received a 25 per cent pay cut. How is that fair? It is outrageous. The majority of retail workers are women. The majority of small business owners are women and they have had their revenue reduced. Professor Allan commented in his report that there was extra foot traffic. When I was shopping before Christmas I saw more discounts on items, so the extra revenue that retailers expected from extra foot traffic was taken away by the discounts they had to offer. Retailers know that people shop on Boxing Day then attend a family lunch when presents are given. Those discounts are impacting on December and January trading figures. This Government has been a disappointment for small businesses in this State.

Commercial fishers are also having problems and they have gone through much turmoil because of this Government's lack of consultation. The Liberal-Nationals Government thinks it is appropriate for people who have worked in a family business for perhaps five generations to pay more to do business and that they should have fewer fishing days allocated with their licence. What is the point of this process for those people? Commercial fishers are facing financial ruin and fishing cooperatives that support our coastal communities are being pressured.

The Opposition gave the Government an opportunity a few weeks ago to examine seafood labelling laws to promote our proud Australian fishing industry, but it walked away from that opportunity despite the commitment it made to other stakeholders in the State. This Government has been a complete disaster for this State. People in New South Wales cannot afford housing, their electricity bills are increasing, there are fewer spaces at public schools, and they are facing longer waiting lists, which means they cannot access the services they need. These things are happening under this Government's watch. The 2017-18 budget was a debacle and I hope that the 2018-19 budget is this Government's last.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (10:30): I welcome the New South Wales budget for 2017-18 because it displays a huge amount of care and balance. It sets out the road map for the continuing upgrade of the State's infrastructure and its maintenance. The budget plans for a future that this Government intends to deliver. This is a budget of highlights for all who live and work in New South Wales. There will be record investment in infrastructure—again. Restart NSW is investing \$29.8 billion in the State as part of a four-year commitment of \$72.7 billion. The budget is in surplus—again. Following a surplus of \$5.7 billion for 2016-17, the projection is now for a surplus of \$3.3 billion for 2017-18, which is an increase of \$634 million on the original 2017-18 budget forecast. Average surpluses of \$2.0 billion are forecast over the budget year and the forward estimates.

State debt will be completely cleared—again. In fact, this Government is saving money. The valued triple-A credit rating has been retained. At more than half-a-trillion dollars, New South Wales has Australia's largest State economy, accounting for around one-third of the nation's economic output, and it is home to nearly one-third of Australians. New South Wales continues to be the State with the lowest unemployment rate. That is the economic news, and it is all good. That is no accident; it is attributable to sound economic management. This is where this Government is different from the Labor Opposition.

In terms of specific budget funding across the State, there are several highlights for the people of New South Wales that I will acknowledge and support. Palliative care will get a boost through a new \$100 million palliative care package that will focus on regional areas. In addition, \$1 billion will be spent on the important Securing Country Water Program to ensure that rural communities have access to high-quality, reliable and

affordable water. Funding of \$1 billion has been allocated for the new XPT carriages, and \$63 million will be used to increase the number of child protection caseworkers. An additional \$217.3 million is being provided for preschool fee relief, and an additional \$20 million will be spent on transitional housing and support services for the homeless.

Nearly \$1 billion will be spent on ambulance services, including the funding of 50 additional relief paramedics to assist in reducing fatigue for those working in regional areas. Farmers will benefit from the abolition of tax duties on crop and livestock insurance. Many more pensioners will benefit from subsidised council rates and charges through the pensioner rebate scheme, thanks to funding of \$79 million to ease cost-of-living pressures faced by pensioners. In addition, \$16 million will support councils through the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme by way of interest subsidies so that councils can get on with their own infrastructure development sooner and more affordably. The New South Wales Government has expanded its emergency assistance to include more welfare groups that can offer the State's most vulnerable energy customers help to pay electricity and gas bills, with rebates to total more than \$1 billion over four years.

I will turn now to some specific highlights from the budget for the electorate of Albury. The budget sets out to cure Albury's ongoing health problems with its inadequate emergency department. To achieve that, \$30 million has been allocated to completely reimagine, to expand and to reconstruct a twenty-first century emergency department for Albury Base Hospital. It will address issues of overcrowding, staff security and improved service for those seeking urgent medical attention.

The budget also continues to support our regional hospitals by providing the next tranche of funding for the continuing rebuild and upgrade of regional multipurpose services for Tumbarumba and Culcairn. I was pleased to be able to open the revitalised and expanded Holbrook Multipurpose Service in August last year. I can report that the Culcairn Multipurpose Service has had much of its work completed. The Premier kindly included a tour of the service during the November community cabinet visit to Albury, meeting many residents, patients and staff. Work on milestone four commenced in February, which includes the demolition of the nursing home, the acute/emergency department and community health facilities, and the commencement of the new building, which includes acute, emergency department, radiology, HealthShare and community health facilities. Meanwhile, in Tumbarumba in November I helped to turn the sod for the commencement of construction works on a new multipurpose service. This work is well underway and I look forward to the eventual opening of this wonderful modern health facility.

Following last year's budget I spoke about the work being done to modernise mental health facilities on the border. Planning has had to deal with an expanding project, as non-government and government services seek to come together in an ambitious new facility based on making life and treatment easier for patients and also for their carers and families. I can report now that, rather than building from scratch, the Government is instead leasing a substantial section of a medium-rise building on the site of the Sisters of Mercy health precinct in Albury. This brings with it many synchronicities, helping to modernise the existing campus and to expand its role in the life of the community.

I have been advised that this will be stage one of what we anticipate to be an ongoing occupation of this building, moving step by step to ensure the border region has quality facilities. Construction tenders for the renovation and redesign have now closed and are being vetted. I expect an announcement of the successful tender to be made shortly. The Government is continuing to plan for a renewal of the acute care facility in Nolan House, which is on the Albury Base Hospital campus. I am grateful that the New South Wales Government and the Victorian Government have each allocated \$500,000 for urgent fixes to address some of the security and safety concerns. As members know, a statewide review of mental health infrastructure is underway so that we can plan to deliver the best facilities across New South Wales.

I now turn to education, and I welcome the presence of the Minister for Education in the House. An exciting new multimillion-dollar school hall complex for James Fallon High School in Albury is undergoing planning now that funding has been approved. My predecessor in this seat, the late Ian Glachan, would raise the subject of this school hall each year in his contribution to the budget debate, but sadly there was no will to address this wrong—this inexplicable gap.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: He certainly did.

Mr GREG APLIN: Nothing happened for what might well be a record period for what was characterised as a "priority" piece of school infrastructure. Since the budget was delivered it has been confirmed that this will be no ordinary school hall, but a specially designed performing arts hall with everything that is necessary to reach modern standards. This will be a showcase for the border region and will put independent schools on notice that this Government is supporting excellence for State schools and their students. As a bonus,

the hall will be used by a number of community organisations and theatre groups who currently step across the border and take their productions and events to Victoria.

This project is a terrific expression of the Government's policy of creating infrastructure at schools which also has a life beyond school hours and which finds use in the wider community. This has been a hard-fought battle for over 40 years in the Albury electorate, and I thank the Minister for Education and Albury's Education Director, Dr Brad Russell, for their support and enthusiasm to get this critical piece of education infrastructure off the never-never list and into reality.

I am also pleased to see funding for a wireless connectivity upgrade for all 43 government high schools and public schools across the electorate of Albury. School maintenance has always been a priority and several schools in my electorate benefited from the maintenance blitz which began over the summer holidays and which is continuing. Public schools in the Albury electorate will have their planned maintenance lists cut by more than \$2 million with work carried out on roofing, flooring, painting and other maintenance projects. I commend the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Education for directing this program, which has seen the New South Wales Government slash the State's planned school maintenance list by more than \$200 million, or by about one-quarter, in the past 18 months.

I turn now to TAFE. The New South Wales Government's \$3.7 million investment in a connected learning centre for Corowa will ensure that TAFE NSW not only continues to have a presence in Corowa but also significantly enhances local education offerings and capability for the community. On 26 February it was my pleasure to welcome the Assistant Minister for Skills to Corowa to turn the sod on this epic new infrastructure that revitalises the regional TAFE campus and expands its education opportunities in Corowa and out to the wider region. It is moves like this that enable motivated people to upgrade their skills and to train near home and work. A better TAFE helps keep people in the country and supports local regional businesses by enabling them to find qualified employees at hand.

This is also a year in which grants to preschools are making an impact. In November it was announced that Howlong Preschool would receive \$200,000 from the Start Strong capital works grants program to assist with expansion of the preschool. This \$200,000 is in addition to the \$100,000 allocated by Federation Council to the preschool through the Stronger Communities Fund, provided as part of the council amalgamation funding. I also note that Howlong Preschool Association raised \$160,000 for this project through support from the community, clubs and other organisations. I say well done to them.

Families in the Lavington-Springdale Heights area will also have more opportunities to find preschool places following a grant from the New South Wales Government of \$557,000 to upgrade early childhood education services there. The Government has doubled the number of financial scholarships on offer for disadvantaged young people to stay in school and to reach their education and training goals. Worth \$1,000 a year, scholarship funds can be used for expenses like textbooks, course costs and computer equipment.

Roads and road maintenance are a constant topic in my electorate. The budget allocates more than \$33 million for roads, bridges and boating infrastructure and maintenance projects, primarily delivered through local councils in the Albury electorate. Roads maintenance block grant funding for councils includes \$488,000 for Albury City, \$2.194 million for Greater Hume Council, and \$1.728 million for Federation Council. Importantly, the budget also funded stage two of the vital Riverina Highway upgrade, an \$11 million project. I am pleased to report that this difficult and precarious road reconstruction on the side of a hill and spilling down to the waters of the Hume Weir was completed six months ahead of schedule and on budget. This is a testament to the Roads and Maritime Services staff. I thank the Minister and the Premier for coming to open the final section of this highway rebuild.

While it was only last November that this long stretch of the Riverina Highway was rebuilt and opened, I can update this with appreciation for the extensive maintenance of other sections of the highway that was undertaken in February. The Riverina Highway is the principal State road in Albury, and I thank the Minister for making it safer and better maintained than it has ever been. This is a real benefit to the residents and businesses of Albury and those who pass through.

I can also report that construction works for the Upper Murray Clarkes Hill project along Tooma Road, near the town of Tumberumba, were completed in January. The New South Wales Government is proud to have contributed \$1.58 million to this project through the Restart NSW Fixing Country Roads program. These vital upgrade works were undertaken on a steep and narrow stretch of Tooma Road. By clearing, widening and stabilising a 3.7 kilometre section and installing new guideposts and signage, this upgrade has ensured the road now meets Austroads safety standards.

Business interrupted.

*Bills***WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF INJURED WORKERS) BILL 2017****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 15 February 2018.**

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (10:43): Before I was interrupted—I will not say rudely interrupted—on the last occasion, I was spelling out for the House the extent of the impact this bill would have on the workers compensation insurance scheme. In many respects this demonstrates the inability of the Opposition to ever be fit for office. The position expressed yesterday by those opposite in relation to this bill and the collection of unpaid debts effectively demonstrates that they have no appreciation of how to manage the finances of this State. For that reason, if for no other, they ought to be rejected by the people of New South Wales. In a most deceptive manner the shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property—who dashes out of the Chamber when I am just about to talk to him—

Mr Clayton Barr: No, I was coming around to your side.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I am sure that is right. The shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property tells us this will cost only 44c per \$100. In fact the real impact on an insurance company that provides these payments is \$700 million. That is the true figure we are asking the insurer to pay in relation to this scheme. Any insurance company faced with a \$700 million debt—which those opposite wish to impose upon the workers compensation insurer—has to pass that on to employers. [*Extension of time*]

This bill is designed to send the workers compensation insurance scheme into exactly the same sort of debt that we had to rescue it from in 2012. The obligations of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] and those who regulate their workers compensation scheme are to properly identify and sensitively deal with people who are coming to the end of the insurable period pursuant to section 39 of the Act. In those circumstances section 39 says that the payments are going to stop and the obligations of SIRA—which are being met—are to put people in contact with community organisations to ensure they continue to receive payments, including medical payments. In fact, the Government provided extra funds to SIRA to ensure there were sufficient funds to meet their ongoing needs in respect of medical expenses.

A responsible government faced with a bill like this first of all asks, "Does the Opposition really want to engage in a process which sends this scheme broke?" What those opposite delivered to us on this side when we came into office was a \$4 billion debt. Those opposite say, "Here is a workers compensation scheme which is unfunded. You guys deal with it." We did deal with it; we dealt with it in a way that shows a responsibility for ensuring the fund was able to get into surplus and that insurers were able to reduce the premiums payable by the employers in circumstances where the people in most need who had to call on the workers compensation were properly looked after. That is the nature of a responsible government delivering proper workers compensation.

No-one on this side of the House says that people who are in the high range category of injury should not be compensated, and we absolutely provide for them. There is a specific provision relating to people with a less than 20 per cent loss of whole body function as a result of injury. In addition, this bill seeks to redeliver journey claims. Those opposite and we on this side know that journey claims were the greatest rort ever perpetrated on the workers compensation insurer. The rorting killed the entitlements of those people who were potentially really entitled to them. When Labor was in government those opposite had no ability to identify rorts because their union mates said, "We have to be able to protect our rorting friends." This is an attempt, under the guise of compassion, to restore favours to people who are allegedly impacted by these so-called "journey injuries". The Government has dealt with that issue responsibly and in a manner that is compassionate to the people who are genuinely injured at work.

This legislation, under the guise of being compassionate, is an attempt to destroy the scheme and place workers in a much more invidious position than they are in now. The scheme works well. The Government ought to be congratulated. The Minister who administers this scheme ought to be congratulated. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority should be congratulated for the work it does in monitoring the performance of the workers compensation scheme. All those who are involved in icare NSW deliver a product for this State that has the interests of the workers of this State at heart by getting them back to work as quickly as possible and helping them through their period of injury, which would not happen if this bill were passed. Those on this side of the Chamber oppose the bill.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (10:50): I am delighted to contribute to this debate on the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017. I commend the member for Cessnock, the shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property, for introducing this bill to provide protections

for workers—legitimate workers with legitimate injuries who deserve protection—at their most vulnerable time. The objects of the bill include:

- (a) to remove restrictions on the entitlement of a worker to make a “journey claim” (that is, a claim to receive compensation for a personal injury received on a journey between the worker’s home or other place of abode and his or her place of employment),
- (b) to remove restrictions on what constitutes suitable employment for the purposes of a worker’s entitlement to weekly compensation by way of income support,
- (c) to remove the 5-year cut-off period for weekly payments of compensation to injured workers,
- (d) to remove a provision that limits the payment of an injured worker’s expenses for medical, hospital and rehabilitation treatment and services to treatment and services provided within 12 months after a claim for compensation is made or within 12 months after weekly payments cease,
- (e) to make it an offence for an employer to dismiss, at any time, an injured worker because the worker is not fit for employment as a result of the injury.

I read those objects out in order to bring this debate back to the facts—not ideology. The member for Epping would have this House believe this legislation is an invalid proposal. That claim is both outrageous and disappointing. This legislation is not about politics; it is about people. It is about people who are injured and need the framework of protection. Many of us have friends, relatives or loved ones who have been injured at work, and I am sure members would be able to relate to their situations. That said, I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Epping, as bizarre as it was; it made the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure look good.

It is important to know the facts. Like all members on this side of the Chamber, the member for Cessnock, the shadow Minister, is motivated by a desire to represent and stand up for the working men and women of this State—something Labor has championed since Federation and the establishment of our great party. This bill seeks to address a number of disastrous consequences that were the direct result of the actions of the O’Farrell Liberal Government, which made sweeping changes to the workers compensation scheme in 2012.

I have already noted the objects of the bill. The five-year cap on weekly payments for workers who have sustained injuries resulting in whole body impairment of between 1 per cent and 20 per cent does not make sense, no matter how you look at it. If a person sustains an injury at work which renders them unable to work—even if that injury only affects less than 20 per cent of their entire body—that person will not, all of a sudden, be physically able to return to work because a piece of legislation tells them that they are only allowed to be compensated for up to five years. When those five years pass, the affected people will simply migrate from workers compensation payments to Centrelink payments, unless they get ruled out because their partners’ incomes and their assets exceed the Centrelink threshold.

This measure does not improve the quality of life for injured workers or their chances of returning to employment; it is simply designed to get as many long-term injured workers out of the scheme as possible. That statement is not theoretical; this has already started to happen. Since this bill was introduced by the member for Cessnock in September last year, thousands of injured workers have had their payments slashed—with the majority of those people losing their payments around Christmas, which really rubbed salt into their wounds. As a result of the changes brought in by this Liberal Government, by June this year 4,423 workers across New South Wales will lose the weekly payments they have been receiving for five years. That is an average of about 50 workers in every electorate across New South Wales.

I challenge those opposite to go into their electorates and speak to the 50 workers whose lives have been, or are about to be, turned upside down by these heartless changes and explain to them why they intend to vote against the bill introduced by the member for Cessnock. As the cost-of-living pressures on families are already immense, the added stress of having workers compensation payments cut can push some families to breaking point. The 2015 survey of injured workers conducted by Unions NSW proved exactly that.

Mr Adam Crouch: Unreliable source.

Mr GREG WARREN: Of workers who sustained injuries prior to the Government’s changes in 2012, 25 per cent had experienced suicidal thoughts. I note the interjection by the member opposite. I will come back to the arguments of those opposite soon. That survey was of people before they were kicked off the scheme. One can only imagine how much stress and hardship those workers have been through over the past few months as their payments have stopped. When it comes to workers compensation—indeed, when it comes to many other areas—this Government is more motivated by ideology than by a commitment to improving the lives of working people. Its business-driven ideology is on display for all to see.

The balance sheet for icare, the workers compensation fund, shows that it is sitting on an enormous pile of money—almost \$2.4 billion as at 30 June last year. This ideological obsession with running the workers compensation fund like an insurance company, rather than a vital safeguard for people who suffer injuries at work,

is nothing short of an absolute disgrace and an injustice of the highest order. This must change. But the injustices of this Government's cuts to workers compensation are not limited to this absurd five-year cap. As a result of its changes, section 248 of the Workers Compensation Act now gives employers free rein to sack an employee purely on the basis of an injury received at work, so long as the employer can stick it out for six months. It is a fundamental responsibility of any employer to provide a safe workplace for its workers, and this Parliament must act to provide that framework. This is not happening under the draconian changes made by then Premier Barry O'Farrell. It is a fundamental responsibility of every member in this place to make the appropriate representations on behalf of the injured workers in their electorates—an average of 50 workers in each electorate.

If an employer fails in that regard and a worker sustains an injury, it is simply not acceptable for that employer to then fire the injured worker. This bill will make a commonsense amendment to section 248, changing an arbitrary period of six months to permanently make it an offence for an employer to sack a worker purely because of an injury sustained at work. This bill also makes important amendments in relation to coverage for journey claims. The changes made by the Coalition Government in 2012 have put huge restrictions on the conditions under which workers compensation claims can be made for injuries sustained while travelling to or from work. Since those changes were implemented, a number of cases have involved workers travelling home—after having worked extremely long hours—who had a car accident, with fatigue identified as a factor, but who have not been covered under the State's workers compensation scheme. That is unusually cruel, given that journey claims represent such a small proportion of all workers compensation claims—around 2.5 per cent. [*Extension of time*]

I again make the point that if the workers compensation fund has a surplus of more than \$2.5 billion, how can this Government not support this bill and make changes? The Government has no excuse to justify its draconian restrictions on journey claims when the scheme's fund increased from \$14 billion to \$16 billion. Although I realise that Coalition members probably will vote against the bill, I implore them to examine the bill's details and specific provisions while keeping in mind the honest men and women in their electorates who are suffering as a direct consequence of the cuts made in 2012 to workers compensation. I ask Coalition members to vote in favour of this bill and put people before politics.

A great deal is said in this House but ultimately members must be motivated by the pursuit of prosperity for every man, woman and child. The plight of the worker must be addressed. The bill provides the framework for improving the lives of some of our most vulnerable workers throughout our society and, closer to home, in our electorates. The Government really has no choice. This bill provides Government members with an opportunity to display themselves to be of an honourable nature and members of political parties who are prepared to leave politics aside to put people first. I hope that Coalition members support the bill.

I note that the member for Epping stated that the Opposition is not fit to govern. I put it to him and to other members of the Government that there is no better indication of the New South Wales Labor Party being ready to govern in its own right than the introduction of this bill, which demonstrates that Labor is across the workers compensation issue. Labor members in government will put people first, not politics. The shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property is to be commended because there are not many more important tasks for politicians than the implementation of the frameworks of protection that deliver legislation to protect people and make their lives a little better. I commonly say throughout my electorate that my politics are simple: All I want to do is my best today to hopefully make the lives of those whom I am honoured and privileged to represent just a little better tomorrow. By supporting this bill, Coalition members can do something to make the lives of those they represent a little better tomorrow.

Frankly, workers in our communities have no time for, pay no attention to or care about the theatrics and rubbish that at times take place in this House, but what they do care about is that members of Parliament change legislation to provide essential protections. This bill provides protections for the State's most disadvantaged workers who are injured and who have families to support. They are legitimate workers with legitimate injuries and they need to earn an income. I urge Government members to consider their position and to support the bill. I thank the House.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (11:04): I lead for the Government in debate on the private member's Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017. I thank the member for Epping for his substantial contribution to this debate. Contrary to what has been said by the member for Campbelltown, by presentation of this bill the Labor Opposition shows that it is entirely not ready for government and ought never be trusted with the levers of power in this State. It is no favour to workers to put in place a workers compensation scheme that will go bankrupt. It brings no benefit to someone injured at work to not be able to provide proper benefits. For one moment let us leave aside the sanctimonious speech made by the member for Campbelltown and consider that a Labor Government in 2006 took away workers rights when Labor reformed an unsustainable and financially bankrupt workers compensation scheme.

The Labor Opposition cannot now say that under no circumstances can workers rights be taken away in respect of the workers compensation scheme because that is the very thing that John Della Bosca and the Labor Government did in 2006. In this space governments must take into account three important factors. The first is the economic context in which a workers compensation policy operates. The second is the financial sustainability of the workers compensation system. Thirdly, and not unimportantly, since Government members are not a pack of heartless and cold-hearted people, we must take into account what is fair in all the circumstances to the injured worker. I suggest that that is exactly what this Government did in 2012 when it introduced workers compensation reforms. Prior to 2012 the workers compensation scheme was financially unsustainable.

As I have already stated, no favours are done for workers by giving them an unsustainable workers compensation scheme. I suggest that that reform struck an appropriate balance that took into account fairness to injured workers. I will deal with that shortly when I discuss the bill in greater detail. It is important to remember that in 2012 the policy was formulated in a context in which the policies of the Labor Government in this regard and in other regards had put New South Wales last in all economic indicators in the nation. Even Tasmania was ahead of New South Wales at that time. It is important to understand that workers compensation premiums from the Labor workers compensation scheme prior to 2012 cost jobs.

It is important to remember that any workers compensation scheme is a cost to business and, therefore, a cost to jobs. As a Government we have a duty to try to minimise that impact on small businesses—which are the largest employer of people in this State—and ensure that they can give people jobs. Prior to 2012 the workers compensation scheme increased the cost of employing labour in New South Wales, made us uncompetitive with other States and pushed jobs out of New South Wales and into other parts of Australia. It is no coincidence that when the Government introduced the existing Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Act 2012, along with other reforms, employment in this State increased. Let us remember that under Labor New South Wales had the highest unemployment rate of any State in the nation.

New South Wales now has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. Nearly 140,000 jobs were created over the past year, representing an employment rate growth of 3.7 per cent, which is higher than the long-term average of 1.6 per cent. More than 44 per cent of the full-time jobs created nationally over the past year were created in New South Wales, with many jobs created in regional New South Wales. For 31 consecutive months, the New South Wales unemployment rate has been the lowest in the country. Today the unemployment rate is 4.8 per cent, nearly 1 per cent lower than the unemployment rate of any other State in the Commonwealth. This jobs growth has not happened accidentally; it is the consequence of the hard work done by the Government, including the record \$80 billion infrastructure program. It is a consequence also of legislation such as the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Act 2012, which reduced costs to business and made it easier for people to employ workers.

There can be no workers compensation scheme unless there are workers. To make the scheme relevant, the primary objective has to be to give people jobs. That is what this Government has done. Despite the gloom and doom we heard from the member for Cessnock, I remind the House of some of the benefits that flow to workers under the 2012 Act, which the member for Epping pointed out in his contribution. The current scheme, which this bill seeks to amend, was introduced after the Government made some hard decisions. Of course, governments are elected to make tough decisions that are in the best interests of the State. In 2012 the Government increased the amount paid to the vast majority of injured workers and the protections afforded to them.

In October 2012 the single statutory rate payable to injured workers who had received 26 weeks of payments was \$439.50 per week. The 2012 reforms introduced a new deemed weekly benefit of \$736.72 per week for injured workers. That is a substantial increase in the benefits paid to injured workers—it went from \$439.50 per week to \$736.72 per week. Today the figures are even higher than they were in 2012—they are now \$828.72 per week, an increase of more than 60 per cent. Today injured workers are entitled to receive up to 95 per cent of their pre-injury average weekly earnings and 80 per cent after 2½ years, which is more than the weekly payments they would have received under the old Labor scheme, which was broken and unsustainable.

The reforms introduced by the Government in 2015 provide and reinforce protections for those who are most in need, including the provision of minimum benefits for injured workers with the highest needs. This provides protection for young and low-paid workers who are tragically injured in the workplace, resulting in a permanent impairment of more than 30 per cent. Injured persons are provided with a minimum payment of \$814 per week, regardless of what their pre-injury earnings were. This minimum weekly payment is targeted to provide protection to young workers, apprentices, and even the barista who prepares the Deputy Speaker's morning coffee—those who need it most. In 2015 the Government increased the amount payable to injured workers' families in the event of a tragic death in the workplace from \$524,000 to \$750,000, an increase of almost 40 per cent. The amount is now \$781,900.

In 2015 the Government increased also the amount payable to those who are injured at work and receive a permanent impairment of more than 10 per cent, as assessed by a medial specialist. This increased the amount payable to a worker with an assessed permanent impairment of 20 per cent from \$30,250 to \$50,760, an increase of more than 65 per cent. For injured workers who sustain a more severe injury and are assessed as having a permanent impairment of more than 56 per cent, the impact and increase is even more dramatic. The amount increased from \$146,850 to \$320,540—more than double. When a sustainable and reasonable workers compensation scheme is devised, we are able to target higher payments for the most severely injured workers, as long as we do not waste money within the system and provide inappropriate benefits. The reforms also protected New South Wales workers from the potential job losses associated with the projected 28 per cent increase in workers compensation premiums in 2012.

Without the Government's 2012 changes, there would have been a 28 per cent increase in premiums, which employers would have had to pay. That is the critical thing. So many jobs have been saved and created by ensuring that that impost on employers did not take place. I turn to schedule 1 to the bill to explain why the Government opposes the proposed provisions. I will not necessarily deal with the provisions in order of importance, but in the order in which they appear in the bill. Item [1] of schedule 1 to the bill seeks to omit section 10 (3A), which deals with journey claims. After hearing the contribution of the member for Cessnock, one would have thought that there was no compensation for journey claims. In fact, there is quite extensive compensation for journey claims under the existing Act. At the moment, with regard to section 10 of the Act, a worker is protected under subsection (3) for the following types of journeys:

- (a) the daily or other periodic journeys between the worker's place of abode and place of employment,
- (b) the daily or other periodic journeys between the worker's place of abode, or place of employment, and any educational institution which the worker is required by the terms of the worker's employment, or is expected by the worker's employer, to attend,
- (c) a journey between the worker's place of abode or place of employment and any other place, where the journey is made for the purpose of obtaining a medical certificate or receiving medical, surgical or hospital advice, attention or treatment or of receiving payment of compensation in connection with any injury for which the worker is entitled to receive compensation,
- (d) a journey between the worker's place of abode or place of employment and any other place, where the journey is made for the purpose of having, undergoing or obtaining any consultation, examination or prescription referred to in section 74 (3),
- (e) a journey between any camp or place:
 - (i) where the worker is required by the terms of the worker's employment, or is expected by the worker's employer, to reside temporarily, or
 - (ii) where it is reasonably necessary or convenient that the worker reside temporarily for any purpose of the worker's employment, and the worker's place of abode when not so residing,
- (f) a journey between the worker's place of abode and the place of pick-up referred to in clause 14 of schedule 1 to the 1998 Act,
- (g) a journey between the worker's place of abode and place of employment, where the journey is made for the purpose of receiving payment of any wages or other money:
 - (i) due to the worker under the terms of his or her employment, and
 - (ii) which, pursuant to the terms of his or her employment or any agreement or arrangement between the worker and his or her employer, are available or are reasonably expected by the worker to be available for collection by the worker at the place of employment.

The current provisions with regard to journey claims are extensive. What does the member for Cessnock want to take out of the current Act? He wants to take out subsection (3A):

A journey referred to in subsection (3) to or from the worker's place of abode is a journey to which this section applies only if there is a real and substantial connection between the employment and the accident or incident out of which the personal injury arose.

In other words, if the worker goes off on a frolic and there is no real connection between the journey and the employment that is protected for the worker then the worker is not able to make a claim. Does the member for Cessnock think that this provision is unreasonable? The bill before us today would potentially add costs to the workers compensation scheme for journeys that have no relationship or substantial connection between workers and their employment. It is the imposition of these sorts of unreasonable claims that made the workers compensation scheme unsustainable in 2012. I would suggest that it is hard to justify the deletion of section 10 (3A), which is sought in item [1] of schedule 1 to this bill. It is a fair requirement for any journey claim against the workers compensation scheme that the journey has a real and substantial connection between the worker's employment and the accident or incident out of which the personal injury arose. This legislation is a good example of why the Labor Opposition is not ready for government.

I spoke about jobs going interstate and an example of why that is occurring is that the Victorian Labor Government does not have workers compensation legislation that allows journey claims. The Western Australian and the South Australian Labor governments do not have workers compensation legislation that allow journey claims. Tasmania and the Northern Territory do not allow journey claims, but with some exceptions. The New South Wales law is currently the most generous of comparative legislation in other jurisdictions. The New South Wales scheme provides protections for this sort of claim, while most workers compensation schemes in the country do not. However, the member for Cessnock has said that the New South Wales scheme is not generous enough.

I remind members that a responsible government must try to balance the budget in making these sorts of decisions. It is important to note that if a claim is made for a journey in a motor vehicle on a public road, but that journey falls foul of section 10 (3A), there is still the possibility of the driver making a motor vehicle insurance claim. This means that an injured worker would have the possibility of making a claim under a different scheme, and therefore there is no need to lump the workers' compensation scheme with costs that are covered by other insurers. If that were the case, the cost would be shifted onto employers when that cost is already covered by another scheme. This is an entirely unreasonable provision. Item [2] of schedule 1 to the bill seeks to change section 32A of the existing Act to change the definition of "suitable employment". The current Act states:

... **suitable employment**, in relation to a worker, means employment in work for which the worker is currently suited:

- (a) having regard to:
 - (i) the nature of the worker's incapacity and the details provided in medical information including, but not limited to, any certificate of capacity supplied by the worker (under section 44B), and
 - (ii) the worker's age, education, skills and work experience, and
 - (iii) any plan or document prepared as part of the return to work planning process, including an injury management plan under Chapter 3 of the 1998 Act, and
 - (iv) any occupational rehabilitation services that are being, or have been, provided to or for the worker, and
 - (v) such other matters as the Workers Compensation Guidelines may specify, and
- (b) regardless of—

which means it is looking at the capacity—

- (i) whether the work or the employment is available, and
- (ii) whether the work or the employment is of a type or nature that is generally available in the employment market, and
- (iii) the nature of the worker's pre-injury employment, and
- (iv) the worker's place of residence. This change seeks to remove the proviso and, by the introduction of what is proposed in new items [2] (e) to (h) in schedule 1 to the bill, to turn a workers compensation scheme into an unemployment scheme. Again, this involves a shifting of cost from one system that is designed to look after unemployed workers—that is, our unemployment system—to the employers who have to pay premiums for the workers compensation scheme. It is another huge impost on business, which is unnecessary. In those two respects, and in the other respects identified by the member for Epping concerning items [3], [4] and [5] of schedule 1 to the bill, it is entirely clear that the bill should not stand.

The provisions and the workers compensation reforms that were introduced by this Government in 2012 and 2015 provide an appropriate balance between protecting injured workers and the need for a sustainable workers compensation scheme. This bill will put at risk the viability of the current scheme. To take one example, the change proposed in item [3] of schedule 1 to the bill would cost approximately \$5 billion, as the member for Epping pointed out. That would alone bankrupt the system. This bill should not be passed. It cannot be passed, and no responsible Opposition would propose a bill of this kind.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (11:32): I contribute to debate on the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017, introduced by my colleague the shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property, and member for Cessnock, who made it clear in his contribution to the second reading debate why this bill has to be introduced when he said, "Because it is the right thing to do." And he is dead right. It is the right bill, and it will right the wrongs introduced by this Government in its 2012 legislation, which has made injured workers across New South Wales worse off.

This bill seeks to remove restrictions on the entitlement of a worker to make a journey claim for any injury sustained on a journey between the worker's home and their place of employment. It removes restrictions on what constitutes suitable employment for the purposes of the worker's entitlement to weekly compensation by way of income support. It removes the five-year cut off period for weekly payments to compensation to injured workers. It removes a provision that limits the payment of an injured worker's expenses for medical, hospital and

rehabilitation treatment, and services provided within 12 months after a claim for compensation has been made, or within 12 months after weekly payments cease.

Finally, the bill makes it an offence for an employer to dismiss at any time an injured worker because the worker is not fit for employment as a result of the injury. If this bill is supported by this House, it will restore a sense of fairness to the workers compensation system in New South Wales, in particular to those workers who have been injured during the course of their employment. The current workers compensation system introduced by the Government treats injured workers unfairly and must change. The member for Cessnock said:

Restoring fairness and equity to workers compensation would require a complete overhaul. The 2012 reforms changed the scheme from one that looked after all injured workers to one that looked after some injured workers for some of the time.

Workers compensation was a social contract that linked the worker, the employer and the State. Its principle of the duty of care is the foundation of civil society. Workers compensation has long been an important commitment by the Labor Party. In 1910 Labor Premier James McGowen introduced the first no fault workers compensation scheme in this place. The idea to protect workers from injury and to help those who were injured has been part of our platform since 1892. It has been there because it should be there. It has been there because workplace injuries are not an inconvenience: They have real and lasting detrimental effects on workers' lives and the lives of their families.

Since it was first introduced, the workers compensation scheme has undergone a number of changes by both major political parties. Some of the most significant changes to the scheme have taken place over the past three decades. Consequently, the social contract between the worker, the employer and the State in the workers compensation scheme has also changed over that period. Although the parliamentary library has published a series of briefings on the changes to workers compensation over the years, I recommend that members read the article published by Michael Peters entitled, "The impact of changes to New South Wales workers compensation law: A betrayal of the compensation bargain?" in the 2014 *Tort Law Review* journal, which provides a terrific overview of the many legislative changes to the scheme. The article gives a scathing assessment of the changes the Government introduced to the workers compensation scheme in 2012, which the member for Cessnock commented on during his contribution to the second reading debate. Mr Peters' conclusions at length, which are worth noting in *Hansard* as part of this debate, state:

The state guaranteed that injured workers would not slip through the safety net. Since 2012 the opposite has occurred. Injured workers are increasingly seen as a financial burden to be managed out of the system at the least possible cost to the system.

The return to work provisions in the new legislation is designed to declare injured workers able to do any task. In 1910 care of the injured was the overriding objective and was a reaction to inequitable treatment of the injured and weak. The social contract now has new rules, which the New South Wales Court of Appeal appears not to agree with, as it relates to retrospective nature of the law.

The contract is now about managing the work injury experience, setting exceptions, and reducing access to compensation.

I strongly support the objects of the bill introduced by the member for Cessnock, particularly removing the current provision that stops payments to injured workers after a five-year period. This is wrong and has simply moved injured workers to Centrelink to deal with. This provision has caused untold concern and unnecessary anxiety to injured workers and their families. At Christmas those families were left with no income, except for Centrelink payments, if they were eligible. This bill makes a sensible and compassionate attempt to amend the current law and to make it fairer for injured workers.

The Government should adopt these provisions instead of opposing them. I have the privilege and honour of representing a region historically based in heavy manufacturing. Many Illawarra workers have been injured, maimed and, tragically, killed in the course of earning an income for their families. I still believe in the social bargain of protecting workers from injury, holding employers accountable for workers' safety and the Government providing no-fault compensation to those workers who have been injured. I hope this bill will be supported. Sadly, it does not look as though it will be. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:38): I acknowledge the member for Cessnock for introducing his private members' bill, the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017. This Government is committed to supporting and protecting injured workers and at the same time ensuring that the workers compensation system is sustainable and affordable for the employers of New South Wales. However, this bill is not about the protection of workers, because workers cannot be protected by an insurance system that is financially unsustainable. Meaningful and genuine protection for the injured workers of New South Wales can be achieved only by a system that is sustainable and focused on return to work, and that provides extra support where it is needed most.

In 2012 this Government increased the amount paid to the vast majority of injured workers and increased the protection provided to them. In October 2012 the single statutory rate payable to injured workers who had

received 26 weeks of payments was \$439.50 per week. The 2012 reforms increased this amount to \$736.72. Today these figures are \$494.30 and \$828.72—an increase of more than 60 per cent. If the old scheme were still in place, an injured worker would be expected to survive on \$494.30 per week. How could an injured worker survive on that amount, when a quick search of property data tells us that the medium weekly rental in Blacktown, for instance, is \$430 per week, in Penrith it is \$420 per week and even in Cessnock it is \$300 per week. These are not North Shore suburbs; they are just normal Sydney and regional suburbs. How is an injured worker under the old scheme expected to survive, when the difference between their weekly benefits of compensation and the medium weekly rent is less than \$65 per week? This Government increased the weekly benefits for injured workers in—

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (11:40): I move:

That the question be now put.

The House divided.

Ayes32
Noes42
Majority.....10

AYES

Atalla, Mr E	Barr, Mr C	Car, Ms P
Catley, Ms Y	Chanthivong, Mr A	Crakanthorp, Mr T
Daley, Mr M	Dib, Mr J	Donato, Mr P
Doyle, Ms T	Finn, Ms J	Greenwich, Mr A
Harrison, Ms J	Hoening, Mr R	Hornery, Ms S
Kamper, Mr S	Leong, Ms J	Lynch, Mr P
McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Mihailuk, Ms T	Minns, Mr C	Park, Mr R
Piper, Mr G	Scully, Mr P	Smith, Ms T F
Tesch, Ms L	Warren, Mr G	Washington, Ms K
Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G	

NOES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K
Constance, Mr A	Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A
Davies, Mrs T	Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D
Evans, Mr A	Evans, Mr L	Fraser, Mr A
George, Mr T	Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T
Griffin, Mr J	Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B
Henskens, Mr A	Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M
Lee, Dr G	Marshall, Mr A	Notley-Smith, Mr B
O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Mrs M
Petinos, Ms E	Roberts, Mr A	Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M
Toole, Mr P	Tudehope, Mr D	Upton, Ms G
Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R	Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Aitchison, Ms J	Williams, Mrs L
Cotsis, Ms S	Berejikian, Ms G
Foley, Mr L	Gibbons, Ms M
Harris, Mr D	Kean, Mr M
Haylen, Ms J	Barilaro, Mr J
Lalich, Mr N	Rowell, Mr J

Motion negatived.

Business interrupted.

*Motions***PARRAMASALA**

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (11:47): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that Parramasala, which commences on Friday 9 March 2018 in Parramatta, is one of the largest multicultural arts and cultural festivals in Western Sydney.
- (2) Recognises that Parramasala has become a wonderful homegrown festival reflecting the diverse multicultural community of New South Wales and is estimated to inject more than \$2 million into the local economy.
- (3) Notes the Government recently announced an additional \$600,000 over three years to support the festival, bringing the Government's overall support to \$2.2 million. It is with great excitement that I stand in this House to commend this motion. Parramasala is a very exciting and wonderful event, not just for Parramatta and Western Sydney, but for the whole of our multicultural community. I am very excited. The Parramasala festivities will commence tomorrow night, Friday 9 March, with an explosion of colour, movement and sound. It is a great festival. There will be dancing in the streets, and not only figuratively or metaphorically. There will be a street parade involving almost 800 participants displaying great community talent and representing the more than 40 nationalities that call Western Sydney home. While other people talk about multiculturalism and its importance, we live it every day in Parramatta. Between 9 March and 11 March, we will enjoy a three-day program celebrating harmony in our community. It is a festival like no other. Under the chairmanship of Dr Harry Harinath, OAM, the festival has expanded from its foundation in the Indian and South Asian cultures to embrace our wonderful diversity. The partnership between Multicultural NSW and the City of Parramatta Council is an example of the excellent relationship this Government has with local councils.

It would be remiss of me to not acknowledge the fabulous work done by Minister Ray Williams and the support he has given to the festival. I also acknowledge the funding and support provided by the previous Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon. John Ajaka. I recognise the great work done behind the scenes by the City of Parramatta Council, which helps to make Parramasala and other events a great success. I congratulate Rebecca Grasso, Director City Identity, Experience and Engagement; Parramasala board members; and Christopher Snelling, Manager, City Activation Marketing and City Identity, and operational contact, on their efforts. Without the wonderful leadership offered by the City of Parramatta Council the festival would not have grown to include some 35,000 participants. Parramasala is a fantastic community event that is enjoyed by people from multicultural communities across Western Sydney. I acknowledge Frank Chou, OAM, Chairman of the Australian Chinese Teo Chew Association, which will lead the lion dance. This is the Year of the Dog, during which we focus on loyalty and courage. I also acknowledge Santa Lim, who will lead the lion dance and who always demonstrates great enthusiasm.

Representatives of the amazing Indo-Aust. Bal Bharathi Vidyalaya-Hindi School Inc. will also participate in the festival parade. Mrs Mala Mehta, the school coordinator, is known for her exceptional leadership of community language schools at venues such as Parramatta North Public School. Mala has devoted herself to helping children who want to learn a language. Hindi is an important language and I commend it to any child wanting to learn a second language. The school's mission is to promote the learning of Hindi and knowledge of Indian culture. It preserves the language and culture of Hindi-speaking Australians to encourage self-confidence and to promote a respect for Australia's multicultural heritage.

Another local group, 2OR Australia Oriental Radio, will also participate in the festivities and the parade. Richard Lu, Chairman of 2OR, is devoted to the Australian-Chinese community and bridges the gap between the two communities through his media outlets. As we know, the relationship between Australia and China is particularly important. I also acknowledge the valuable and significant contribution of the Nan Tien Temple and Buddha's Light International Australia. Venerable Abbess Man Ko and the Reverend Sisters do a wonderful job, not only in Parramatta but also in Chatswood and Berkeley near Wollongong. They study Fo Guang Shan and make an important contribution to the community. Francis Wong, President of Buddha's Light International Australia, does a wonderful job year after year. I commend the Parramasala festival and this motion to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:55): We had an interesting debate yesterday about which motion would be debated today. The member for Parramatta is a nice guy, and he proved that by inviting me to Parramasala. I said that I would love to attend, but unfortunately he said that I would have to hang out with him for a few hours. I put on the record that he was considerate enough to invite me, and I appreciate that.

Dr Geoff Lee: Come to Parramatta and then go home later.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I would do that if I could find my way back to the M4, but that is another story. Our commemoration of Multicultural March involves festivals and many other celebrations. We have just celebrated Luna New Year and we have many different harmony events to come. I acknowledge Kristina Keneally and former Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship John Hatzistergos, who saw Parramasala as not only a great festival but also a fabulous opportunity to celebrate our multicultural communities. Members know that I am

passionate about our multicultural Australia. More than 50 per cent of people in New South Wales have parents who were born overseas. It is great that we have so many people in this State who can speak a second language. That is an enormous strength of this nation, particularly from an economic point of view given the need to participate in trade negotiations. There is no other place in the world that has the cultural diversity that we have established in this country, and it is unfortunate that that is not celebrated.

The Parramasala festival will have markets, music, and dance. Some events are free and some require a ticket. There will be a welcome parade and the Dreamgirls of Bollywood will dance. I know some members try to join in the dancing, but some are better at it than others. I have not seen the member for Epping dancing, but I have heard that he tries. The Shahrouk sisters, who will participate in the festival, recently won the *Family Food Fight*. I know that the member for Granville will be at the festival representing the Labor Party; she always attends and she probably will get the chance to wear one of her 15 saris.

The Parramasala festival attracts 35,000 people to Western Sydney and it highlights our Australian identity. It is great that we have a country in which people can celebrate their cultural heritage and identity. When I speak to young people from a non-English background, I tell them that they should not come to Australia and leave their cultural heritage at the door. The diversity of our culture strengthens us as a nation. Immigrants bring with them their history, heritage and traditions, and our cultures are not mutually exclusive.

Modern, multicultural Australia takes elements of everywhere—it is the best of all worlds brought together. I get upset when anyone tries to take a crack at that, because it is one of the great strengths of this country. We have moved a long way from the idea of multiculturalism being just about food, which is a simplistic approach. We now have different approaches. There are more intercultural and interfaith based activities and other things that show greater understanding of one another such as marriages and business opportunities. We see it in Parliament. It is great that it is a reflection of the generations of migration.

Perhaps as Australians we do not know how to celebrate our good stuff. We often knock our good stuff. We do not want to say we are doing really well, but we are doing really well. Other countries have nothing like us and we take it for granted. Every member in this place attends events at which we talk about cultural diversity and the things that bring people together. The member for Parramatta spoke about language schools. They play an important role. We want Saturday language schools and community language schools to be introduced as part of our policy to ensure we have second languages in schools. I visit a lot of these schools. It is evident that it is not only about the language but also keeping traditions and heritage, creating connections and reminding people of their cultural heritage in an Australian context. That is so important.

Parramasala is one of the big festivals. The Lunar New Year took place recently; it is the Year of the Dog. For Parramasala they are probably hoping it is the "Year of the Eel"—but not this time. I am hoping it is the "Year of the Dragons", but I think it will be the "Year of the Dogs". Other festivals celebrating multiculturalism are the Eid festival, Buddha's Birthday festival, the Greek Festival of Sydney—that is currently taking place—Holi and the Thai festivals. It is good to see the Government is funding festivals to celebrate multiculturalism.

While I have the call I ask the Government to help fund the Haldon Street Festival in Lakemba or the Ramadan festival, which is a fantastic street parade. I invite everybody to attend, as I did last year. It is not about scoring a political point today; it is about saying that a bit of financial assistance would be a great help. Members talk about and celebrate multiculturalism. We all go to events and talk it up, but we need to be sincere when we do that and fight any resistance to multiculturalism. People who have a negative approach to multiculturalism will try to drive wedges between our communities and divide us. They will create issues that do not exist. If we allow that to continue then we risk losing this great, modern, multicultural Australia. That is why I have real difficulties with parties such as One Nation. We need to continue to stand for multiculturalism because that is Australia's great strength. I commend the member for Parramatta for moving the motion.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:02): It is an honour to speak to the motion of the member for Parramatta. I acknowledge the majority of comments of the member for Lakemba. He certainly brings a lot of experience to this Chamber. He is a man of character who is very passionate about issues such as these. Speaking of character, the member for Parramatta is an excellent Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Western Sydney and Multiculturalism. I commend his motion. The New South Wales Government is promoting social cohesion and community harmony by boosting funding for grants to help bring the community together and to celebrate our cultural diversity.

As the member for Parramatta said, Parramasala is an energetic, vibrant and colourful celebration of our diverse customs, traditions and many of our past histories combined. Each year more than 35,000 people are attracted to the festival in the geographic heart of multicultural New South Wales. The heart of Sydney, of course, is Parramatta in Western Sydney—and I acknowledge the member for Riverstone and the member for Epping

who are in the Chamber. We live in one of the most diverse cities in the world, with residents from 307 backgrounds, speaking 215 languages and following 146 religions.

Parramasala is an event that celebrates our wonderful diversity and encourages community harmony. It showcases the immense success story of Western Sydney and its extraordinary multicultural identity. This year the theme is Many Cultures, One Sydney. This will bring the best of local and international acts to perform, with a huge array of free events. Our cultural diversity is one of the greatest assets of this great State. Every day it delivers social, economic and cultural benefits for us all. Nowhere is this more evident than in Parramatta and at Parramasala.

Some of the highlights of this year's three days of events—many of them free—include Classic Flow, a chance to practise yoga to classical music on the Parramasala main stage on Saturday at noon. Also included in this year's festival are live interpretations of music from the golden era of the Arab world. One of the highlights is a dance performance by mature artists called "Agile Not Fragile", by Linda Luke and Martin Fox, facilitated by Diane Busuttill of FORM Dance Projects—agile not fragile, is probably an apt description of the members for Seven Hills, Epping, Riverstone and Parramatta. The same team will provide performances by dancers with disabilities, showing us that everyone is capable of beauty and grace.

Reggae and soul band King Tide are appearing for free. At Riverside Theatre, there will be a Western Sydney dance competition, dance and music, and flamenco performances. The New South Wales Government is investing in high-quality international and domestic events that reflect Parramatta's status as a leader in the State's economic and cultural boom. Parramasala highlights the Government's commitment to our State's growth, not only in economic terms but also through community projects that bring us together and enrich us all. With the support of this Government and the City of Parramatta council, the festival is expanding its offerings to celebrate our amazing cultural diversity. I suggest everyone attend and enjoy a great festival in the great city of Parramatta.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:06): It gives me great pleasure to support this motion. Parramasala is a fantastic festival that has been running for a number of years. It was started by the Keneally Government in conjunction with Parramatta council. When I was a councillor on Parramatta council I was involved in putting together Parramasala. It started to coincide with Diwali purely as a festival celebrating the arts and culture of the entire Indian subcontinent but it has evolved over many years and is a much broader multicultural festival.

In some ways we have lost a lot, but Parramasala has become a great celebration. I wish we could have both as two separate festivals. The Indian subcontinent has 26 languages, many different cultures, and 5,000 years of history and cultural traditions, which is enough to support a three-day festival. Parramatta is the multicultural heart of Sydney, which should be celebrated. Parramasala is a fantastic celebration. Some people criticised the earlier Parramasala festivals because of concerns that they were exclusively focused on the Indian community. I disagreed with those people. Other criticisms were that it needed to have more of a community focus. The parade or street walk at the start is absolutely fantastic and responds to those criticisms.

The community has been incredibly enthusiastic in coming forward with different cultural performances to create that street parade. It is a beautiful, fantastic, colourful event that includes linedancers, bhangra dancers, garba dancers and belly dancers going all they way down Church Street. It is very special and a great way to open the festival. There are some exciting performances over the weekend. There are still probably more performances from the Indian subcontinent than anywhere else, but that is important for a place like Parramatta. Even though this is no longer an Indian festival, the community fills Parramatta with Indian festivals throughout the year. We celebrate Pongol, Holi, Diwali and Independence Day in Parramatta. They are huge celebrations led by the community.

Dr Geoff Lee: And Republic Day?

Ms JULIA FINN: Republic Day coincides with Australia Day, so there are smaller celebrations for Republic Day, but they are still good. It is great to be able to celebrate India and Australia on the same day. I am disappointed that I cannot attend on Saturday night to see the performance of Tinawiren from Mali. I love the blues music of Mali. I have been to Mali and I have seen a lot of performers from Mali over many years. I wish Tinawiren were performing twice so that I could see them. There are fantastic performances all weekend, and I am sure that they will be enjoyed by everyone. I will be wearing a sari on Sunday for the Hindu Council of Australia's International Women's Day event, which happens to coincide with Parramasala in Prince Alfred Park on Sunday. I am looking forward to that event but I am also looking forward to seeing everybody there for the parade tomorrow night.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:10): I support the motion of the member for Parramatta. I acknowledge the contribution made by the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services in promoting this festival and making funding available to ensure that it is one of the pre-eminent events in the

cultural calendar for Sydney. I can demonstrate the multicultural community in which we live by telling the House that last week I attended the Lunar New Year function in Eastwood, which was attended by many thousands of people. The following day I was at a Holi festival at Fagan Park in Galston. It was as if there were a seamless celebration. I refer to the Lunar New Year celebrations in Eastwood because every year we have a cooking competition. That cooking competition is usually won by a notable celebrity within the community.

This year, to our undying shame, that competition was won by the member for Parramatta. I place on record that next year we are going to Parramatta in force to win back the trophy he has taken from us. It is almost as if he snuck in under the cover of night and grabbed the trophy. We are waiting for the next opportunity to win it back. Parramasala is a fantastic event because now it celebrates multicultural New South Wales. In the past 40 years 1.35 million people have come from overseas to call Australia home, and we celebrate that. When overseas visitors stay with us and experience the sights of Sydney, they always comment upon the apparent multicultural nature of the city. If we walk down a street in any part of Sydney we will find a diversity of nationalities which, day after day, we take for granted. Parramasala gives us an opportunity to celebrate it. The member for Parramatta made one very important point.

Dr Geoff Lee: Only one?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: More than one perhaps, but there is one important point which I will acknowledge. He mentioned language schools and the role that they play in our communities. I join him in acknowledging the work that Mala Mehta does with the Hindi school. There is a need for more such schools. Last year the New South Wales Government, in conjunction with the University of Sydney, allocated \$10.9 million to develop those schools. That acknowledges the importance of community languages in this State. No other Government in Australia recognises that. Caroline Xu Yi runs the Mandarin language school in my electorate. Her role is important. I recommend that people attend this festival. I will be there. I am looking forward to it. I commend the motion.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:14): Western Sydney is an incredibly diverse place. The Parramatta we see now would have been unrecognisable to people from a couple of generations ago. It has become an incredible hub of vibrant diversity with people from all sorts of backgrounds living harmoniously, productively and industriously together in a way that was probably unthinkable in the times of our grandparents. It is a sign of how Australia and New South Wales has changed. We can celebrate that change, as Australia is one of the most successful countries in the world in bringing together people from a range of cultures, languages, nationalities and backgrounds to live peacefully in one homeland. Western Sydney is home to an incredible range of these cultures and their artists, many of whom will be taking part this weekend in the three-day Parramasala 2018 Festival. People from more than 40 cultures will be taking part in a ground-breaking explosion of culture, sound, colour and cuisine. We heard something about the cooking expertise of the member for Parramatta. That shocked us all.

Since 2010, the festival has been an annual exploration of the diversity of cultures that make up modern Western Sydney. This Government recognises that Western Sydney is a cultural powerhouse, with Create NSW offering \$400,000 to fund creative hubs to foster new rehearsal spaces, studios and innovative projects across the region. Parramasala is an example of the State Government's commitment to support and develop creative talents in the arts and cultural sector. Premier Berejiklian launched the Western Sydney City Deal last weekend. It is a multibillion dollar growth plan to transform Western Sydney infrastructure. This innovative partnership with local councils will take an integrated approach to develop infrastructure and livability for residents. Councils will be able to work on community facilities such as parks, playgrounds, sporting facilities and libraries.

The New South Wales Government is committed to housing initiatives that emphasise better connections between where people live, work and play. This whole approach to the development of Western Sydney is to ensure that these places are not only housing estates or places of work but real communities, where people can live and feel that they belong. The Western Sydney City Deal is a partnership between the Federal Government and the State Government, as well as eight local governments. Our State Government shares an excellent working relationship with these councils, which is highlighted by the Parramasala partnership between Multicultural NSW and City of Parramatta council. Under Chair Dr Hari Harinath, OAM, the festival has expanded to embrace our wonderful cultural diversity, with more than 800 performers over the three-day festival.

The Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Councillor Andrew Wilson, welcomes the festival as one that mirrors the incredible variety of people who make their home in the city. Performers are from Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia and Latin America, which ensures that there is something for everyone. There are performances from Grammy winners, in the form of Tuareg musicians from the Sahara Desert, Tinariwen, and Australia's own Grammy nominees, the soul jazz quartet Hiatus Kaiyote. Dance aficionados will be able to enjoy a World Dance Congress, where the world's best dancers will take to the stage and showcase styles ranging from flamenco to salsa, samba and classical Indian dance styles. Market Street will host a street market featuring dancers, rhythms and cuisines of the world in one great celebration. Parramasala will be a great festival celebrating the culture,

lifestyles, heritage and history of so many different peoples who call Australia home and live in harmony. It is to be commended.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (12:18): In reply: I acknowledge the valuable contributions to this debate made by the member for Lakemba, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Granville, the member for Epping and the member for Riverstone to recognise the importance of Parramasala—an iconic event celebrating multiculturalism and many faiths that will be held in Parramatta this weekend. It is wonderful when all members agree on the valuable contribution that Parramasala makes to our communities by recognising multicultural groups and what they add to the vibrancy, harmony and diversity of our society. Our multicultural society makes Australia an exemplar to the world of integrating people from all round the world. Multiculturalism is and will continue to be an important building block of Australian society.

The member for Lakemba quite rightly recognised that the event was initiated by Labor approximately eight years ago. It is an initiative that both sides of politics support and I am pleased to acknowledge that it was originally a Labor initiative. I am very proud that a former Minister for Multiculturalism obtained funding of the event for four years and that the current Minister for Multiculturalism has secured three years of funding—another \$600,000. Annual funding is important to ensuring the continuation of the festival. The member for Seven Hills provided some great statistics—146 religions are practised in Australia by people from 307 areas who speak a variety of languages. Parramasala is a great way to showcase how people from many cultures live in one place, Sydney. That is evident in Parramatta.

The members for Seven Hills, Epping and Riverstone are looking forward to the yoga session on stage on Saturday at noon. They are particularly excited about donning their short shorts for that session, which I am sure will be dazzling. We all look forward to it. I acknowledge the valuable contribution made to this debate by the member for Granville. As a former councillor of the City of Parramatta council, she gave strong support to the festival. Without the strong support of the council, none of the event's activities would be possible. I recognise the City of Parramatta Lord Mayor, Andrew Wilson, and all current councillors and staff for partnering with the Government and the community to produce the wonderful Parramasala festival.

The member for Epping spoke eloquently about Parramasala being an extension of events, such as the Chinese New Year and the Holi Mahotsav Festival, that roll seamlessly throughout Parramatta in Western Sydney as well as other areas across the State. I thank him for his commendation for winning a cooking competition, which was quite a surprise to me. I was probably more surprised than anybody else. I commend the member for Riverstone who said we should be proud of Parramasala because it demonstrates the State's commitment to recognising and celebrating the importance of cultural diversity. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I have one question for the member for Parramatta: Exactly what did you cook? I think everyone in the Chamber would be interested to know.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Prawn dumplings.

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

Motion agreed to.

SEAFORTH ARTS FESTIVAL

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:24): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the organisers of the Seaforth Arts Festival, in particular Phillip Young.
- (2) Recognises the effort and talent of the many artists who have contributed their works to the festival.
- (3) Thanks everyone who attended and supported the event to raise funds for the Burdekin Association.

The motion highlights the importance of art in all our communities. The Seaforth Arts Festival is a long-running and highly regarded arts festival that showcases the work of artists from across the northern beaches. The festival not only encourages northern beaches artists to support important organisations, such as the Burdekin Association that supports at-risk youth from across New South Wales, but also brings together a huge section of the local community to support a good cause. The festival commences on a Friday evening when the recipient of the People's Choice Award is selected by those in attendance. The 2017 winner was local Clontarf resident, portrait artist Margo Freimann, with her entry *Maureen*. The subject of the painting is a very popular bank manager of the Commonwealth Bank in Seaforth.

On the first Saturday evening of the festival, there is a gala dinner. At the most recent dinner the keynote speaker was Justene Gordon, who is the chief executive officer of the Burdekin Association. Jean Hay, who is a long-serving and capable former Mayor of Manly, also made a speech. Justene outlined the work done by the

Burdekin Association and how grateful the association is for funds from the arts festival. The Judged Art Prize was awarded by Rachel Carroll from the Manly Art Gallery and Museum to *Jumping Fox*, which was submitted by a 24-year-old Mosman resident, Peter Crawford. The gala dinner featured entertainment beyond artworks that included musical performances by the Chameleons, comprising five university students from the local area, and a performance from students of the Seaforth Public School.

Along with other members of the community of Seaforth and Manly, I am grateful for the energy and effort of the organising committee, in particular my good friend Phillip Young. It takes many hours to organise an event that has become an important addition to the calendar of the Manly community. The longevity of the Seaforth Art Festival is testament to its success and to the special place it holds in our community. Members from both sides of politics often speak on the importance of community in this place. It is incumbent upon us to support and champion community initiatives and events—both big and small—in our electorates. Art speaks every language. It can heal, it can inspire, and it can be both humorous and harsh. I note that recently in Old Parliament House, Canberra, a number of political cartoons, which of course are art, were displayed. I hasten to add that Mr Temporary Speaker was not the focus of a cartoon. They are good fun. As I said, art can be both humorous and harsh.

Having had the opportunity to view all of the artworks at the show last year, I know that not only was the final output of the artists impressive but also were the stories behind each of the portraits and paintings and the reasons the artists chose to paint their subjects. The positive impact of art in our community is well documented, which is why I am a strong advocate of the Seaforth Arts Festival and grateful to those who support it. Direct involvement in the arts builds interpersonal ties and promotes volunteering, which improves health. It increases opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment. Moreover, in circumstances such as the Seaforth Arts Festival, it increases a sense of collective identity and efficacy. When I attended the Friday night opening of the Seaforth Arts Festival I saw not only fantastic arts but also a building of social capital by people volunteering their time, getting involved, connecting with each other and coming together—people who might otherwise not come into contact with each other. In every sense, that is the essence of community.

It will come as no surprise that the Government is committed to supporting the arts—both significant institutions such as the Art Gallery of NSW with its recently approved \$244 million expansion, and local festivals. The Art Gallery extension will be known as the Sydney Modern, and will double the gallery's exhibition space, thereby enabling the gallery to display more Indigenous art and expand educational programs. It is expected that that major investment and project will be completed in time for the 150th anniversary of the gallery's founding in 1871 and the 100th anniversary of the Archibald Prize. Turning from one end of the spectrum to the other, I am pleased to report that I recently announced funding for several local artists. A significant grant by Minister Harwin was made to a group called Live Ideas, who perform immersive theatre. This is a tangible demonstration of this Government's commitment to grassroots arts initiatives.

I conclude where I began, with the Seaforth Arts Festival. The festival thrives due to the energy and effort of its organising committee and community members such as Mr Phillip Young. It is a festival that not only builds social capital and encourages local artists but also raises funds for the Burdekin Association, which, as I mentioned, looks after at-risk youth from not only the northern beaches and Manly area but also other parts of New South Wales. Art is not elitist; it is for everyone and speaks every language. I commend the Seaforth Arts Festival to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:30): I support the motion moved by the member for Manly on community art festivals. The member for Manly is known for his keen support of his community's culture, lifestyle and charitable organisations that reflect the volunteering spirit of my neighbours on the other side of The Spit. North Sydney and Manly share many facilities, services and waterways and have a similar passion for community arts. A number of the organisations in the North Shore community are involved in community art festivals. Mosman Art Gallery, the Festival of Mosman, the North Sydney Art Prize and a festival currently occurring in North Sydney, the Red Project, are all notable examples of this.

The 2017 Festival of Mosman was a community celebration that marked two significant anniversaries for the Mosman community. It celebrated the theme "Living Mosman", which reflected Mosman's unique community identity and embodied the community's commitment to sustainability and protecting the local environment and waterways. The festival ran during October last year and included a variety of events, which featured Mosman Art Gallery. The festival celebrates the best of Mosman: its beaches, scenery, lookouts, harbour lifestyle—including fine dining and shopping—vibrant arts experiences and easy walking access to national parks and other natural wonders. Highlights of the festival included the seventieth Mosman Art Prize exhibition and the seventy-fifth anniversary of HMAS *Penguin*. The festival included the HMAS *Penguin* freedom of entry parade, which I was happy to participate in. It also included the Mosman Art Prize and festival opening concert, which I was happy to also participate in.

The current exhibition at Mosman Art Gallery, Artists of Mosman: 2088—for those who are not aware, 2088 is Mosman's postcode—celebrates local community artists. I celebrate and commend the efforts and work of Mosman Art Gallery Director John Cheeseman, who curated the work of the local artists. There is an exceptional amount of local artistic talent, including that of people such as Ken Done, Sue Frew, Liz Hardy, Jan Hook, Joanna Kopocinska, Beverley Woollett and Suzanne Alexander.

The North Sydney Art Prize is a major biennial arts event that showcases some of the best contemporary art in Australia with indoor and outdoor immersive works by emerging, mid-career and established artists. Last year, 88 finalists were selected from an astonishing 360 entries, which included a range of mediums, such as sculpture, painting, installation and digital work. The works were exhibited at the iconic coal loader in Waverton, which is one of the historic features of the North Shore community. A number of chambers of the old coal loader on the wharf have been converted into exhibition galleries. This was the first time the nine chambers located next to tunnel one were used to exhibit site-specific and digital works. The chambers and tunnels offer a unique experience for both artists and visitors.

The Red Project is an exhibition currently taking place in North Sydney at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability. The Red Project is an important initiative to speak about on International Women's Day, because it is a series of artistic exhibitions that celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March 2018. The exhibitions are a showcase of work created by emerging and established artists, each of whom have developed works in response to the colour red—a colour associated with the earth, energy, strength, power, action, determination, passion, desire and love. There is a long list of artists participating in the exhibitions, which I encourage people to view.

I congratulate the many artists involved, including: Jessica Birk, Gloria Florez, Kath Fries, Tina Fox, Nathalie Hartog Gautier, Nola Jones, Penelope Lee, Debbie Mackinnon, Michele Morcos, Virginia Moorfield, Ingrid Morley, Anne Numont, Denese Oates, Meri Peach, Mandy Pryse-Jones, Tamsin Salehian, Alma Studholme, Helen Sturgess, Janet Tavener, Jane Theau, Alex Thorby, Ingrid van der Aa, Sandra Winkworth, Basia Zielinska, Sally Blackwell, Tamara Bowman, Carolyn Cooper, Liron Cohen, Jillian Culey, Lissa-Jane de Sailles, Desdemona Foster, Flora Friedmann, Marion Gaemers, Nanette Goodsell, Jan Hay, Jan Hook, Glenese Keavney, Brenda Livermore, Lanny Mackenzie, Karen Murray, Trudi Nisbet, Judy Nolan, Meri Peach, Catriona Pollard, Nicole Robins, Pella Shalvey, Kathy Stewart, Louise Gilchrist, Dinah Beeston, Ang Marynissen, Lydia Fegan, Brenda Livermore, Jill Elias, Claire Brach, Janet Michael, Michelle Day, Rhonda Nelson, Harriet Watts, Mandy Burgess, Syd Pemberton, Bonnie Lipman, Nazanin Marashian, Sepideh Farzam, Farina Salehi, Azadeh Yaghoubi and Negin Chahoud.

This significant cultural exhibition provides a broad view of contemporary visual practice, with an aim of celebrating women's resilience, creativity and ingenuity. I thank North Sydney Council Mayor Jilly Gibson and her supporting councillors and staff for putting on this wonderful event, and I encourage all of the North Shore community to support this fantastic showcase of art. The last element of the motion moved by the member for Manly focuses on how we recognise the community organisations that support the work of homeless young people in our community, such as Taldumande Youth Services. International Women's Day gives me a great opportunity to talk about the North Shore woman of the year, Taldumande Youth Services Chair Virginia Howard.

Taldumande Youth Services works to ensure that people have a roof over their heads when they are escaping crisis, at locations within and outside my electorate. Some people think that, because of different socio-economic statuses, some communities do not face the challenges of violence in the home, drug addiction or dislocation between families. Taldumande Youth Services breaks down that perception and ensures that there is support and nurturing for all young people in the community, regardless of their postcode. Once again, I thank the member for Manly for moving this important motion today.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:37): I thank the member for Manly for moving this motion, which congratulates the organisers of the Seaforth Arts Festival, particularly Phillip Young. There are Seven Wonders of the World; the eighth is the electorate of Oatley and the ninth is the electorate of Manly. I congratulate the member for Manly, an outstanding member of Parliament, for moving this motion, which recognises the effort and talent of the many artists who have contributed their works to the festival. As everyone knows, this festival raises much-needed funds for the Burdekin Association. The annual Seaforth Arts Festival took place over the weekend of 15 to 16 September. It is a wonderful exhibition that features the work of local artists, which people can view or purchase at affordable prices. The funds raised go to the Burdekin Association. I understand that the festival has been going on for quite a while now—

Mr James Griffin: More than a decade.

Mr MARK COURE: For over a decade. It is wonderful to have so many artistic shows and festivals in and around Sydney. We have heard from the member for Manly and the member for North Shore, and my electorate of Oatley also has many festivals. I acknowledge in particular Oatley 101 Society of Artists

Incorporated, which was inaugurated in October 1997 under the name of Gallery 101 Association by six artists with the initial purpose of holding a monthly gallery in which local artists would be invited to exhibit their work. After several gallery weekends and many inquiries from the public, the artists moved to include other activities at the venue such as art classes, monthly workshops, demonstrations and a life drawing room.

In October 1998 Gallery 101 Association became incorporated and opened its membership. By the end of 1999, with more than 90 financial members, the committee sought for the organisation to become a member of the Combined Art Societies of Sydney, a group I also acknowledge. In 2000, Gallery 101 Association officially changed its name to Oatley 101 Society of Artists. I acknowledge the wonderful contribution of President Geraldine Taylor and Vice President Jill Hamilton as well as Robyn Riley, who is the secretary, and Freda Surgenor, who is the treasurer, along with other members of the committee.

Like the Seaforth Arts Festival, Oatley 101 Society raises money for much-needed community groups. Activities organised by such groups and festivals bring together community members, as was said by the member for Manly. The Seaforth Arts Festival happens in the same month each year and raises much-needed funding for many community groups; last year the recipient group was the Burdekin Association. Arts festivals play a huge role in bringing together community members. They are a part of the fabric of their community and they enable local artists, who might otherwise be unable to show their works, to showcase their art. This gives artists a reason to participate in community life. I thank the member for Manly for moving this motion.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:41): In reply: I thank the member for North Shore and the member for Oatley for their contributions to the debate on my motion acknowledging the Seaforth Arts Festival. The member for North Shore spoke about the Mosman Art Gallery and the Red Project, which raises funds to support International Women's Day. I thoroughly enjoyed the International Women's Day breakfast this morning at the International Convention Centre, which was attended by the Premier and the Manly Woman of the Year, Maria-Elena Chidzey. The member for North Shore also spoke about the vibrant arts experiences throughout her electorate including the seventieth anniversary of the arts festival and the North Sydney Art Prize with its 88 finalists from 300 entries. We know how passionate the ever effusive member for Oatley is about his electorate. He spoke about Gallery 101 Association, now known as Oatley 101 Society of Artists, and the fantastic work done by members of this society in raising money for important organisations.

The motion accorded priority today was on Parramasala, a cultural festival that also has a beneficial impact on our community. When we speak about arts festivals and societies, there is a similar theme celebrating arts and culture in all our electorates. We have heard about the role of the arts in bringing together communities. It is obvious that arts festivals give budding artists an opportunity to show their work and display their talent, whilst at the same time the arts community fosters community spirit and promotes volunteering along with increasing opportunity for self-expression and enjoyment. The arts community ultimately builds social capital by bringing together people and getting them involved and connected.

I am proud to be part of a government that is investing in \$200 million in the arts, with the great expansion of the Art Gallery of NSW at one end of the spectrum and being equally supportive of smaller local arts events and festivals such as the Seaforth Arts Festival. These events could not happen without the support of volunteers such as Mr Phillip Young, who has been a stalwart in organising the Seaforth Arts Festival. I also acknowledge the festival committee that makes sure that the festival is such a great success year after year. It is important for us to recognise the value of the arts in our communities. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

FIREARMS AND ORGANISED CRIME SQUAD STAFFING

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:45): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that Freedom of Information documents reveal the State Crime Command's Firearms and Organised Crime Squad had 49 members of staff in December 2010.
- (2) Notes that since taking office in 2011, the Government has cut the State Crime Command Firearms and Organised Crime Squad down to 37 staff.
- (3) Notes there have been 699 shootings since 2011.
- (4) Calls on the Minister for Police to take substantive action and develop a strategy to deal with illegal firearms and gun crime.

Members of the New South Wales Labor Opposition have been calling on those opposite to bolster police numbers throughout the State for quite some time. We have been reminding those opposite, week in and week out, that

they have been doing an abysmal job of looking after our police force. We have been reminding those opposite of their track record when it comes to stripping money away from our State's emergency services. For those opposite who may not know what the Productivity Commission is, it is the Federal Government's principal review and advisory body on micro-economic policy, regulation and the effectiveness of government spending.

In the most recent Productivity Commission report—a damning report—the commission confirmed that the Berejiklian Government spends less on fighting crime than any other State. It also noted that New South Wales has fewer police officers per person than any other State. These facts are clearly stated in black and white: This Government does not give the NSW Police Force the resources the police so rightly need and deserve. We are well aware that the Minister for Police does not believe the finding of the Productivity Commission; however, if he is not willing to hear about the issues highlighted in the Productivity Commission's finding then perhaps he could listen to the Police Association of NSW, which has been calling for more frontline officers, extra troops on the ground, for more than a year.

It may interest members to know that freedom of information documents have revealed that the State Crime Command's firearms squad had 49 personnel in December 2010. Since those opposite took government, the number of personnel was reduced to 37. It is therefore quite clear that they are willing to sacrifice anything in order to save a quick buck. Those of us on this side of the House stand with the Police Association in its calls for more frontline police officers. Since 2011, when those opposite came to power, there have been 736 shootings across New South Wales, 63 of which were fatal. It is clear that those opposite are not actually focused on cracking down on gun crime but only appear to be fighting against it. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has been as effective as a wet mop when it comes to cleaning up gun crime in this State.

The call for additional frontline police officers has been ongoing for quite some time, and yet this Government has done nothing but sit on its hands and play politics with the safety of our community and the future of this State. I note that the Commissioner of Police has been incredibly vocal on the NSW Police Force's need for additional frontline police officers. Those of us on this side of the House agree with the commissioner and stand by his call to bolster frontline officer strength. One would have to be raving mad not to stand up and say that we want to bolster the front line and have more police on the ground. The Police Association of NSW has echoed the calls for additional officers, emphasising that the NSW Police Force needs at least 500 extra police officers a year for the next five years. That is what it is calling for just to keep up with the State's expanding population. Despite the grandiose claims by the Premier and the Minister for Police that they have done a magnificent job at bolstering police numbers since coming into office, it is evident that they omit the details concerning the turnover of police numbers and the state of natural attrition within the force.

I will listen intently to the two Government members present in the Chamber—both former police officers—regarding the natural attrition of frontline police officers and what happens to them as a result of the nature of policing. Despite what those opposite want people to believe, our police numbers are not immensely higher than they were seven years ago. Our police officers are overworked and overstretched—as I am sure I will hear today in this debate—and they need the support of this Parliament. It is clear that the NSW Police Force and the people of New South Wales deserve better. The best way to safeguard our community is to adequately staff and resource our police force. That is what we are calling for. It is time for the Minister for Police to take action which is long overdue. I say to Minister Grant: It is time he developed a clear and workable strategy to deal with the illegal firearms and gun crime which is plaguing the streets of New South Wales.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:51): I speak on the motion moved by the member for Fairfield. I say at the outset that the NSW Police Force has no greater supporters than the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and the Minister for Police, Troy Grant. As a former proud serving police officer, I say that what we are hearing from the member for Fairfield is misinformation and scaremongering. The NSW Police Force Firearms Squad has been an integral part of the crime-fighting arsenal of the police for many years under the State Crime Command. As part of the re-engineering of the police force, the Firearms Squad has been amalgamated with the Drug Squad to form the Drug and Firearms Squad under the command of Detective Superintendent Peter McErlain. Despite the claims of the member for Fairfield, there has been no reduction in the number of Firearms Squad investigators. Only the intelligence staff have been grouped together in the Intelligence Directorate to make the most of the joint resources. This will ensure that intelligence on criminals who operate in both worlds can be best utilised to assist investigators.

Those opposite should accept that our police commissioner knows what he is doing when it comes to tackling serious and organised crime. This motion is an attack on his professionalism, experience and knowledge of policing matters. Commissioner Fuller's recent creation of the Drug and Firearms Squad has only increased its strength, enhancing the squad's investigative capacity and capability. The squad has a complement of 87 officers. The entire squad investigates firearm and drug offences. There is no defined team that operates exclusively on one commodity, be it firearms or prohibited drugs. All teams operate under the charter which has incorporated

that of the old Firearms Squad. The Drug and Firearms Squad leads investigations into high-level and organised criminal networks involved with the supply, distribution and manufacture of illicit drugs, illegal firearms and military-style weapons, including explosives and ammunition, as well as clandestine laboratory response, chemical diversion and rural surveillance. The squad works with and supports police area commands and districts in the identification and eradication of illegal drugs and firearms. It also facilitates training to the NSW Police Force in the area of drug and firearms investigations.

Unlike those opposite, who criticise the NSW Police Force and its commissioner without knowing the facts, we know there is considerable overlap between the criminals responsible for organised crime, illegal drug importation and manufacture, illegal firearms possession, manufacture, distribution and use, and now we have a single squad to cover the full range of these activities. The Government has given Commissioner Fuller the brief to use his resources wisely and, like others in this place, I applaud his efforts to do so. Linking the criminal aspects of serious crime investigations relating to firearms and drugs ensures that all aspects of the NSW Police Force work collaboratively and make the most of in-demand policing resources. Organised criminal groups involved in the importation, manufacture, possession and supply of illegal firearms are seriously mistaken if they think the NSW Police Force has taken its eye off the ball. Australia, and New South Wales in particular, leads the world in having appropriate, scrupulous and effective firearms regulation.

I note that the member for Fairfield has quoted firearms shooting statistics. All firearms shootings, and certainly deaths, are a tragedy—a fact the NSW Police Force is well aware of. With the recent events in the United States of America in our minds, it is important to remember that in the USA it was estimated that there were 33,636 deaths due to injury by firearms in 2013 alone. Even allowing for the population difference, that is an amazing statistic. These statistics are not by chance. All countries that, like Australia, have rigorous firearms controls, such as Sweden and Japan, have significantly fewer deaths from guns and significantly less burden on the health system from firearms injuries. Firearms deaths in Australia remain a rare and noteworthy event, mostly related to organised crime, including infighting between criminal gangs and, most tragically, domestic violence.

Between 2005 and 2014 in New South Wales there were 169 victims of domestic violence-related homicide, 19 of whom were killed with a firearm. Almost 80 per cent of the total domestic violence homicide victims were killed by a current partner. The continued use of a firearm or weapon highlights the need for continual vigilance and for ensuring persons who have a gun in their home have it safely secured without easy, spontaneous access to it and the ammunition. It also means continual use of genuine and legitimate reasons for possessing a firearm and no prior history or criminal record that may make that possession a danger to anyone else. Firearms and weapons generally continue to be a domain where sound regulation, a strong and adaptive police squad and continual vigilance on the new and creative innovations of the criminals are required. The focus of police on responding to illegal firearms crime has been enhanced by the Drug and Firearms Squad, not diminished. As noted before, the entire squad investigates firearm and drug offences. By not operating in silos, investigative resources can be allocated where they are most needed for any investigation. New South Wales strives to keep our law enforcement up to date and responsive.

The men and women of the Drug and Firearms Squad have some of the toughest jobs in the State, which they do magnificently. Those of us on this side of the House believe they should be congratulated, not used for cheap political grandstanding. If members look at what has been achieved since we came to government, they will see that we have increased the penalties for gun offences. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research figures show all serious crime is either on the downward trend or static. Regarding the numbers of police, we have increased the authorised strength. Notwithstanding that police retire and leave the police force, the actual number and strength of the police are increasing. There is a record number of police in the NSW Police Force now, and they are achieving fantastic results in driving down crime in this State. The Government opposes this motion.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:58): I support the motion moved by the member for Fairfield. It is of great concern that the Firearms Squad has been reduced and, as a consequence, the level of focus on firearms crime has been reduced. Overall spending on policing was \$480 million less last year. The overall number of police might have grown a little but it is not keeping pace with population growth. New South Wales has fewer police per 100,000 people than the other States. I support the motion moved by the member for Fairfield and I also support the calls by the Police Association and by Commissioner Fuller for more frontline police and additional resources. Opposition members support the Commissioner of Police and are not undermining him as has been suggested by the member for Myall Lakes. Since the Liberal-Nationals Government came to power there have been 736 shootings, 63 of which have been fatal—several shootings occurred in my electorate—but thankfully there has been a reduction in the number of shootings over the past few years.

At one time Merrylands was referred to as "the drive-by shooting capital of Australia"—a title that no suburb wants—and it was frightening for everyone who lived there. I was critical of my predecessor Tony Issa when he said to the media that people should not be alarmed because criminals were just shooting criminals.

Innocent victims are always involved. I do not want to see anybody dying as a result of gun crime, even if they are criminals. An Afghan family sought asylum in Australia, moved into their new home and a week after they moved in they were the victims of a drive-by shooting as the perpetrators were not aware that the previous tenants had moved out. What a welcome to Australia and how terrifying it would have been for that family.

Graeme Hunt, a local truck driver in Merrylands, heard an altercation in Lansdowne Street outside his home and went to see what was going on. He asked whether he could help and was caught in the middle of an argument about a stolen mobile phone. At the time no-one believed him, he was shot, the bullet lodged in his spine and he is now a paraplegic. He was awarded compensation, which as we all know was cut by this Government, and he received a maximum payout of \$60,000 which was not enough to modify his home for disabled access. After being shot at his home he was no longer keen on living there. I attended a fundraiser for Graeme at one of Arthur Laundry's pubs, which was organised by Arthur Laundry himself. The entire community and others raised funds for Graeme, which was double the amount he received from his stingy compensation payout. Graeme should never have been shot. We need more frontline police and we need more police in the Firearms and Organised Crime Squad. I support the motion moved by the member for Fairfield.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:02): The Government does not support the motion moved by the member for Fairfield. The member for Granville referred to a number of tragic events in her electorate which highlight the reason governments should enact uniform firearms legislation. Innocent bystanders are often caught up in tragic events such as those referred to by the member for Granville. This Government wants to crack down on drive-by shootings and it has a strong record in taking steps to rid the community of illegal firearms. This Government recognises the tough and tireless work undertaken by the women and men of the NSW Police Force.

The motion moved by the member for Fairfield refers to staffing numbers in certain units in the NSW Police Force. As a former member of the NSW Police Force I am always interested when Opposition members make suggestions about staffing numbers and police operational matters. Members would be aware that the Commissioner of Police has responsibility for operational matters; he looks after the resourcing and staffing of those units. As the member for Myall Lakes said earlier, crime rates have been falling in New South Wales as a result of the great work done by the NSW Police Force. In this fast-paced world in which we live the Commissioner of Police should be provided with enough resources to tackle crime in our community and to adequately staff various units in the NSW Police Force.

We must do everything we can to ensure that we have a robust firearms regulatory framework in New South Wales. In my electorate innocent members of the public, some of whom are children, have been victims of gang-related crime. That is why this Government has in place a robust firearms regulatory framework. I remind members of the strong measures implemented by this Government to reduce the likelihood of illegal guns falling into the hands of organised criminals. This Government took the lead in strengthening arrangements regarding firearms prohibition orders. These orders can be made by the Commissioner of Police against a person who, in his or her opinion, is not fit to possess firearms.

In 2013 this Government strengthened those arrangements by giving the NSW Police Force greater powers to search individuals who were subject to a firearms prohibition order. Since November 2013 more than 3,000 firearms prohibition orders have been approved, with more than 2,600 orders served. These orders are directed at organised crime and organised gangs in our community. I commend the NSW Police Force and the Commissioner of Police for the great work that they are doing.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:06): I support the motion moved by my good friend the member for Fairfield. I thank the member for Fairfield and shadow Minister for Justice and Police for visiting the Wallsend electorate a number of times to take part in community meetings about policing. They were successful meetings because of his commitment to reduce crime in New South Wales and to make people safe. The Labor Party knows that policing is a complicated business. With only so many officers for so many millions of people in New South Wales, allocating resources means making difficult decisions. I have nothing but respect for the NSW Police Force. Police officers have a tough and dangerous job and they serve our communities well.

Wallsend has had more than its fair share of shootings and it does not want anymore. In the past two years, a number of shootings and firearms offences have taken place in Wallsend and across parts of the Hunter. On 28 March 2017, 27 shots were fired into a home in Longworth Avenue, leaving bullet holes the size of a dollar coin. Police determined that the shots had come from an illegal semiautomatic weapon. Thankfully nobody was injured. This occurred after an incident in December 2016 when a brawl between rival groups broke out at a service station on Thomas Street in Wallsend. A gun was produced along with various other weapons but thankfully no shots were fired. Days later, a brawl at the Fire Station Hotel in Wallsend resulted in the local high school being put into lockdown after a gun was produced in the car park which is close to the high school.

Early on the morning of 9 March 2015, shots were fired into a home in Youll Street, Wallsend. Fortunately, no-one was injured but, again, the weapon used was an illegal pistol that was recovered some months later during a roadside stop by police. As a result of repeated freedom of information requests, documents have revealed that the State Crime Command Firearms and Organised Crime Squad has had its staff cut by almost 25 per cent since this Government was elected. That is 25 per cent fewer specialist police officers on the streets, which is putting our community at risk. It also means there is an increase in the number of illegal guns on our streets. It makes no sense that fewer cops are being deployed to the firearms squad when we are trying to deal with the rugged gang crime.

The Minister has said that his Government is committed to ensuring that strict and robust firearms laws are enforced and that illegal firearms are taken off the streets. How does the Minister explain the increase in gun crimes in the Wallsend electorate? I call on the Minister to take the necessary action to deal with illegal firearms and gun crimes. During my 11 years in this place I have given many speeches about policing. Again, I am not criticising the police; in fact, I support the NSW Police Force and its need for more resources so that police officers can do their job well.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:09): I acknowledge the work that the New South Wales Government continues to do to uphold law and order, to minimise the use of illegal firearms, and to reduce organised crime. I thank my colleagues the member for Myall Lakes, who is a lawyer of noted repute, and the member for Seven Hills, who is a former police prosecutor, for their contributions to this debate. They know better than most the problems associated with organised crime and have worked in government to ensure that we bring criminals to justice and minimise the harm caused by the unruly use of firearms on our streets.

This Government has implemented several policies to address this issue, including revamping the Crime Commission and renewing its focus on serious criminal activity and the confiscation of criminal proceeds; modernising consorting laws and restricted premises legislation; breaking up criminal gangs; and closing down clubhouses where illegal activity occurs. It has also reintroduced firearms prohibition orders to keep criminals from owning guns and enhanced criminal group participation and drive-by shooting offences to deter and to punish violent and organised criminals. The Government continues to support the work of Strike Force Raptor. Members will remember the stories in the *Sunday Telegraph* not long ago about the procedures used by the strike force and how it undermines organised crime and gets to the heart of the organisations that peddle drugs, for whom guns are tools of the trade. That is despicable and those groups strike fear into our hearts. I commend this Government's actions and the measures it has taken to minimise those activities.

Sadly, the same cannot be said about the efforts of the Opposition with regard to gun control. A little more than a year ago, members opposite were happy to do a dodgy preference deal with none other than the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. They supported a candidate who represents shooters and who was then elected to Parliament. We have repeatedly seen that dear old Luke "Two-faced" Foley is more than happy to say one thing but do another. In fact, we saw it this week when the Leader of the Opposition said that he did not support stadiums and then that he did. It depends on who he is talking to at the time. Members opposite say they support tight gun controls, but they then do politically expedient shonky preference deals to get someone elected who represents the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. That is stock in trade for Luke "Two-faced" Foley, the Leader of the Opposition. He will say anything to make gains for the Labor Party. The people of New South Wales are smart and they know who stands up for law and order in this State, and it is the Liberal-Nationals Government.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:15): In reply: I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Myall Lakes, thank the member for Granville, acknowledge the contribution of the member for Seven Hills, thank the member for Wallsend, and thank the Minister for Multiculturalism and member for Castle Hill for his contribution. This motion calls on the Minister for Police to take substantive action. As has been said, since this Government came to office in 2011, 736 shootings have occurred. When I gave notice of this motion, that figure was 699.

In my view, the Productivity Commission does not trust this Government's claim about its spending on police services. The commission has revealed that the Government had underspent the Police budget by \$483 million compared to the five years prior to the tabling of its report. The member for Myall Lakes said that this motion represents an attack on the Commissioner of Police. It does not. Cutting \$483 million from the Police budget is making the Commissioner of Police work with one hand because his other hand is tied behind his back. This Government allocates funding and resources to the commissioner, and if that funding is inadequate, there is only so much he can do. The Opposition will stick by the NSW Police Force and support the Commissioner of Police. The Police Association has called for 500 more police officers this year and every year for the next five years. The Government must acknowledge our exponential record population growth and that community safety

must be the first priority. I must put it on the record that community safety must come before stadiums. It is as simple as that.

Shootings in Granville, Wallsend, Fairfield and other electorates in this State are unacceptable. They are happening as a result of criminal activity and the illegal use of firearms. It is as simple as that. I like the Minister for Multiculturalism. He talked about the Labor Party's preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, and it is clear that the Government is still crying about its loss of the electorate of Orange. The Government must realise that our police officers put their lives on the line day in and day out.

When the Productivity Commission reveals that New South Wales has the fewest police officers per person and that this Government spends less on crime fighting than any other government, we know that something is wrong. Members opposite cannot wiggle out of that. This motion deserves to be supported because, contrary to what members opposite said, the Labor Party supports our police officers. As members on this side of the House have said, 736 shootings since 2011 is totally unacceptable. The Government cannot say that that is hunky-dory. The shootings keep happening and the Government must ensure that the Commissioner of Police has adequate funding and resources to tackle this issue.

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

The House divided.

Ayes36

Noes45

Majority.....9

AYES

Atalla, Mr E	Bali, Mr S	Barr, Mr C
Car, Ms P	Catley, Ms Y	Chanthivong, Mr A
Crakanthorp, Mr T	Daley, Mr M	Dib, Mr J
Donato, Mr P	Doyle, Ms T	Finn, Ms J
Foley, Mr L	Greenwich, Mr A	Harris, Mr D
Harrison, Ms J	Hoening, Mr R	Hornery, Ms S
Kamper, Mr S	Leong, Ms J	Lynch, Mr P
McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Mihailuk, Ms T	Minns, Mr C	Park, Mr R
Parker, Mr J	Piper, Mr G	Scully, Mr P
Smith, Ms T F	Tesch, Ms L	Warren, Mr G
Washington, Ms K	Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K
Constance, Mr A	Cooke, Ms S	Coure, Mr M
Davies, Mrs T	Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D
Evans, Mr A	Evans, Mr L	Fraser, Mr A
George, Mr T	Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T
Griffin, Mr J	Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B
Henskens, Mr A	Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M
Lee, Dr G	Marshall, Mr A	Notley-Smith, Mr B
O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Mrs M
Perrottet, Mr D	Petinos, Ms E	Provest, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A	Sidoti, Mr J	Speakman, Mr M
Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M	Toole, Mr P
Tudehope, Mr D	Upton, Ms G	Ward, Mr G
Williams, Mr R	Williams, Mrs L	Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Aitchison, Ms J
Cotsis, Ms S

Berejiklian, Ms G
Gibbons, Ms M

PAIRS

Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N

Maguire, Mr D
Rowell, Mr J

Motion negatived.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:25): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the perfluorinated and polyfluorinated alkyl substances contamination emanating from the RAAF Base Williamtown is now extending far beyond the area known as the red zone.
- (2) Notes that a couple in the suburb of Fullerton Cove have very high levels of these firefighting chemicals in their blood and that a mother has discovered elevated levels in her young child.
- (3) Notes that there are 533 residents in this suburb and urges the NSW Environment Protection Authority to expand the so-called red zone as a matter of urgency.

I acknowledge that I moved this motion six months ago. Since that time Williamtown red zone has been expanded very little to include small parts of Fullerton Cove. It gives me no pleasure to advise the House of the issues before us, but it is important to recognise that the contamination coming from the base is moving further into the electorate of Newcastle and is certainly affecting my community in Fullerton Cove. It is disappointing that at the end of last year the Government was proposing to disband the elected members group and outsource the community consultation group—it was looking to outsource it to a private consultant. After much noise from me, my colleague the member for Port Stephens and other Hunter members, the Government has seen some sense.

The Minister's response has been disappointing. The member for Port Stephens and I both invited the Minister to the area. Neither of us were notified of the Minister's visit. I was shocked that I again had to read in the newspaper that the Minister was visiting. I was not invited to that meeting. In fact, the meeting did not even occur in the main area; I believe it occurred in the government office in Newcastle—in my electorate. After I had invited the Minister I was not even notified or invited, which I find quite appalling. But it follows a pattern. There has been pretty severe erosion at Stockton and I have not seen the Minister in the area looking at that. Single-use plastic bags have not even been outlawed in this State, unlike in many other States and places around the country. The recycling system has been completely botched and now there is contamination in Newcastle—not just Williamtown—that has been completely ignored by this Minister. There is a distinct pattern here. I am sure the Government will see the error of its ways soon enough.

The motion talks about the expansion of the per- and poly-fluorinated alkyl substances contamination. The community in Williamtown and Fullerton Cove were telling the Government two years prior to this event that this issue was affecting them and suggesting that the Government might want to respond. It took the Government two years to respond to this issue and to the concerns of those residents. In fact, they had a simple, logical explanation—that is, topography. If anyone looks at the topography they will see that that large cloud will no doubt move underground toward that area. If they look at all the drains in the area they will also see that that is very much the case.

It was shocking, as I said, that the Government was thinking of outsourcing and decreasing its involvement with the community consultation group, given that those in the group have such important local knowledge and contributions to make. I was appalled that the Government was looking at that option. In this area, 50 residents living on one stretch of road have been diagnosed with cancer. People in the red zone are furious. One has only to drive there—as I do quite often and as does my colleague the member for Port Stephens—to see the huge signs outside people's houses that all the holidaymakers going from Sydney to Port Stephens also see. That is a good thing because these people are hurting badly. Their lives have been devastated. It is not only the incredible loss of value of their houses; they cannot even get a loan to put a garage or a lean-to on the back of their houses. It is good that they are putting up signs and trying to hold this Government to account, as we are, because they are devastated.

Business interrupted.

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to a delegation of members from the Manly Probus Club, guests of the member for Manly. I also welcome the Cootamundra Local Woman of the Year, Pam Halliburton, who is accompanied by her husband, Alan. They are guests of the member for Cootamundra.

I acknowledge in the gallery, and welcome Wendy and John Lazanas, guests of the member for Seven Hills. I also welcome Lee Tuai and Fala Tuai, guests of the member for Wyong. I welcome John and Catherine Cruickshank from the United States, as well as Michael and Helen Payten from Canowindra. I also welcome students and a teacher from the Evolution Hospitality Institute.

*Documents***NSW OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I table the report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled, "Correcting the report: Investigation into water compliance and enforcement 2007-17", dated 8 March 2018. I order that the report be printed.

*Question Time***SYDNEY STADIUMS**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:19): My question is directed to the Minister for Sport.

Mr John Sidoti: Leave Zangari alone.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Drummoyne to order for the first time. I was waiting for quiet, but he continued to interject.

Mr John Sidoti: He doesn't like Italians.

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

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Prior to entering into any construction contracts for the two new stadiums, will the Minister publish the full business cases and substantiate the Premier's claim that the stadiums will pay back their cost in just two years?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (14:20): I want nothing more than the opportunity to continue to reinforce why the Government's stadium strategy is the right thing for the future of New South Wales.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: As we have said, time and time again, when we make our final investment decision we will publish the summary business case. It will have everything the member needs. It will contain all the numbers he needs, including everything that he needs when he announces the refurbishment or rebuild—whatever his policy is—when he gets around to announcing it.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: But, that is right, he has already announced the ANZ Stadium and a stadium for Parramatta. He has already announced that he will be investing in Allianz Stadium. He can have everything—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question did not ask for a summary; it asked for a full business case.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked.

Mr Michael Daley: It was not relevant to the question that was asked. I do not know what question he was relevant to.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr STUART AYRES: All of the material that the Government publishes will give the Opposition every single number it needs to identify that our policy is the right policy for the future of New South Wales.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: It is about making sure that in Western Sydney ANZ Stadium is redeveloped into a full, world-class, rectangular stadium that Western Sydney and New South Wales deserves. It was fantastic to see the Leader of the Opposition finally reveal his position: He supports a redeveloped ANZ Stadium—a fully rectangular, redeveloped stadium. It is fantastic. It is so good that the Leader of the Opposition has told everyone that that is exactly what he wants to do. He has also told everyone that he wants a new stadium at Parramatta. He has also said that he will keep all his options open for Allianz Stadium.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I hope the member's point of order is not the same as his last one.

Mr Michael Daley: It is, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: The Minister has failed to answer the first half of the question. Now he is hiding from the second part of the question with respect to the two-year pay-off.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked. The member will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: Peter FitzSimons wants to know. Two hundred thousand people want to know. The Government's backbenchers, who are all trembling, want to know as well.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: Just yesterday, in response to—what will we call it?—the bipartisan approach to ANZ Stadium, the National Rugby League [NRL] thanked the Leader of the Opposition for the unity ticket on ANZ Stadium. It also told everyone that the value of the NRL grand final, over the length of the time it will take us to run that grand final, would be \$1.7 billion.

Mr Ryan Park: Next you will say that we will get the Melbourne Cup.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: As I have said numerous times over the past few days, the major events economy generates more than \$30 billion for the New South Wales economy. It employs more than 125,000 people. The centrepiece of that major events economy is our stadium network. If we do not maintain a competitive stadium network we will export jobs and events.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: If that is the case, Minister, release the business case, not the summary handed to you by Tony Shepherd and Alan, mate—not the summary handed to you by Alan.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr STUART AYRES: Don't worry, mate. The member for Kogarah is already counting the numbers after your "Yep, yep, yep" yesterday.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: The Leader of the Opposition can keep "yepping" all the way to Parramatta and all the way to ANZ Stadium. The Leader of the Opposition has been hiding the truth from the people of New South Wales behind his red and white cards. But yesterday the Leader of the Opposition actually had a moment of truth.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will determine whether this point of order is better than the previous two, which were not points of order. If the member for Maitland is making a debating point, she will be directed to resume her seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I will try my best, Madam Speaker. My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister cannot attack the Opposition for not producing figures when he has not shown the Opposition the business case for this project, or the last four projects the Government has backflipped on.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The member for Maitland took the same point of order as two members had taken previously.

Mr STUART AYRES: The Leader of the Opposition has been out there supporting the Government's position on the ANZ Stadium and Parramatta's Western Sydney Stadium. The problem is that anyone who has

been around New South Wales in the past three months has been looking at the Leader of the Opposition standing in front of a big red sign that states, "Schools & hospitals BEFORE stadiums". Unfortunately, the policy of the Leader of the Opposition is stadiums before stadiums. That is all he is building. What we are seeing time after time is the Leader of the Opposition being caught out after hiding the truth of his policy, which is that he will build the new ANZ Stadium if he is elected Premier. If we count the ANZ Stadium, the Western Sydney Stadium and the Allianz Stadium, that is still building stadiums.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will put away that prop. Members will come to order.

TAFE NSW ENROLMENTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:26): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government's record-breaking infrastructure program driving up TAFE NSW enrolments?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:26): That is a great question.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber, which for some members will be their third consecutive sitting day.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for North Shore for her question and appreciate that she, like all of us, supports people who want to get into the jobs market. That is why the Liberal Party always will be the party for the workers. This Government has created more jobs than the Labor Opposition ever could imagine. I ask: What do Labor members have against workers? What do they have against tradies?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will not incite the member for Keira.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This morning in Annandale I was so pleased to join the Assistant Minister for Skills, Mr Adam Marshall, to meet teachers and instructors from TAFE NSW who demonstrated to us how they are preparing students for working on major projects throughout Sydney. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure will be pleased to know that at least 40 new apprentices are on sites and receiving training on the Sydney Metro project.

Ms Kate Washington: That is coming off a very low base.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What do Opposition members have against tradies and workers?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In addition to those new apprentices, 238 TAFE NSW apprentices are working on NorthConnex and 157 apprentices are working on WestConnex.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time. If the member repeats her performance of yesterday, she will be removed from the Chamber very quickly.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is why students are flocking to TAFE. The Assistant Minister for Skills will agree that it was great to see all of the apprentices at Annandale this morning.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I realise that Opposition members do not like facts, but the facts are that there has been a 19 per cent increase in enrolments of electricians, an 11 per cent increase in enrolments of carpenters, and an 11 per cent increase in enrolments of plumbers.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The member for Newcastle will cease interjecting. If he continues to interject, he will be removed from the Chamber very quickly.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As the Deputy Premier so eloquently explained, this Government has reduced wasted back office expenditure that Labor administered.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government is employing hundreds and hundreds of new teachers in TAFE.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time. The next time the member interjects, she will be removed from the Chamber immediately. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Labor does not like to admit that this Government supports tradies.

Mr John Barilaro: We are training the tradies.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Labor did nothing to support them. It is really exciting that this Government is subsidising TAFE courses up to 85 per cent for those who wish to take up a trade. For example, students studying carpentry are saving more than \$10,000 on the cost of their course. Students studying plumbing and electrical trades are saving \$11,000. The Government is subsidising 85 per cent of those courses because the Government knows we need workers to support the State's massive infrastructure boom and the consequential increase in jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Londonderry will cease interjecting constantly.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government not only created more than 445,000 new jobs since the 2015 State election but also realises that more jobs will need to be created in the future. The Government is very pleased that jobs are in not only highly technical and highly skilled fields but also fields suited to people who left school to directly find employment and people who want to work on construction sites. The difference between the Government and the Labor Opposition is that the Government is focusing not only on increasing the number of frontline teachers in TAFE but also is interested in increasing opportunities for employment.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government is also ensuring that industry is supported. In contrast to that, the Opposition does not want to work with industry. The Government has ensured that industry and private sector experts assist in the development of TAFE courses so that the skills of tradies and others working on construction sites can be developed. No matter which way the subject of workforce skills development is viewed, the Government is creating jobs for tradies and apprentices. A skilled workforce is needed to ensure that the infrastructure boom continues. The Government is also ensuring that TAFE becomes a key vocational education and training institute in providing courses to ensure that graduates are ready for employment. Sadly, the Opposition does not want to admit that when Labor oversaw TAFE, between 40¢ and 60¢ in the dollar was allocated to back office expenditure. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Fairfield that question time is not a debate. I warn the member for Londonderry for the last time not to interject.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Between 40 per cent and 60 per cent of every dollar of the former Labor Government's budgetary allocation to TAFE was spent on back office expenditure—not on teachers, students or jobs creation. This Government has had the guts to bring TAFE into the modern century.

Mr John Barilaro: We put the student first.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: New South Wales now has a system that puts students and workers first. Labor Opposition members put themselves first, but this Coalition Government puts students and workers first.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Oh, yeah. You decimated TAFE. You have no shame.

Ms Kate Washington: No-one believes you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What do Labor members have against tradies and workers? That is all I want to know. When the year-on-year increase in the number of people taking up apprenticeships and developing their skills through TAFE is examined, it becomes obvious that the policies implemented by this Government are bearing fruit. I thank every single person currently undertaking a TAFE course. They are ensuring that New South Wales remains the number one economy, not just in Australia or the Pacific region but potentially globally, which makes this Government incredibly proud. I thank all TAFE students and all teachers who provide support. I also thank industry leaders who have provided course specifics for the students. This Government will always support the worker.

SYDNEY STADIUMS

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:32): In directing my question to the Deputy Premier, I refer to his comments on radio station 2BL last Friday when he said, "There will be another conversation within Government"—referring to stadiums—"about the future of those particular projects, for sure". I ask: Does the Deputy Premier and the rest of The Nationals support spending \$2.7 billion on Sydney stadiums, or, like the great—

The SPEAKER: Order! That is the end of the question. Opposition members will put away their props.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:32:0): Wow!

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Deputy Premier to wait before he commences his answer. If I see one more person holding props, they will be removed from the Chamber immediately. If Opposition members want to have a mass walkout today, they may do so, if they wish.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have not even commenced answering the question yet. What is going on?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order? Does she want to be permitted to wave props around and carry on in a childish fashion?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Madam Speaker, I know you are always scrupulously fair, but Government members were doing that yesterday and so we thought it was okay.

The SPEAKER: Doing what?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Flapping around those signs. That is why we thought it was okay.

The SPEAKER: Order! I did not see that. Opposition members made themselves more obvious.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Oh, I am sorry.

The SPEAKER: The member for Maroubra will not be impertinent. I remind the member for Mount Druitt of my previous ruling regarding flyers. The member for Mount Druitt is ignoring directions from the Chair.

[Interruption]

I can hear that the member for Strathfield has regained her voice. I direct the member for Strathfield to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours. I gave the member a warning.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 14:35.]

Members will cease waving the flyers around. The member for Kogarah will put it away. I can still see it lurking in his lap.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Normally, I get approximately a minute into my answer before someone gets thrown out because they have started to argue; but it is good to see someone get thrown out before I even start. The question from the Leader of the Opposition, otherwise known as Flip-flop Foley, and we know he flip flops on decisions—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: I ask you to remind all members to refer to each other in this place by their correct titles.

The SPEAKER: I remind members to refer to other members by their correct title. There is still too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I saw all of the flyers flip-flopping around the Chamber and they reminded me of the Leader of the Opposition—that is all—who flip-flopped on the Opposition's position on stadiums and whether Wollongong was part of regional New South Wales. Do members remember that a couple of days ago? The member for Keira said, "regional Newcastle and regional Wollongong"?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Keira that he is on three calls to order. The member for Keira is on his final warning.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Then the Leader of the Opposition told him to sit down and get back in the corner, but he flip-flopped on that too. In recent days, we have heard that he has flip-flopped on stadiums. Today I understand that he has flipped again. The answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question on whether there will be more conversations in Government on stadiums is that of course there will be. The plan has to come back to the Expenditure Review Committee, of which I am a member. Once we get all the information and evidence, and review the business case we will make a decision. We will continue with the Government's \$81 billion infrastructure spend, which created jobs, grew the economy, and built the infrastructure that our communities deserve and need for future generations.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will be removed from the Chamber for the third sitting day in a row if he continues to interject.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Once again, Labor is trying to wedge city against country by saying that approximately \$2 billion will be spent on stadiums in the city. But last week, the Government announced \$4.154 billion for regional New South Wales off the back of Snowy Hydro.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That funding is for the real regional New South Wales, which includes every place other than Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle—we are excluding regional Ryde! Those opposite are a party of envy. The Liberal Party and The Nationals, who have been in government since 2011, the strongest Coalition in the nation, are working together. We are led by a Premier who cares for all corners of the State, be it metropolitan Sydney, be it Wollongong or Newcastle, or be it regional New South Wales. Premier Berejiklian has proven that she cares through the policies that this Government delivered through last year's budget—\$1.3 billion for regional growth for sporting infrastructure in the bush, arts and culture in the bush, and building amenities in the bush.

Members of this House—including regional Opposition members—should thank this Government for the Stronger Country Communities Fund, Regional Growth Fund, Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund, Regional Cultural Fund, Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund, Resources for Regions fund, investment in telecommunications and mobile phone blackspots, Fixing Country Roads program, and Bridges for the Bush program—I could go on and on. Billions and billions of dollars are being invested in the bush. Yesterday I told the House that if you go back to 2011 then move forward to this year's forward estimates, \$40 billion is going to the bush. That is an investment in the generations to come.

Ms Kate Washington: Is it all going to Monaro?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Monaro is getting its fair share. I thank the member for Port Stephens for inviting me to talk about investment in Monaro. In last year's budget, close to \$100 million was invested in new schools or upgrades to schools.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I would pitch my delivery record in the Monaro against those opposite any time of the day. Guess what? There is still another budget and an election to come. Watch this space. We have already heard from the Leader of the Opposition that Labor will use the Snowy Hydro funds to pork-barrel to win an election. Those opposite will play politics with the legacy left by the men and women of the Snowy Hydro scheme and squander the opportunity to invest. On this side of the House, we believe the fund is precious and that it should be invested in productive generational infrastructure.

We will take our time to ensure that we invest in regional New South Wales to change the landscape. Returning to the member's question, this Government has a great sporting infrastructure program that includes regional New South Wales, and I have touched on the programs involved in it. Recently I was in the Myall Lakes electorate, where the member for Myall Lakes and I announced an additional \$100 million for regional sports infrastructure. We are delivering for regional clubs and regional infrastructure. I stand by the Government's track record that we deliver for all of New South Wales.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:41): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is regional New South Wales benefiting from record female job growth?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:42): That is a great question. I will reverse the question to ask, "How is regional Cootamundra benefitting from having Steph Cooke in this House?" The member for Cootamundra is a fantastic local member and small business owner who has three florist shops. But she is more than just a small business owner, because if you are a small business owner in regional New South Wales you create jobs. Through her businesses, the member for Cootamundra has created 15 direct jobs. But it is not only about the jobs—the member would often hire people with no skills and pay for their training so that when they leave her florist business in the electorate of Cootamundra they are qualified. Three of her employees have started their own businesses. She is a great mentor and a great ambassador, and she is an example of fantastic small business owners.

On International Women's Day, the member for Cootamundra is a fantastic example of a female entrepreneur who is setting the standard in regional New South Wales. What a fantastic question from such a quality member. Mind the pun, but we missed the bullet by not having the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate in this place. The member's question asked what the New South Wales Government is doing to create jobs in regional New South Wales, and that is important. A large number of the 67,000 jobs that have been created in regional New South Wales have come from, as I have said often, the small businesses that are owned by the mums, dads and individuals who show courage, mortgage their homes and invest in their small businesses to create jobs and be part of the small business economy.

We have some great businesses in regional New South Wales. In my electorate of Cooma we are blessed to have Jane Cay, who runs Birdsnest, which is an online fashion house—many people know about it—that employs 130 local people in Cooma, but competes globally. Jane is an example of the type of entrepreneur we have in regional New South Wales. That is why it is important for the New South Wales Government to invest in the regional environment, ensuring that we build on our telecommunications, and that regional New South Wales stays in the fast lane connected to the national broadband network, broadband or wireless, and empowering young people to become entrepreneurs by giving them the skill sets to do that.

We are doing these things because we want to grow jobs in regional New South Wales. Why? We want our kids to stay in regional New South Wales. If we want our regional centres to continue to grow, we know that those centres will need a workforce in the region, and we want our kids to get those jobs. Centres like Tamworth, Bathurst, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Goulburn and Queanbeyan will only grow if there are job opportunities for our kids in those centres. I can give a great example of a local business that is creating jobs in Tamworth. Registered midwife Edwina Sharrock is helping hundreds of women to overcome geographic isolation during pregnancy by giving quality and accessible childbirth classes online, which means she is using the available technology with support from the Government. Edwina's business, Birth Beat, is an example of the exciting and entrepreneurial work women are doing in regional New South Wales. Edwina started her business to give women in country New South Wales the same choices as women in the city, and with the help of the Government's Business Connect advisory service, her business has snowballed.

Mr Kevin Anderson: She's a champion.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Tamworth knows Edwina and knows that she is a champion. Edwina, who also worked out of the University of New England Smart Regional Incubator in Tamworth, is a great example of how the Government is supporting businesswomen from the bush. Her idea is now helping hundreds of other women across New South Wales, not only those in regional areas. Jobs for NSW, which has invested \$190 million in creating jobs in this State, has an ambitious target of creating 19,000 jobs by supporting businesses through grants, loans and our new and exciting equity stakeholder in businesses. Birth Beat received \$22,750 through the Minimum Viable Product grant to help start the business. Members do not have to take my word for this—

Ms Yasmin Catley: We don't.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite want to mock this Government's policies and investment in small businesses that empower women in the regions to start businesses. That is typical of Labor members. The Liberals and The Nationals have become the parties of the workers. We are empowering small businesses because we want businesses to remain in regional New South Wales. Edwina is benefiting from our investment in regional businesses. She said, "We don't have to hold traditional mindsets anymore and we don't even have to think about being jobseekers but rather job creators." That is an exciting statement: Rather than being jobseekers, these women can become part of the small business economy and therefore become job creators. This is just one of the many successful stories from the New South Wales Government's investment in making sure that small businesses are empowered and that there is an environment in which they can prosper. This investment means that entrepreneurs can stay in the regional areas and get their business ideas off the ground. I am excited that our Jobs for NSW and the many other programs of this Government have resulted in small businesses thriving in regional New South Wales.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRATEGY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:47): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government introduce 10 days domestic violence leave for victims of domestic violence?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:47): I thank the member for her question and note that this is the first Government in this State's history to have a Minister responsible for domestic violence, Pru Goward. This is also the first Government in this State's history to have a coordinated strategy for domestic violence. I am extremely proud of our record on tackling domestic violence, and what makes me most proud of our record is the fact that we have ensured that victims are protected and have the confidence to come forward. We believe that was the most important piece that was missing from the system, which was focused towards the courts and proceedings, as opposed to providing support for victims so that they had the courage to come forward and report incidences of domestic violence. As Minister Goward and Minister Davies, the Minister for Women, would attest, the Government is spending record amounts on the prevention of domestic violence through education and other measures. I am proud of this Government's record to date, but if there is more to do then we will do it.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Is that a yes?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will be heard in silence.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I would have thought that on International Women's Day there would be bipartisan support for the initiatives that the Government has taken. It is not only about money. This Government has also invested record amounts of funding to tackle domestic violence. When this Government came to power, there was not a whole-of-government approach to domestic violence. Different agencies were doing different things and, although all of them were well-intentioned, there was no coordinated approach until we came to power and took the initiative.

I am proud that for the first time in our State's history we have a whole-of-government approach to domestic violence issues, as we do in the case of a number of other important issues. Our focus remains on supporting victims whilst also preventing domestic violence in the first instance. We will always look at other opportunities to prevent domestic violence in the first instance. We will also support victims, who are in the main women, to ensure that they have the courage to improve their circumstances while protecting their lives and those of the people closest to them. We stand by our record, and I assure everyone in the community that we will continue to support those most vulnerable, whether they are victims of domestic violence or they feel threatened. This Government not only talks the talk but walks the walk.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:50): My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. How is the New South Wales Government continuing to support vulnerable women across the State?

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (14:50): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. She is a great local member who is determined to support her community, especially women, and I congratulate her on her fantastic International Women's Day event. She knows that no government has had the same commitment to supporting vulnerable women than this Government, in particular through the integration of domestic violence support, as the Premier said in answer to the previous question.

It is important on International Women's Day, when we celebrate the achievements of the many incredible women across our State, that we also recognise those who are doing it tough. While we celebrate the teachers, the leaders, the doctors, those pioneering in their fields, we also recognise the incredible efforts of the mother fleeing domestic violence while trying to keep her children safe. We should recognise the efforts of the woman who has overcome her drug and alcohol addiction and is raising her children in a safer, happier home, which also requires enormous courage. We recognise the efforts of the young woman who had a difficult start but has found a job, who is studying and who is building a better life for herself.

The incredible efforts of those women often go unrecognised, but they are extraordinary nonetheless. We on this side of the House want those women to know that we are their partners in a better future. This Government is investing record amounts of money to support vulnerable women. We are doing more to support women in crisis. We are funding more women's refuges. We are doing more to keep families together. We are doing more to enable vulnerable women to lead happier and more fulfilled lives. We on this side of the House recognise that supporting women at risk means more than just a safe place to stay. It means restoring dignity. It means providing opportunity. It means allowing them to take control of their future.

We know that one of the challenges facing some women wanting to leave violent relationships is their lack of financial independence. The skills offered through the New South Wales Government's fee-free training can provide a new start. More than 100 women have taken the opportunity to up-skill, secure employment and gain financial independence through this Government's Smart and Skilled Program, which offers survivors of domestic violence free vocational education and training. We have a range of other options that support vulnerable women in New South Wales. We have Rent Choice Start Safely, a private rental subsidy for women leaving domestic violence to support them to live independently. We have Staying Home Leaving Violence to support women and their children to remain safely at home while the perpetrator is removed. We have Safer Pathway, the tailored multi-agency response to high-risk domestic violence victims.

We are building additional units on the grounds of existing refuges in regional New South Wales to increase the capacity of refuges to provide women and their children with greater privacy and independence. We have launched new evidence-based service models to improve family preservation by introducing Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect, known as MST-CAN, and Functional Family Therapy Child Welfare, known as FFT-CW. As at January 2018, sales of public housing properties in Millers Point have raised funds for

1,147 new fit-for-purpose homes including 775 that have been completed and a further 372 now under construction.

I have met women who have moved from the social housing waiting list into brand new, fit-for-purpose homes which has been made possible by these sales. It is obvious how much it means to them to have a place they can truly call home. I am proud that this Government can deliver for them. I am also proud of our Social and Affordable Housing Fund. It is a completely new approach to the way we deliver housing. It is designed to empower people to live more independent lives and for some to move beyond the need for housing support. The second phase of this \$1.1 billion fund will prioritise proposals aimed at supporting older women in housing stress. We on this side of the House are definitely getting on with the job. We are the champions of social reform and we are intent on improving the lives of women and their children across New South Wales. We are their partners in a better future.

SEXUAL ASSAULT STRATEGY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:55): My question is directed to the Minister for Women. Given that Sydney has twice the number of sexual assaults as New York City, will the Minister explain why the Government has failed to deliver the sexual assault strategy that was promised in 2015 and advise if this strategy will ever be released?

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (14:56): I thank the member for Maitland for her question, but members know—at least members on this side of the House—that the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is Minister Goward. Nonetheless, I am happy to speak about the work that we on this side of the House are doing to support women across our great State. I welcome all the women in the gallery today and thank them for coming to New South Wales Parliament on this prestigious day—International Women's Day. It is exciting to be able to inform them about what we are doing about helping—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! It is too early in the Minister's answer to take a point of order on relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister will resume her seat. The Minister was welcoming guests to the gallery.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I also welcome the guests to the gallery. The Minister sits at the Cabinet table. We have heard about the whole-of-government response. We are entitled to hear from the Minister.

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

Ms TANYA DAVIES: International Women's Day highlights the push for genuine equality for women and young girls. Many statistics exist that show the incidence of violence, sexual assault and homelessness. Pay inequity still exists in today's society even though women are performing the same jobs as men. We on this side of the House have set specific targets to reach. One of those targets is this Government is committed to ensuring that by 2025 50 per cent of senior leadership roles in the public service will be held by women.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The target that we are particularly interested in is the sexual assault strategy that was announced in 2015; it is two years overdue.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question she was asked. The Minister has the call.

Ms TANYA DAVIES: I will reiterate: The Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to gender equity and having women hold 50 per cent of senior positions in the public service. In my hand I hold Labor's plan for women when they were last in government.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. If this is another stunt by the member for Maitland I will direct that she be removed from the Chamber. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is very clear: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73.

The SPEAKER: It is not about a clear point. A point of order is about a breach of the standing orders. The member will resume her seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Do I get to make the point of order?

The SPEAKER: Does the member have a point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister is attacking Labor's women's strategy after telling people in Newcastle that we never had one and that she was the first Minister in this State to prepare a women's strategy. What a joke.

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Maitland to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maitland left the Chamber at 15:00.]

Ms TANYA DAVIES: I hold here in my hand the Labor Party's plan for women when they were last in power. What was their goal?

Ms Prue Car: Point of order—

Ms TANYA DAVIES: They wanted 35 per cent of women in senior leadership roles. That is not equitable. Why not 50 per cent?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume her seat. Is the member for Londonderry having a go at me? I remind the member for Londonderry that she is on three calls to order and has received numerous warnings. She was ejected from the Chamber yesterday. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Prue Car: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is purposely not answering the question. If the Minister does not know, she should say so.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Member for Londonderry will resume her seat.

Ms Prue Car: Just say it.

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Londonderry to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Londonderry left the Chamber at 15:01.]

Ms TANYA DAVIES: The Labor Party's plan for women has no sexual assault strategy. We do.

The SPEAKER: The House will come to order.

JOB CREATION

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:02): My question is addressed to the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veteran Affairs. How is the New South Wales Government's prison infrastructure plan creating jobs across the State?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:02): I thank the member for Clarence for his question. The Government is delivering a new 1,700 bed prison in his electorate which will inject more than \$560 million into the economy, creating 1,100 jobs during construction and 600 permanent roles once it is operational.

Mr Luke Foley: Phelps wants you to release Macdonald.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I note the interjection from those opposite, particularly the Leader of the Opposition. On behalf of my former colleagues, those in the press gallery should thank the Leader of the Opposition for hosting media drinks at his home, but he forgot to take his smalls off the line. He is our very own Captain Underpants. Good on you. Well done, old boy. Well done. Good on you, mate.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Paul Lynch: My first point of order relates to Standing Order 75—correct title; secondly, Standing Order 129. The gross comments from the Minister had nothing to do with the question he was asked.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the first point of order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The Government's \$3.8 billion infrastructure program has helped create more than 2,100 jobs in the past two years. This includes more than 1,100 frontline jobs.

Mr Guy Zangari: You are replacing long-term vacancies.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I note the interjection from the shadow Minister for Corrections. He inherited his seat from Joe Tripodi, who may well be a custodian of my establishment very soon. Unfortunately, his pre-selection has been postponed because of internal charges he is facing.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being relevant to the question he was asked.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am responding to the interjection.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members should not respond to interjections.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Let us go to the detail. I will take thanks from the member for Cessnock because I am creating 220 new jobs in construction and recurrent spending in his electorate. Captain Underpants from Auburn—nine minutes away from the Leader of the Opposition's electorate, the new Mary Wade Correctional Centre has created more than 100 jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refer to members by their correct title.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I will use his correct title. The new maximum security women's prison in his electorate, named after the 13-year-old convict, Mary Wade, who—unlike those Labor Party Cabinet Ministers sitting in jail—turned her life around and became a respected member of the community. The member for Wollongong will thank me because 24 new jobs have been created at the new Illawarra Reintegration Centre. Inmates from Wollongong are cleaning local sportsgrounds and gardens. The member for Gosford is grateful because I have reopened Kariong Correctional Centre and created more jobs. Unfortunately, the member for Londonderry has left the Chamber. I am hoping she is writing to say thank you because I am creating new jobs in her electorate by expanding the Dillwynia Women's Correctional Centre. This week the Premier and I joined the member for Goulburn, in Goulburn, to announce an upgrade to Supermax, Australia's toughest prison. That will be a significant investment in the Goulburn area.

The Goulburn Correctional Centre currently employs 225 staff. Its officers live locally, join local sports clubs, and get involved in local activities, which generates \$20 million of economic activity for the region. The upgrade at Supermax is part of the Government's \$47 million investment in combating radicalisation within the correctional system. The upgrade will create 40 jobs for local contractors and increase the number of frontline officers. We need to be on the front foot when it comes to radicalised offenders, and that is why this investment in infrastructure will future-proof New South Wales and handle a new era of terrorist inmates. The Government refuses to take a step back when protecting the community against counterterrorism. The Labor Party will still not commit to counterterrorism. [*Extension of time*]

While we wait for the Opposition to announce a policy on counterterrorism, we are getting on with the portfolio, ensuring that our community remains safe and secure. If the Opposition cannot guarantee the community's safety, it is unfit to govern, and that includes the Leader of the Opposition. The Government understands that our prisons have to go beyond locking people up to get the best value for money. That is why we want to harness the opportunity for prisoners to positively contribute to society once the courts have said they must be reintegrated to the community. This Government is investing \$330 million in rehabilitation programs across this State. Prisoners will have better supervision in the community, better rehabilitation programs and education. This investment in rehabilitation programs has the added benefit of creating more jobs, including the appointment of 519 community corrections officers and an additional 68 security and intelligence positions. In regional areas such as Cooma—

Mr John Barilaro: Regional Cooma.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: In regional Cooma, we have a new high-intensity program unit where inmates receive treatment, education and follow programs to help meet the Government's target to reduce adult reoffending. Ten high-intensity program units will be rolled out across the State and we have created more than 80 new roles to staff those units in Bathurst, Mid North Coast, Windsor, South Coast and Wellington. This Government is committed to stimulating employment and economic growth. Every community should receive its fair share and that is why we are delivering improved inmate rehabilitation programs and additional prison infrastructure. The Government is making a real and lasting difference for the people of New South Wales.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:09): My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Given Woollahra and Waverley councils, parents and the CLOSEast Community Group have identified rapidly growing needs for high schools in the eastern suburbs, will the Minister work with local councils and parents to plan for and secure a new high school site in the east to meet future demand?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (15:10): I thank the member for Sydney for his question and for his passion for public education in his community and across eastern Sydney. The member for Coogee and the member for Vaucluse share his passion for improved public education facilities in the city's east. I acknowledge the wonderful advocacy of the CLOSEast Community Group, the Community for Local

Options for Secondary Education in Sydney's east. I had the opportunity to hear a wonderful presentation by Licia Heath, who is one of the organisers of CLOSEast. I acknowledge their passionate and well-argued advocacy for the better provision of public education facilities in Sydney's east.

Recently the member for Vaucluse and I attended the opening of the refurbished Bellevue Hill Public School. The refurbishment preserved and restored the heritage parts of the school. A whole new wing was also established, doubling the school's capacity. I acknowledge the great advocacy of Principal Sue Bennett, who has a prodigious history of being a leader in public education. Earlier this week the member for Coogee and I inspected progress at the Randwick Public School. Amazing work is being done there. We were interviewed by Isabel, one of the student reporters from the student magazine. The Randwick Public School and Rainbow Street Public School will receive an extra 35 permanent classrooms to accommodate the increasing demand for public education in Sydney's east.

The question pertained specifically to secondary education, but it is important to speak about the totality of new infrastructure in Sydney's east. In secondary education it is important to acknowledge we have inherited some challenges. It is well documented that the Labor Government closed no fewer than four public high schools in Sydney's east—Maroubra High School, Randwick North High School, Vaucluse High School. Bob Carr sold that school for a reported \$35 million; I suspect that school site would be worth upwards of \$200 million today. The Dover Heights High School, which was consolidated, ultimately closed as well.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr ROB STOKES: That legacy of Labor's decision to sell those public high schools has led to some significant constraints. We are working with the community and local schools. In the Vaucluse electorate we have identified that the Rose Bay Secondary College has capacity, in the Coogee electorate the Randwick Boys High School and Randwick Girls High School have capacity, in the Heffron electorate the JJ Cahill Memorial High School has capacity. Overall, there is capacity for another 1,500 enrolments across those schools. Nonetheless, we are still working with the community to deliver two comprehensive public high schools at Alexandria Park. That high school is currently under construction and 1,000 students will have an opportunity to attend the school. The inner city high school on the site of the Cleveland Street Intensive English High School, which is one of the most beautiful gothic revival school buildings in the country, will accommodate approximately 1,200 high school students. The Government has a plan and it is working together with the school community.

In the time I have remaining, I emphasise the incredible advocacy and wonderful examples of local members, community groups and school communities working together. Earlier this week I met with the member for Coogee and one of his local high school principals, who talked about using innovation to attract more students to excellent local high schools. While this Government stands ready to provide the infrastructure necessary to support increasing enrolments, ultimately the quality of schools depends on the excellence of the teaching staff. In Sydney's east we have some incredible, hardworking teachers who are committed to serving the young people in their care and helping them to gain the skills they need to make a real contribution to our community.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOB CREATION

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:15): I address my question to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. How is the New South Wales Government's record investment in roads creating jobs across the State?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (15:15): I thank the member for Miranda for asking that important question. Many jobs are being created in road construction across New South Wales, not only for men but also for women. The Government is spending \$300 million on a pinch point program in the member's electorate to make people's journeys to work easier, faster and safer so that they can spend more time with their families, whether they are travelling on Heathcote Road, Alford's Road, New Illawarra Road or Grand Parade. People across the shire are benefiting from that pinch-point program.

On International Women's Day, and as the first female Roads Minister in New South Wales, it is exciting to be able to tell the House that the Government is meeting its target of having 50 per cent women in the Senior Executive Service [SES]. Over the past seven months, 50 per cent of the appointees to SES positions have been women. Even more excitingly, the Government has appointed more than double the average female engineering graduates to Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] jobs. Thirty per cent of new engineers appointed to RMS are women, which is twice the graduate rate from engineering schools. That is exciting for women across New South Wales.

The Government has created 10,000 jobs, whether on the Pacific Highway or the Princes Highway. We have spent \$1 billion on the Princes Highway and there are plans to spend another \$1 billion. Both men and women are involved in that project, but most importantly there are jobs. There is a future for New South Wales while the Government builds the infrastructure that this State and this city need. That is something that members

opposite were incapable of doing. Whether it is Tweed Heads to Tathra, Broken Hill to Bateau Bay, things are improving because over seven years this Government has spent \$39 billion on new roads across the State. The member for Rockdale is with us. He was a big supporter of the F6, which this Government is delivering. You flip-flopped. You are worse than Foley. I cannot believe it.

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

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Madam Speaker, I ask that you direct the Minister to refer to the member by his correct title.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister should refer to the member by his correct title. If the member for Rockdale wishes the Minister to do that, he should stop menacing her by shouting.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: The Minister is directly addressing the member for Rockdale and inciting him instead of directing her comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! The poor man spends most of his time aggressively arguing with either me or other members. There is no point of order. The member for Wyong will resume his seat. I am dealing with the previous point of order. I ask the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: On 13 June 2017 the member for Rockdale said, "We live in a modern society; we should have a modern road coming through the electorate." This Government is delivering and it is doing the planning and the geotech work. However, we found on YouTube a recording of a secret meeting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale might not like what is being said, but he will resume his seat.

Mr Stephen Kamper: She is not being relevant.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question she was asked. What part of the answer is not relevant to the question? The member did not even listen to the question. The member for Rockdale is close to being named three days in a row. The member will not call out.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We have "Flip-Flop" Foley and now "Backdown" Rockdale. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The recording of the private meeting has been uploaded on YouTube for the public to watch. The member for Rockdale is heard saying, "We live in a modern society; we should have a modern road coming through the electorate." The pressure was on, the community had some concerns, and the Government was dealing with them. However, he said, "We here in Kogarah, in the electorate of Rockdale, are going to pay the price for that; we have got to stand up against that."

Mr Stephen Kamper: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will resume his seat. This is not a debate.

Mr Stephen Kamper: My point of order relates to relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on relevance. The member did not even hear the question. The member will resume his seat. The question was about roads. The Minister is being relevant to the question she was asked.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The Government is building the F6, NorthConnex, WestConnex, the Pacific Highway and the Newell Highway, and it is improving the Great Western Highway and the Princes Highway. This Government is doing what a good government does: It is building roads and planning for the future. I will leave Carl Scully to deal with this issue. As he said:

The current Liberal-National Party State Government is now getting on and building major road and rail infrastructure across Sydney and fully exploiting the fact that three post-Carr Premiers were simply asleep at the infrastructure wheel. The baton passed, it will not be easily returned.

This Government is doing the right thing for the people of New South Wales; it is building for the future and dealing with the mistakes of the past. This is a good government delivering for the people of this State.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons was lodged for presentation:

Newcastle Transport Services

Petition calling on the Government to restore direct services to key destinations in the Newcastle transport network, received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

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**.

*Condolences***DEATH OF STANLEY ALFRED JAMES KNOWLES, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I acknowledge and welcome to the gallery Stan's widow, Marie Knowles, whom I first met scrutineering at the Gosford or The Entrance by-election—we argued then. Stan was the former member for Macquarie Fields and we were sworn into this House on the same day. I also acknowledge and welcome the Hon. Craig Knowles, his wife, Liz, and their son, Hamish. Welcome to the Parliament. It is a sad day but I offer my condolences to you and to all of Stan's mates.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:24): 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 30 December 2017, of Stanley Alfred James Knowles, a former member of the Legislative Assembly.

This afternoon I pay my respects to the former member for Ingleburn and the first member for Macquarie Fields, Mr Stan Knowles, who passed away on 30 December 2017. Stan was a member of this place from 19 September 1981 to 11 October 1990, a total of nine years and 23 days. I make this speech and pay my respects to Stan in the presence of his widow, Marie; his son Craig, himself a former member and senior Cabinet Minister; Craig's wife, Liz; and their son, Hamish. I offer to all of them my heartfelt condolences on their loss.

Any reflection on Stan's life must commence with the observation that, first and foremost, Stan Knowles was a family man. He loved his wife, Marie. Together for over 60 years they were a team—a very formidable one at that—in every aspect of their life. They were devoted to each other and their children, Brent and Craig. Later, Stan was a doting father-in-law to Janice and Liz; grandfather to Jase, Lauren, Hillary, Hamish and Lucinda; and great-grandfather to Bodhi. He greatly enjoyed family life and was very proud of his family. Stan was also a much-loved and respected friend to many. This was attested to by the large group that gathered on 8 January at Leppington at his funeral.

I note the funeral was attended by former Premier Barrie Unsworth and a large number of current and former members of Parliament, both Federal and State. In making these remarks today, I note that I am fortunate to have known Stan Knowles personally. Further, I counted Stan Knowles as a dear friend and mentor. In political terms Stan Knowles was a natural. He had a wonderful natural smile and a friendly disposition. Stan could walk into any pub and make friends immediately, and walk any street and come out with five new sign locations and, like all effective Labor MPs, a few more new branch members. He was also a natural doorknocker.

Perhaps Stan's natural ability to deal with people and make friends came from his hard upbringing in and around Burwood and his varied working life. Like many of his generation, Stan left school at 15 and entered the workforce. Again like most, Stan did whatever it took to earn a dollar—a quid in those days—to get by. Although this is not an exhaustive list, Stan did everything from selling oranges to making Bianchi bikes, butchering, driving heavy equipment, greenkeeping and taxidiving. Only after all this experience and work did Stan enter politics, at first as an alderman on Liverpool council and then as a member of Parliament.

During his term as a local member, Stan was a staunch community advocate and fighter. He never took a backward step and never compromised on his values. During his term, the East Hills rail link to Campbelltown was built, as was the Henderson Road overbridge at Ingleburn, Glenquarie Senior Citizens hall and Macquarie Fields fire station. Stan also worked extremely hard to protect Hurlstone Agricultural High School from urban development—a fight I am proud to carry on today. Indeed, Stan's fight to save Hurlstone earned him the Hurlstone medal of honour and a citation certificate. The 1983 citation from Hurlstone says a lot about Stan. It reads:

For spearheading the coordinating all the efforts to save Hurlstone from becoming a housing estate in 1982, and in so doing displaying outstanding political courage in constantly lobbying a Cabinet Committee of six Ministers, and being prepared to stand up against the leaders of his own Party for the sake of Hurlstone.

I have Stan's medal, which was given to him by the school, with me. It says a lot about Stan that he received that recognition from his local school. I hope that I have done Stan proud in my ongoing fight to save Hurlstone from opposition from all parts of the political sphere. Stan and Marie's work—because they were a team—at the Liverpool South branch of the Australian Labor Party for more than 30 years is the stuff of legend and revered in Labor history. Has there ever been a more formidable duo? Their involvement with the community and Liverpool South branch over such a long period formed valuable and enduring friendships.

It was said at the funeral: "If Stan considered you a friend, it was a friend for life." Never has a truer word been spoken. I was delighted to see families such as the Glynnns, the Neales, the Amalfis, the Pantaleos, the Habibs, the Vitoccos, the Gauchis and the Tulichs at Stan's funeral. To Stan, a person's word and handshake was as good as any contract—he was very much old school. With regard to my election to this place, I greatly valued Stan's 100 per cent support and endorsement. I am proud to say that one of my very first acts as an endorsed Labor candidate was to seek Stan's endorsement in a leaflet and to have my photograph taken with him. I knew only too well that Stan's name next to mine was a bonus.

The leaflet spoke about standing up for one's community and doing what is right by them each and every time—no matter the opposition, no matter the issue. Stan's endorsement is a constant reminder that I must continue his high standard of public service and community advocacy. I could go on and on about Stan—about his sporting prowess as a boxer and footballer, his knack for giving anything and everything a go, his love of singing, his commitment to the Liverpool senior citizens and so on—but I can do no better to summarise Stan than to use Marie's own words that were read out on 8 January. She said:

Stan doesn't need pats on the back nor accolades ... just to be remembered ... simply as a good and decent man who tried to help those less fortunate.

I will miss knocking on the big green door of room number 37 at Durham Green Retirement Village where Stan and I would have our regular catch-ups and conversations over a milkshake—strawberry, of course, was his favourite. Naturally for two members for Macquarie Fields, the conversation would turn to politics. I would update him on my local campaigns, the changes that were happening in our area and, of course, about how badly the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government was doing, on which we were in total agreement. Stan will be sorely missed by all those who knew him. May my dear friend, role model and mentor rest in peace.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:32): I knew Stan Knowles, albeit not all that well. For me Stan Knowles personified the very best qualities of old Labor, and I mean that as the sincerest compliment. He was staunch, loyal and humble. He believed the role of a Labor member of Parliament [MP] was to help people. He never forgot where he came from. He always remembered that he started as a schoolboy running messages up and down Burwood Road for the starting price bookie. He never forgot the class he came from and the class that a Labor MP should always strive to represent and advance the interests of.

I have seen some formidable husband and wife duos in the Labor Party—I think of Don and Maggie Bowman and, in more recent times, Anthony Albanese and Carmel Tebbutt—but I have never seen a more formidable husband and wife combination inside the Labor Party than Stan and Marie Knowles. Stan and Marie respectively served as President and Secretary of the Liverpool South branch of the Labor Party for 33 years straight. You will note that Marie never trusted Stan with the books, so she was always secretary and he was the president. Anyone who made the mistake of taking on Marie while scrutineering would not make that mistake twice! I tried it myself, as a very young man in the Labor Party, in some long-forgotten contest. I learned the hard way; I did not repeat the error.

Stan and Marie were a great combination over decades. Stan was a true Labor man: I cannot deliver a finer compliment than that. He represented, for me, the very finest traditions of the old Labor Party at its best—rooted in localism and in genuine representation of local working-class communities, in which the member of Parliament would never be above those people but would live and work amongst them every single hour of every

single day. I offer my condolences to Marie, Craig, Brent and all of Stan's family. May this good man rest in peace.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:35): I am honoured to speak on this condolence motion for Mr Stan Knowles, a legend in his own right. I acknowledge in the gallery Marie, Craig and his wife, Liz, their son, Hamish, and their adopted son, Mr Aaron Rule, my good friend. It is an honour to be here today with you to speak about Stan. Sometimes in life one finds oneself in situations that are like standing on a cliff facing a raging storm. At such times there are certain people who will always be there, standing at one's shoulder—and for many, many people, Stan Knowles was the person who would always be there. I did not know Stan well, but I certainly knew the strength of his character and loyalty. He was a man of solidarity, who embodied the values of our great party.

Stan passed away on 30 December 2017. He was 86 years old and had a life filled with joy, love and achievement. I was privileged and honoured to be at Stan's funeral, along with my colleague the member for Macquarie Fields and many other people. The feeling in that room was, of course, one of sadness but also of celebration for the life of a man who gave so much to his community, to his family and to the Labor Party. But what stood out most of all was his love for his home and his family, including his children and his grandchildren. Stan married Marie on 11 June 1955, and they had two sons, Brent and Craig. I love hearing the stories about the Liverpool South branch meetings. Our Labor leader Luke Foley would know more about that. The iron-clad commitment that Marie and Stan had to that branch was formidable.

The length of time I have been in the Labor Party—almost 20 years—is a drop in the ocean compared to that of a family which has been entrenched in the heart of the cause of our great party. Stan was educated at Burwood Primary School and Ashfield Boys High School and became a small business owner. He was an alderman of Liverpool City Council from 1976 to 1982, where he was deputy mayor from 1980 to 1982. Stan was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in September 1981, serving in Parliament for nine years before resigning as the member for Macquarie Fields in 1990. He was a stalwart at that time—staunch in every way. I often use the phrase "no steps backwards" in this House, because I have learnt the virtue of standing firm. Stan epitomised that notion.

Stan was succeeded by his son, Craig, who was elected in the 1990 by-election, went on to serve as Minister for Health and is currently—I congratulate him for it—the Consul-General of Australia in Auckland. Stan was a lifelong member of the Australian Labor Party and gave back to his community as the President of the Liverpool and Districts Senior Citizens Progress Committee, Deputy Chairman of Liverpool Bicentennial Community Sub-Committee, Convenor of Senior Citizens Week Activities from 1980 to 1987 and patron of a number of sporting and social clubs throughout the Ingleburn area.

I love hearing some of the more intimate stories about Stan—his love of strawberry milk, his singing and the good times when branch members and community members rallied down the side of his home to sign the attendance book or just to say g'day and have a cup of tea. Whatever they were doing, I am sure a good time was had by all! As I said before, Stan's greatest pride was in his family. I really felt for the family at that celebration of Stan's life because we never get used to losing, from this world, those who are very close to us. I think a piece of us goes with the person whom we love so dearly—a piece that can never, ever be replaced.

There are many words that can be used to describe someone's character but I will reflect on Stan's life in terms of his public representation. I was talking earlier to Aaron about the East Hills to Glenfield rail line, and he said it was like the opening of the Harbour Bridge—a celebration of a great achievement. It was advocated for and achieved by a great man. Stan was also there to cut the ribbon for the citizens hall at Glenquarie. But neither of those things come close to epitomising Stan, and his character, which was marked by solidarity and loyalty. He stood staunch for every man, woman and child, and for the love of his family. Earlier today I was reading something by the late Martin Luther King. He said:

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

When I hear the stories about Stan fighting for people in his community I think that that quote embodies everything about Stan's life. I send my deepest condolences to Stan's family and his very close friends. Our community lost an invaluable person; his family lost a loving man, who cared for them greatly; and our great party lost one of its finest sons.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:43): At the outset, on behalf of my wife, Alison, and me, I extend condolences to Marie, Craig, Liz, Brent, Hamish and adopted son, Aaron Rule. We know all of you held a special place in Stan's heart. Unfortunately, neither Alison nor I was able to attend the funeral earlier this year. We were sorry that we missed it: It sounds as if great respect was paid to Stan, which is fantastic. I also thank the member for Macquarie Fields for putting this motion before the House. It is important that we take time to reflect

on the successes of those who have gone before us and to acknowledge the great warriors for our cause and for our party.

Neither Alison nor I knew Stan when he served in this place, but we learned pretty quickly of his reputation when, at different times, we both worked for different members for Werriwa. We learned pretty quickly of the level of respect the community had for their former alderman and local member. We learned pretty quickly of the level of respect and esteem with which he was held in the Labor family of south-west Sydney. We learned pretty quickly just how respected and dedicated he still was to the party that he served at local government and State Government levels. We learned pretty quickly that with Stan, it was a two-for-the-price-of-one deal because we got Marie as well, and we were better for it.

During this debate we have learned from the member who represents the suburb of Ingleburn, the member for Campbelltown, and the member for Macquarie Fields about some of Stan's successes and achievements as an alderman over the 14 years he represented his community proudly and strongly. When Alison and I visited that area at different times, people described to each of us the type of representative Stan was. The expression that most people used to describe him was "old school", which was most apt. Stan was an old-school representative of his community. He was of his community, from his community and he always did his very best for his community—values that all members of this House aspire to have during our parliamentary service. Stan's activism and commitment were grounded in the community he represented and most certainly grounded in the Liverpool South branch of the Labor Party.

It was through working with the Liverpool South branch that I first met Stan and Marie. As we have heard—and it comes as no surprise—between them they ended up running the branch as president and secretary respectively for more than 30 years. Alison and I run a branch together but we have not yet hit anywhere close to 30 years, and I do not think we will match that record. Stan knew that branch inside and out. He knew every member, he knew their families, and he knew the history of the branch. It was from Stan and Marie that I grew to understand some of the branch's history. I appreciated the time they gave to outlining that history to me. Stan put service above self and his community benefited from it, so much so that the next generation of the family continued the job.

We can see that Stan's influence is reflected in this House in the member for Campbelltown but more particularly the member for Macquarie Fields. His influence also was reflected in a former councillor and Mayor of the Campbelltown City Council, Aaron Rule, who is present in the gallery. Stan has never been far from their minds. I know that Stan is never far from the mind of the member for Macquarie Fields. As other members who have preceded me in this debate have said, the best word to sum up Stan Knowles is "staunch", which is pretty high praise from members of the Labor Party. As we pay tribute to Stan and the commitment he made to the Labor Party as well as to his community, I acknowledge on the record that we would not be doing that today but for the contribution of Marie also. I thank both Stan and Marie.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:47): In reply: I thank members who are present in the Chamber for their attendance this afternoon. I express my particular appreciation to my friends and colleagues the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Campbelltown and the member for Wollongong for their fine and fitting words. The days of Donegal suits and two-tone shoes have passed, but so has my friend and mentor, Stan. While his fashion sense may have been a thing of days long gone, the values by which Stan lived and the values he brought to this House are very much alive to this day—values such as decency, honesty and fairness and, above all else, loyalty.

In today's political environment, when the level of public mistrust continues to increase, those personal characteristics are more important than ever. I feel very honoured to have moved the motion and spoken during this debate, which is an appropriate and fitting bookend to Stan's honourable parliamentary career. To Marie, Craig, Liz and Hamish, who are present in the gallery, and to Brent and Janice, who hopefully are live streaming, your loss is shared by many. May Stan rest in peace.

Motion agreed to.

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

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 50/56

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:49): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's digest. Today I will speak to the fiftieth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. This sitting week the digest reviewed the Family Impact Commission Bill 2018 and the Medicinal Cannabis (Compassionate Access) Bill 2018. The digest also commented on four regulations. I will now draw Parliament's attention to some of the main issues raised. The Family Impact Commission Bill 2018 seeks to establish a Family Impact Commission, which would report on the moral, social and economic impact on New South Wales families of existing and proposed laws as well as government spending. The committee noted that the bill includes definitions of family that do not align with the diverse nature of family structures in New South Wales, including de facto couples and single parent families. Marriage is defined as between a man and a woman in the bill, which is different to how marriage is now defined in the Commonwealth Marriage Act. The bill's definitions of marriage and family potentially would leave many people unrepresented by the new commission.

Another issue raised by the bill is whether it is right that the Family Impact Commission can assess whether a proposal or law contradicts or adversely affects the Judeo-Christian ethic. Similarly, under the bill, a person may become a commissioner only if the advisory committee to the commission is satisfied that the person is supportive of the Act's principles. That advisory committee is comprised mainly of religious appointees. We live in a multifaith community, so the committee thinks that these provisions in the bill trespass unduly on freedom of religion. I will now move to the Medicinal Cannabis (Compassionate Access) Bill 2018—a bill that seeks to provide access to medicinal cannabis in certain circumstances. The committee previously reviewed a version of this bill in its thirty-third digest, and many of the same issues are raised.

In this digest, the committee noted that part 2 of the bill allows a parent or guardian to make an application under the Act on behalf of a child. However, the bill does not say whether the application is for the child to be a registered user, or a registered carer of a user. Legislation that could confer carer responsibilities on a child may infringe on the rights of a child. That is why the committee drew this provision to the attention of Parliament. Under the bill, photos of all registered users and carers are to be kept by the Secretary of NSW Health. The bill does not say who can access these photos, or for what purpose. The committee acknowledged that some people may view this as a trespass on the right to privacy. However, given that the bill sets up a scheme for restricting the use of medicinal cannabis to approved individuals, the committee made no further comment.

A key part of the committee's work is reviewing regulations. Regulations can affect the day-to-day lives of people in a big way, so it is an important part of the committee's review function. This digest reviewed four regulations. Two of those regulations require medical and other practitioners to keep records of the names and contact details of individuals affected by chlamydia. Details of that person's partner also are to be kept. The committee was concerned that those two regulations may impact on the right to the privacy of patients and of their relationships—including the identity of their partners. That said, the right to privacy is balanced against other concerns, including those related to public health, such as the need to appropriately manage the spread of disease. Accordingly, the committee made no further comment on this issue.

Another regulation examined by the committee varied the special licence conditions that apply to certain venues in Sydney's central business district and Kings Cross. Licensees must not admit any person who is wearing or carrying anything that displays certain names, including the name of a motorcycle-related organisation. Six new names have been added to the list. Although the committee acknowledged that the regulation aims to increase public safety, it referred this matter to Parliament because the regulation may unduly trespass on a person's freedom of association. That concludes my remarks on Legislation Review Digest No. 50/56. As always, I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's website. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:54): I concur with the comments of the Chair of the Legislation Review Committee on the Legislation Review Digest No. 50/56. The committee considered two bills and four regulations and commented on all of them. When considering the Medicinal Cannabis (Compassionate Access) Bill 2018, the committee noted that an almost identical bill had come before the committee in 2017. Consequently, the committee's comments were similar to those made about the 2017 bill. In itself that is not important, except that when a bill that the committee has already commented on is returned it could be seen that the work of the committee and the comments made by it are not fully taken into consideration by those drafting bills that are introduced to the House. The committee's job is to comment on bills and not to tell people how to do their jobs. We make that comment nevertheless in the hope that such guidance results in better legislation.

Generally, the comments that were made were of a minor nature. However, clause 14 (2) of the Medicinal Cannabis (Compassionate Access) Bill 2018 empowered regulations to create new offences that are not part of the bill before the House. The committee commented on the wide power to create new offences through regulation, rather than bringing the matter before the House in the form of a bill. We will continue to make that comment in the future. In a similar light, the committee commented on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Licence

Register) Regulation 2017. That regulation authorises the regulator to include on the register of licence holders, which is publicly available, "other information that the regulator thinks fit." The committee commented strongly on that and referred the issue to Parliament. As we have done in the past, the committee commented that regulations should particularise the information wanted. The regulation goes beyond what is proper for the regulator or executive to do when creating new offences and requirements without first referring them to the House for scrutiny. I thank my fellow committee members and secretariat staff who support us. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

Matter of Public Importance

NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:59): The 2018 National Rugby League [NRL] season begins this weekend. I am Co-Chair of the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Rugby League, along with the member for Tamworth, a rugby league fan and a dyed-in-the-wool South Sydney Rabbitohs supporter. Rugby league is one of the longest running professional sports in Australia, with the inaugural season of the Rugby Football League first grade played in 1908. There were nine clubs—eight in Sydney and one in Newcastle. In the grand final, which was called the Royal Agricultural Society Challenge Shield, the Rabbitohs got up over the Eastern Suburbs, which was a good start.

Since its beginnings more than a century ago, rugby league has enjoyed many highs and endured many lows, with team mergers, the super league split-off, and my beloved Rabbitohs being kicked out of the league. But throughout the entire period, rugby league has maintained its place in the hearts of men, women and children across New South Wales and in other parts of our great nation. Rugby league, and indeed sport in general, is an immensely positive force in our society. There are health and fitness benefits for players young and old—amateur and professional. Social and developmental benefits come with team sport, particularly for junior players. Many young players gain a great deal from having role models in the professional league. That is evident with First Nations people and players and should be encouraged.

The most prominent and important benefit of rugby league is simple—it is fun and enjoyable. Whether it is a young bloke playing in the under-8s, mum and dad watching the game on television at home with the kids, or the thousands of dedicated fans who attend the games week in and week out, all fans do what they do for the same reason: It brings them great joy and it is a fun way to spend their increasingly scarce time. The start of the 2018 season is exciting for a number of reasons. First, it will be the first season under the new NRL television broadcast deal, which will include more big matches being played in the earlier evening time slots to encourage a more family-friendly broadcast and schedule.

The new elite women's programs will be launched, with a national championship to be played in the middle of the year and the new NRL women's premiership to be played in September. The teams that will compete in the inaugural women's premiership will be announced in the next month. This year, the first women's State of Origin will be played as a standalone fixture, broadcast live during prime time. The location is yet to be announced, but it is pending. I congratulate Todd Greenberg, Jaymes Boland-Rudder and the NRL team on what is looking to be an exciting season. Another exciting change is the NRL's slogan for this year, "This is How We League." The new slogan celebrates the diverse rugby league fan base across New South Wales and Australia. It acknowledges that every rugby league fan, from the bandwagoners to the life members, is what makes rugby league the wonderful game that we enjoy. The first round of the season kicks off in a couple of hours, with the St George Illawarra Dragons and Brisbane Broncos playing in Kogarah.

It is not often that we agree unanimously on things in this place, but I can confidently say that we all join the members representing the electorates of Kogarah, Rockdale and Oatley in hoping for a Dragons win against the Queensland-based team. I am told by the NRL's well-known statistician David Middleton that the Broncos have not won at Kogarah for almost 20 years, so I am quietly confident that the Dragons will get the job done again tonight. I encourage all members of this place to support rugby league in each of their communities, whether it is their local junior club or, if they are fortunate enough to have one, their first-grade team. I commend the National Rugby League for all the wonderful things it does in our communities on and off the field and wish everyone involved all the best for a great season in 2018. According to the Chinese zodiac, 2018 is the Year of the Dog, but I have a strong feeling that when it comes to rugby league, 2018 will undoubtedly be the Year of the Rabbit. Most importantly, the game will be the winner.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:04): As Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Rugby League it gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on this matter of public importance on the National Rugby League [NRL]. My focus will be on the game's community approach to preventing domestic and family

violence. The league not only provides entertainment on the field but also undertakes significant work off the field in our communities. The NRL is committed to utilising its powerful voice to take action to prevent violence against women and children. It is the game's stance that domestic violence and family violence are never acceptable. The NRL's Voice Against Violence initiative was expanded in 2016, and this expanded initiative is now in its second year of operation. The aim of the expanded initiative is to assist the rugby league community to stand up, speak out and take action to prevent violence against women and children.

There is no better time to talk about being a voice against violence than on International Women's Day. The Voice Against Violence strategy includes to use the game's reach, profile, clubs and players to assist the rugby league community to stand up and to acknowledge that a gender-based violence issue exists in Australia and for the game to speak out against gender-based violence through clearly communicating a strong stance on the issue. Further, the strategy aims to take action to proactively contribute to the prevention of violence against women and children by addressing the drivers of such violence, in particular gender inequality, to educate and inform young men in grassroots clubs through an interactive face-to-face session and to continue to educate and develop league players, staff and ambassadors to be leaders in respectful relationships within the clubs and communities.

The plans for Voice Against Violence in 2018 in regional New South Wales are to continue to leverage the Australian Kangaroos and Jillaroos to deliver the Voice Against Violence workshop to 60 grassroots clubs across Australia, if possible, to deliver the Voice Against Violence education workshops in Fiji and Papua New Guinea with the support of local expert partners and to continue to develop education programs such as Better Choices and Respectful Relationships to our rising stars and elite players and administration staff. I know these programs are very welcome in Tamworth, and the aim is to pass on the lessons from these programs to the juniors coming through the league who were playing on paddocks right across regional New South Wales.

Another plan is to develop specific Voice Against Violence workshops and resources for workplaces, Junior League administrators and volunteers. The Voice Against Violence initiative continues to be the frontline for the NRL in looking at what has to be done both on and off the field as part of its corporate social responsibility in the cities as well as regional New South Wales, from Tamworth to Turrumurra, from Walgett to Wollongong, from Dubbo to Dapto. Voice Against Violence should be loud and strong. The NRL is taking games to the country. There has already been a Charity Shield match in Mudgee and this year there will be games in Tamworth, Bathurst and Mudgee.

There will be more regional premiership games than ever. The match in Tamworth features the Wests Tigers versus the Knights on 21 April at Scully Park. I invite all members to come to Scully Park, because yours truly will be the ground announcer. We will be singing up a storm for the NRL when the Wests Tigers take on the Knights. I thank Wests League's Wests Entertainment Group for taking the games to the country on behalf of the NRL. I invite my colleagues to Scully Park for round 7 of the NRL on Saturday 21 April 2018. I commend the NRL for taking the game to the country as well for its stance against domestic and family violence, Voice Against Violence.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:09): I thank the member for Campbelltown for bringing forward this matter of public importance, the return of the National Rugby League [NRL] season. Needless to say, the Newcastle Knights, the stars in my electorate, are my favourite team in the competition. The team is a case study for the positive effects of the NRL in a community. I attended the team's launch on Friday night and spent the night speaking with these men. I should say that I believe we will be handing back the wooden spoon this season and using it to wallop anyone that gets in our way on our way up the ladder!

We have had a couple of tough years, but 2018 will be the year we work our way to the top with new signings of Kalyn Ponga, Aiden Guerra, Chris Heighington, Herman Ese'ese, Tautau Moga, Connor Watson and, of course, Mitchell Pearce. The 2018 co-captains of the team are Jamie Buhner and new Knight, Mitchell Pearce. Under their leadership we are expecting more wins and, who knows, possibly a third Premiership in the next year or two. The excitement for the season is palpable in our city: There is a real buzz. Due to a remarkable show of loyalty from the Novocastrian faithful, the Knights have managed to increase their corporate support and potentially their number of memberships, despite collecting their third consecutive wooden spoon last season. Chief Executive Officer [CEO] of the Knights Phil Gardner said:

I have a few contracts still to be signed, but it looks like at this stage, for the first time since the stadium was upgraded, we'll have every one of the enclosed corporate boxes sold. ... From that perspective, the support of the community has been humbling.

It has been said often that when the Knights are happy, the town is happy. We even beat last year's premiers, Melbourne, in their trial match last month. It would be remiss of me to not talk about the Women's Newcastle Knights team, which is following in the footsteps of the W-League Newcastle Jets team. In the opening game of the Tarsha Gale Cup against the St George Dragons, the women's Knights absolutely smashed it with 54-10

victory. They continued this theme when they followed it up with a comfortable 92-4 win over the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs.

The first Knights game is Friday 9 March at our home ground of McDonald Jones Stadium. The Manly Warringah Sea Eagles will not know what hit them when they meet the 2018 Newcastle Knights on their own turf. The greatest force in the McDonald Jones Stadium is when thousands of Knights fans open their mouths and empty their lungs as they demonstrate their three-syllable hometown name is just made for chanting: New-ca-stle! New-ca-stle! As Scott Bean so eloquently says, "The roar of identity can be so loud that, sitting in the stands, you have no hope of hearing the lungs of the players working ever harder as they run down the race and onto the field." But the Knights can hear us. Go hard, go Knights, go proud!

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:12): By leave: I contribute to the debate on this matter of public importance on the National Rugby League and thank the member for Campbelltown for bringing it before us today, because it gives me an opportunity to talk about 110 years of North Sydney rugby league. I joined the North Sydney Bears for their season launch and the women's rugby league team launch, who will participate in the Harvey Norman NSW Women's Premiership competition in 2018. I thank the Norths Group and Luke Simmonds, who are extremely passionate about strengthening women's sport in the local community and have supported this fantastic initiative in women's sport. It is worth noting that women make up more than 50 per cent of the Norths membership base, and it is great to see them supporting women in our community even further.

The Bears have also proudly announced Ben Gardiner as head coach. Ben is very familiar with the Bears' culture and brand from his stint coaching the Men's ISP NSW Cup over the last few seasons. He understands the significance of this day. The Bears have recruited new players for 2018 including experienced player Barbara Waddell. Local girl Isabella Parkman is also one of the Bears' newest recruits. I thank the Forestville Ferrets, a team that has produced many of the women players joining the North Sydney Bears. The North Sydney Bears, who have played at North Sydney Oval since 1910, are a great part of the social fabric of the North Shore community.

North Sydney was one of the original founding members of the New South Wales Rugby Football League and one of Australia's first rugby league football teams. It was nearly dropped from the competition during World War I because of dwindling spectator numbers, but towards the end of the war North's fortunes improved. Playing quality and spectator numbers increased, and the team, coached by Chris McKivat, won two premierships, one in 1921 and the other in 1922. The team became known as the North Sydney Bears after accepting a sponsorship from the nearby Big Bear supermarket in Neutral Bay—my local shopping centre. The club has had many successes, but notably on 23 August 1998 at North Sydney Oval it won a match by 62 points—that is, 62 to nil—against the North Queensland Cowboys. We hark back far for these great outcomes.

Last week I joined the North Sydney Bears for its season launch. It was a pleasure to see our community engaging to support this historic sporting organisation and celebrating 110 years of North Sydney rugby league. I thank the board of directors for their leadership, including Perry Lopez, Mark Dowel, Marty Lawson, Peter McGrath, Justin Owen, Fred Thompson and Sean Wiles, I also thank Greg Florimo for all the work he does for the Bears, including what he has done to deliver this new women's team. I also thank the North Sydney Bears premier team players, led by the new captain Billy Britain, who has joined us from Brisbane, and all the other North Sydney Bears team players. I look forward to supporting you out on the paddock.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:15): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Tamworth, Newcastle and North Shore for contributing to this matter of public importance. In particular I thank the member for Tamworth taking this opportunity to do two very important things. First, he highlighted the National Rugby League's [NRL] anti-violence campaign Stand Up, Speak Out, Take Action. It is a very important issue and it is good to see the NRL showing leadership on this matter. Secondly, it was good to hear him talking about how the games are getting out into the bush and how well the NRL is doing in engaging country and regional areas. As I am originally from Dubbo I understand how people in the bush can feel alienated and probably a bit left behind at times. I thank the member for Newcastle for his passion for his beloved Newcastle Knights. We always have friendly banter—and of course the Rabbits are my priority—but I certainly would like to see the Knights have a better year this year than it had last year.

I was delighted to hear the member for North Shore, particularly on International Women's Day, speak of the good work that the Bears are doing for women's rugby league, which continues to develop. The NRL is showing good leadership in having more equity in the game and in promoting women in sport and women's rugby league. Recently I attended a lunch where Chief Executive Officer Todd Greenberg addressed the gathering. The vast majority of his speech was about the good work the NRL is doing with women in rugby league. I thank the member for North Shore for her passionate support for the North Sydney Bears and women's rugby league. I thank the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I wish Paul Gallen and the Cronulla Sharks a great season. It is my first team. I also wish Russell Crowe, who is a constituent of mine, and the Bunnies all the best for their season.

Community Recognition Statements

GREAT LAKES UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB VIKING CHALLENGE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:18): I inform the House of the success last weekend of the annual Great Lakes United Football Club Viking Challenge. A record 158 teams contested the Viking Challenge converging on the North Tuncurry sporting complex from across the State. It was a great weekend of football for all the men's and women's teams, and we turned on beautiful sunny conditions for some super competitive matches. The Viking Challenge is a great event, driving sport-based tourism into regional New South Wales with close to 3,000 visitors and bringing millions of dollars into the Myall Lakes economy. Congratulations to club President, Ray Brady; Treasurer, Karen Fraser; Vice-President, Tony Russ; chief barbecue cook, Pete Flowers; Secretary, Kevin Stevens; canteen coordinator, Leslie Campbell; and event organisers Paul Sandilands and Jerrard Allen for a job well done.

COUNCIL OF AFGHAN COMMUNITIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:19): I recognise the Council of Afghan Communities in New South Wales. This is a new organisation, which was formally inaugurated on 25 February this year at Liverpool. It was formed by eight existing organisations in the Afghan community joining together. This is obviously a positive development and can only be of benefit to the community. It equally obviously has benefits for the Government and departmental structures in engaging with a peak body in the community. Present at the inauguration meeting was His Excellency the Ambassador in Australia of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Wahidullah Waissi. I was invited to the event by Sayed Hussainizada of the Afghan Fajar Association Incorporated, the treasurer of the new council. I also acknowledge the president of the new council, Amir Karimi. It was a pleasure to be invited to the inauguration meeting. I wish the organisation well for the future.

ARMIDALE AND NEW ENGLAND SHOW SOCIETY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (16:19): I recognise president Kelso Looker and all members of his committee who comprise the Armidale and New England Show Society on the successful holding of the 143rd annual Armidale and New England Show last weekend. It was one of the best shows yet wherever one walked throughout the showgrounds, whether watching the horse sports, walking through the beautiful pavilions looking at the wonderful work and produce of locals both young and old, or visiting the demolition derby, the ute show, the cattle pavilion, the sheep, the polo, or the wonderful showgirl competition run by Emma Hooper this year. All the famous sights and delights of sideshow alley were there. This year the magnificent catering committee headed by Glenda Fittler looked after the cooking and decorated cakes section. I congratulate Kelso and all the committee on a terrific Armidale and New England Show.

GRANVILLE ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR SUSIE BOYD

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:21): Today is International Women's Day and I pay tribute to the amazing and energetic Granville Woman of the Year Susie Boyd. Many of us in this place know Susie. She is the highly respected New South Wales President of the Parents and Citizens Association, where she tries to actively engage parents and parents and citizens associations [P & Cs] across the State to become more active and be effective advocates for their children's schools. Susie has been involved in the Merrylands High School Parents and Citizens Association for more than 10 years and organises the annual trivia night fundraiser. In 2016 Susie was awarded the Sydney Mid-West Volunteer of the Year award, recognising her enormous contribution to P&Cs local and statewide, but more importantly her work in empowering others to make a contribution. Susie is a great advocate for public education. My community is lucky to have her tireless efforts. I congratulate Susie and thank her for all she does.

BALGOWLAH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:21): It gives me pleasure to update the House and congratulate the students and staff of Balgowlah Boys High School on another incredible set of National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] results. For the fourth year in a row the students of Balgowlah Boys have achieved significant NAPLAN success. It is an incredible result. It is only one of a few schools in New South Wales to have had such a strong record of improvement. Although the NAPLAN is not everything, it is a building block for students on their way to higher learning, and it is great to see the strong focus of staff at Balgowlah Boys on students' numeracy and literacy, which are studied for 20 minutes every day distinct from their regular English and maths lessons. I congratulate principal Paul Sheather and his staff on their incredibly successful program.

I was delighted to join the Premier and Minister for Education last year to launch the Higher School Certificate at Balgowlah Boys. I look forward to seeing the next group of talented students enter their senior studies. I wish them all the very best for the coming year. I congratulate Paul Sheather and all the teaching staff at Balgowlah Boys High School.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:22): On this International Women's Day I thank all of the women of Wollongong who contribute so much to making our community what it is. Throughout its history Wollongong has been blessed with women who are willing to stand up to fight for our community and the causes they believe in, whether it is the women who were among the first on the scene following mine disasters or industrial accidents; the women who took on BHP so that they could have a fair shot at a job in the steelworks; those who have led our communities as elected representatives at local, State and Federal levels; or those who have dedicated time, energy and effort—often with very little recognition—to keep community organisations and institutions going.

I take this opportunity to thank some of the women who help and support me—Inta Scully, Jane Scully, Rosemary Scully, Annabelle Scully-Butcher and the wonderful, thoughtful and amazing Alison Byrnes—whose support, encouragement and advice, and the occasional bit of criticism, are exceptional and assist me greatly in this role. We have progressed a great deal, but there is so much more to do to bring about equality for women.

TENTERFIELD SHOW

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (16:23): The Tenterfield Show was held on 9 to 11 February and once again showcased some of the best rural and agricultural exhibits. I recognise Keely Mooney, who was crowned Tenterfield Showgirl for 2018. This year marked 50 years of the Tenterfield Showgirl competition. I know through my associations with Keely, that she will continue to be a fantastic ambassador for Tenterfield. Unfortunately, I could not attend the show this year, but I thank Minister Adam Marshall, who opened the show, and Austin Curtin, who represented me during the official opening. It is wonderful to see Keely acknowledged in this important way. I wish her all the best for her future endeavours.

LAKE MACQUARIE SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR ERIN CLEAVER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:24): On International Women's Day I recognise the outstanding athletic achievements of Paralympic track and field athlete, Erin Cleaver, who was awarded dual honours at the Lake Macquarie Sports Awards, which I attended on 17 February. She was named Lake Macquarie Sportsperson of the Year and she also took out the Scholarship for Athletes with a Disability, in recognition of her incredible sporting achievements throughout 2017. Those achievements include: winning gold in the long jump at the Australian Athletics Championships; winning silver at the International Paralympic Committee World Championships in London; and winning gold in the New South Wales Junior, Open and Combined High Schools championships for the 100 and 200 metre sprints. Erin's athletic track record goes back further than 2017, having previously represented Australia at the 2016 Rio Paralympics. At the age of 18, Erin has competed successfully in State, national and international arenas. Congratulations, Erin. I look forward to watching you win more gold!

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Terrigal, I ask members not to converse while other members are giving their community recognition statements. It is obviously somewhat annoying to the member speaking.

VISSLA CENTRAL COAST PRO

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:25): This week Avoca Beach will play host to some of the world's best surfers, with the Vissla Central Coast Pro running from Wednesday until Sunday. It is expected that more than 200 surfers representing 18 different countries will take part in this fantastic five-day competition. The Central Coast Pro is a great opportunity to showcase our region to hundreds of surfers and fans from around the world. As part of the Pro Surf Series, which has traversed the beautiful New South Wales coastline over the past few months, this event also provides a huge boost for our local businesses and accommodation providers. Good luck to local participants Wade Carmichael and Macy Callaghan, who achieved high scores in 2017 and will be competing again this year with a local advantage. I am delighted to welcome the Central Coast Pro back to Avoca Beach for the third consecutive year. I wish all competitors the best of luck over the weekend.

CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:26): Central Coast Community Legal Centre is a community-owned-and-run, not-for-profit organisation that aims to promote social justice for the people of the New South Wales Central Coast. The centre provides free legal help for people living, working and studying on the Central Coast who cannot afford a lawyer. Its staff are often the first people to help many of the vulnerable

people who come into my office for help. They give priority to people living in poverty, Aboriginal people, people living in fear of violence and people with a disability. In other words, they stand up for those in need. They care about the wellbeing of our society and service a dire need to create a fairer society based on access to justice. There are more than 100 community legal centres in our country and 40 in our State. The Central Coast Community Legal Centre is a vital part of this network. I thank the centre for the work it does for the Central Coast community

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR VIRGINIA HOWARD

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:27): This International Women's Day I congratulate an exceptional woman who has been named the 2018 North Shore Woman of the Year, Virginia Howard. Virginia has received this award as a result of her significant contributions in the field of local government, charity administration and education. Virginia is currently the Chair of Taldumande Youth Services, a not-for-profit organisation that supports vulnerable and homeless children, and young people aged 12 to 21 and their families. She is also involved in the Dougherty Retirement Village and Care Home and is director of Bendigo Bank Mosman.

Virginia works with Mosman Community Services. She served as Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Mosman Council and served the council for 16 years. She was also an executive director of the Wenona Foundation and an administrator of Mosman Meals on Wheels. She has worked for the Australian Red Cross, taught English at Loreto Kirribilli and undertook Community Relations in Queenwood School for Girls. She is the true definition of a North Shore local, and constantly gives back her time and energy to our community to make it a better place. I congratulate Virginia and thank her for her work.

WILLIAMTOWN SAND MINE PROPOSAL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:28): I have spoken in this place many times about the endurance and resilience of the residents of Williamstown. Not only are these residents dealing with the impact of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances [PFAS] contamination coming from the local RAAF base, which has polluted their water supply, but now they are also fighting plans for a sand mine next to their properties. These residents came together at a community forum last week to get organised before an upcoming Planning Assessment Commission meeting. I thank residents Cain Gorfine, Brian Curry, Fran Laffan, Mary Sampson, Kay Rochester and Max Reddie who spoke at the meeting. These personal stories are so important in explaining the impact of this development in a contamination zone where surely there are too many uncertainties to approve a sand mine. The sand mine was started by the former council through a dodgy tender process. I urge all affected residents to attend the Planning Assessment Commission public meeting this Monday, 12 March, at 12.30 p.m. at the Mercure Hotel. I also thank Port Stephens Mayor, Ryan Palmer, councillor Giacomo Arnott and former councillor Geoff Dingle for attending the meeting.

NATIONAL INDOOR HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLISTS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:29): I congratulate four Grafton hockey players who have recently participated at the National Under 15 Indoor Hockey Championships conducted by Hockey Australia. Toby Power is a star on the rise in the umpiring ranks and was invited to umpire at the boys' events, while Tyler Gaddes and Jake Lambeth both played in the winning New South Wales team and walked away with gold medals. Grace Young played in the New South Wales girls team, which was also a successful winning time, having gone through the championships undefeated. Congratulations to each of these local sports stars. I wish them continued success into the future.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

MAMBO WETLANDS

Discussion

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:30): Today, I bring a simple message from my community to the Premier and her Government: Buy back the Mambo Wetlands before it is too late. I thank everyone who is in the gallery today for travelling here from Port Stephens. I know that you have made a big effort and I know how much you care about the Mambo Wetlands. Why are we here? We are here because almost 15,000 people have signed a petition urging this Government to buy back the Mambo Wetlands. Yesterday, in this place, I thanked the many businesses, community groups and residents who have worked so hard to gain so many signatures in such a short time. It is a hard task and I thank them so much for their work, but it shows just how much our community cares about this. But the real reason we are here is that this Government decided to sell a six-hectare portion of the Mambo Wetlands to a developer for a paltry \$250,000.

Sensitive environmental land, core koala habitat, and home to multiple threatened species, sold off to fund a ridiculous stadium splurge in Sydney. It does not get much lower than this. For the benefit of those who have not had the privilege of visiting the Mambo Wetlands, let me give you a taste. As you walk among the beautiful old growth trees—ferns, eucalypts and blackbutts—the Mambo Wetlands buzz with vitality. Koalas sit high above you and sea eagles peer down on you. Other many threatened animals call it home—the powerful owl, squirrel gliders, wallum froglets, flying-foxes and green bell frogs. It is the only known place in the world, where koalas amble down to the beach to lick the minerals from the sand. It is unique.

The part of the wetlands that has been sold off is the high ground where the koalas breed. A koala carer told me that development of the site could see Port Stephens koalas become extinct. This is what is at stake; we are not making this up. The NSW Scientific Committee recently assessed our koala population as being in critical decline and recommended that it be listed as endangered. Given the obvious importance of the site, people often ask: How did this happen? Why and how did the Government sell it off? The answer is: Quickly. A for sale sign was erected on 7 May 2016 and within just one month, it was sold for a paltry \$250,000 in an online auction to a developer. When the for sale sign went up, my community rallied.

We wrote to Ministers with portfolio responsibilities for Education, Environment and Finance, and the Premier, urging them to stop the sale. We held rallies and a community forum. I handed to the then Minister for Education a petition signed by hundreds of residents urging the Government to stop the sale. But no-one listened. After the sale, the Government's spokesperson for the Hunter, Scot MacDonald, had the gall to describe the sale as a "mistake". Then, in an effort to recover the situation, the Hon. Catherine Cusack misled the upper House and said that the community did not make enough effort to let the Ministers know how important the land was. Suddenly, it was the community's fault. Seriously, we are sick of the excuses, and we are sick of the politicking. People of every political persuasion have been involved in this community-led campaign. This is not about politics. It is because we care deeply about the environment in which we live, and we care deeply about our community.

It is bleedingly obvious that on any environmental measure, the Mambo Wetlands should be preserved. Culturally, the wetlands are also important, having been walked by the Worimi people for centuries. Economically, the wetlands are vital. Visitors come to Port Stephens for all it has to offer, but particularly to see our bluewater wonderlands. We have the largest marine park in the State and we are the dolphin capital of Australia. Without the Mambo Wetlands serving as the lungs of the Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park, the health of our entire ecosystem would be under threat. We all have a moral obligation to take care of this beautiful land. We owe it to future generations to protect it so that they, too, can see koalas in the wild. Under this Government's watch, the chances of that happening are diminishing by the day.

Perhaps the only thing Government members will understand is the politics of this issue. If the Government does not buy back the Mambo Wetlands, it will never hold the electorate of Port Stephens again. If this Government does not buy back the Mambo Wetlands, when the Labor Party forms government next year it will return it to public hands. I hope that today we hear something of substance from members opposite. I do not want to hear more mumblings about the Government not being able to buy it back or that it will look into it. We have had enough of that. Members opposite have a moral, environmental, economic and cultural responsibility to buy back this land, which they never should have flogged off. They have the opportunity now to do the right thing by the environment and by my community. The Government should make the choice to buy back Mambo Wetlands.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I am in the chair every Thursday for the discussion of petitions, and every Thursday there is more and more aggravation. Although the subject is emotive, I ask those in the gallery to refrain from making comments or applauding. Members are trying to discuss the petition respectfully.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:37): I thank community members for their interest and concern, and congratulate them on being able to gather more than 10,000 signatures on a petition dealing with an issue that is extremely important to them. Well done. I will provide some background about the land concerned and work forward. The Department of Education acquired the site on Port Stephens Drive from Port Stephens Council in 1959. The Minister for Education declared the site surplus to the department's requirements and its disposal was approved. The sale was subsequently approved by Cabinet, and the approval required the net proceeds to be retained by the Department of Education for reinvestment in school infrastructure. The department engaged Property NSW in November 2015 to manage the sale of the site. The site was sold by competitive process on the open market on 9 June 2016, as mandated by NSW Treasury guidelines.

The Mambo Wetlands site is zoned "E2 Environmental Conservation". The site was presented to the market with full disclosure of the environmental constraints and the associated protections. An independent flora and fauna assessment identifying species of ecological significance was attached to the contract for sale, and the

report informed prospective purchasers of their legal responsibilities. Any future development of the site would be subject to legislation and local council approval. I will explain why the Government went through this process, and then I will address what is happening now. Property NSW provides a diverse range of services on behalf of the New South Wales Government, including property reform, asset management, transactions, major projects, place making, valuation services and infrastructure advice.

One role of Property NSW is to manage the sale of underperforming or surplus assets and recycle the capital. The Government's stated policy is to divest assets that are not core to service delivery or are not of long-term strategic importance and use the proceeds to invest in infrastructure and improved frontline services. Underutilised property creates an unnecessary financial burden on the State and the proceeds from divestment can be otherwise redeployed to other essential service needs. All divestments undergo rigorous analysis prior to sale and the value extracted from these properties is invested into infrastructure and frontline services for the people of New South Wales.

This site was approved for sale with the provision that the proceeds were to be used by the Department of Education for reinvestment in school infrastructure. The Government committed to acting in the best interests of New South Wales taxpayers on all commercial transactions, including ensuring that divestments deliver an optimal return to the State. Properties are sold in accordance with government policy, which includes that independent valuation advice is obtained and an open market process followed to ensure maximum value for the State's taxpayers. All government property sales need to comply with New South Wales Treasury guidelines, which stipulate that market value must be realised.

I highlight some of the things that have been sold in the past. The sale of the old Newcastle courthouse on behalf of the Department of Justice returned \$6.6 million and the proceeds were reinvested into initiatives for the Department of Justice, including the new \$90 million courthouse at Hunter Street. More than \$500 million realised from the sale of properties in Millers Point were reinvested by the Department of Family and Community Services for social housing across the State. They are some positive examples of asset recycling for the State. I say to those in the gallery that the Minister for Planning is currently investigating the potential to purchase the land. The New South Wales Government has provided more than \$145,000 to Port Stephens Council for koala habitat protection projects. This matter is being reviewed. I cannot say now, because the matter is under investigation, but maybe there will be an outcome that the community could be pleased with.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:41): I congratulate the ladies and gentlemen in the gallery on their efforts in getting so many signatures on the petition and having it debated in Parliament today. Indeed, without this debate, we might not have been able to bell the cat as loudly. I point out some fundamentals with respect to the contribution of the member for Myall Lakes, who represents the Government. The first fundamental is that the Government puts money before the environment or people. The second fundamental is that the Government knew all about the environmental sensitivities of that land when it sold it. The third fundamental is that while the Government is cutting a 1.5 per cent efficiency dividend out of education, which in any given year equates to about \$150 million, it is selling a block of land for \$250,000, which equates to 1 per cent of 100,000 of the Education budget. But the Government has not been able to tell the people of New South Wales what it spent that money on. It is an absolute disgrace.

I do not know why Government members hate koalas. I do not know why they hate communities. I do not know why they hate the environment. I know what they do love—a little cash. It is important to sell everything across regional New South Wales so they can build infrastructure in Sydney. People in the gallery will get a lot of benefit from the tunnels, trains and things like that. I am the shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property. I understand what Property NSW is for. The member for Myall Lakes does not. He has received a really bad brief today. Property NSW was invented about four years ago with one purpose—that is, to sell. The other departments were told, "Find everything that can be sold, send it over to Property NSW and we'll sell it." To the Government's credit, it has been a wonderful success because today \$50 billion worth of property and assets that used to belong to the people of New South Wales are now gone.

Property NSW has only one purpose. For the member for Myall Lakes to pretend that Property NSW does anything other than sell shows he fundamentally does not understand the purpose of Property NSW—or the legislation and the speech of the Minister who introduced the legislation for Property NSW. Once that legislation was put in the hands of Property NSW it was only going one way. Those opposite have belled the cat today. They do not care about the members of the community who are in the gallery. They do not care about koalas. They do not care about the environment. They do not care about the broader community. They only care about the dollars for Sydney. They are a disgrace.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:45): I too congratulate those members of the community in the gallery on their efforts on this important issue. I am not at all taking away any of the value of their time, effort, passion and belief in the protection of the Mambo Wetlands, but there are a few things we need

to talk about. The member for Cessnock said the sole purpose of Property NSW is to sell land. I will take him back a step. One of his own party members, former Labor lands Minister Tony Kelly, sold off prime public land at Palm Beach for \$1. Because of the corruption of the former Labor Government and its Ministers, Property NSW now has a proper process in place.

Properties, including the one at Salamander Bay, are sold in accordance with government policy, which includes that independent valuation advice is obtained and an open market process is followed to ensure maximum value for the State's taxpayers. The so-called furphy that we are "selling off everything" we own because we are all taxpayers is absolute garbage. The shadow Minister for Finances, Services and Property does not have his head around the budget because the balance sheet of the State has gone up by more than \$60 billion.

Ms Anna Watson: Because you've sold everything.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: There it is: Those opposite do not understand the balance sheet. This Government is currently investigating buying back that land. How are those opposite going to help the community achieve their goals when they do not even understand what a balance sheet is? Seriously, Opposition members talk about putting people before the environment and profits before people. With that money that is recycled, people are in schools and hospitals. We have nurses and police, and we have to pay for them.

Ms Tamara Smith: I seek leave to make a contribution.

Leave not granted.

Community Recognition Statements

KIAMA ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR SHARON PARKER

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:49): I congratulate Sharon Parker of Kiama Downs on being the recipient of the 2018 Kiama Electorate Woman of the Year award. Ms Parker's many years of dedication and hard work in the local community is evidenced in many ways, especially through her role as the Community Development Manager at North Kiama Neighbourhood Centre. Furthermore, Sharon's continued advocacy for the North Kiama Neighbourhood Centre has led to the upgrade of its amenities, ensuring that its status will be maintained as a vital community hub for people of all ages. This includes everyone from young people who use the skate park to seniors who attend group activities. The Kiama U3A regularly use the centre. Ms Parker is an extraordinary member of our community who is doing wonderful things. Sharon is not just a deserving recipient of this award, she is also a tremendous example of someone who is passionate about helping others. She is universally respected and this award is deserving recognition for her awesome efforts. It was a pleasure to join her and her mother today at the International Convention Centre where she was duly recognised as Kiama's Woman of the Year.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:50): On this International Women's Day 2018 I recognise the many fantastic and inspiring women in the electorate of the Blue Mountains. It is not often that our humble hardworking staff are noted in this place. I acknowledge Suzie Van Opdorp, Kirsty Graham and Camille Walsh for their confidence, good humour and intelligence as part of a strong and sassy team. I could not do my job without them. I acknowledge the Blue Mountains Local Woman of the Year, Robyn Yates, OAM. Robyn has taken a holistic approach to helping people in our community manage cancer diagnoses with a focus on nutrition, mind, body and spirit. Cancer Wellness Support, formerly Blue Mountains Cancer Help, was set up by Robyn. She has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to caring for people with cancer. In 2015 Robyn was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for this work. I extend love and strength to Robyn in the next chapter of her life.

CHINESE WHISPERS: IN SEARCH OF IVY

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:51): For Pymble lawyer Alison Choy Flannigan, undertaking genealogical research has been an emotional and eye-opening experience. In 1972 her mother, born Ivy Gertrude Lai, died during a holiday in Los Angeles when Alison was only seven years old. While she was aware of her mother's Chinese origins Alison knew very little about when and why her family had come to Australia and how they had spent their lives. Thirteen years after her investigations started, Alison has written the first of three books about her findings called *Chinese Whispers: In Search of Ivy*. With no other living relatives to assist her, she has examined State archives and court records. She has been able to find that her grandfather and his two brothers had joined the gold rush in Cooktown, Queensland, in the 1890s, where her mother was born. Alison has learned that the family eventually became general merchants, trading goods including opium. Other records have revealed that Alison's mother trained as a nurse during World War II at Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, which, coincidentally, Alison now represents as a lawyer. I look forward to the publication of volumes two and three of Alison's family history.

NSW SWIMMING COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:52): I bring to the attention of the House the sporting achievements of Oak Flats Swimming Club and, in particular, two swimmers: Clint Ridding and Cooper Smart. Just over a week ago, Oak Flats Swimming Club sent nine exceptional swimmers to the 2018 NSW Swimming Country Championships at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre. The small but talented squad made the entire community of Shellharbour very proud. Mr Clint Ridding was the most successful of the club's swimmers, finishing first in the 14 years 50 metre freestyle and second in the 100 metre freestyle. His win in the 50 metre freestyle was a photo finish, with Clint winning gold by just one one-hundredth of a second. Mr Cooper Smart also had a very impressive weekend, finishing third in both the 200 metre and 400 metre freestyle for his age group. I congratulate each and every member of the Oak Flats Swimming Club team that participated in the 2018 NSW Country Championships. I look forward to hearing about their achievements and successes again in the future.

CUDGEN HEADLAND SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:53): I congratulate Cudgen Headland Surf Life Saving Club on claiming the country championships title at the NSW Surf Life Saving Envirobank Country Championships held at South West Rocks recently. Cudgen Headland Surf Life Saving Club was guided by coach Scott McCartney. They took the win from their close rivals, Sawtell Surf Life Saving Club. Byron Bay Surf Life Saving Club claimed third. Cudgen Headland will host the event next year. I am sure they are looking forward to the challenge of retaining the title on home soil.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR CHRISTINE BURGE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:54): I am proud to recognise the Gosford Local Woman of the Year and community champion, Christine Burge. Christine was recognised for her tireless work supporting vulnerable local residents and her incredible love and dedication to the peninsula, which she displays by managing Mary Mac's Place in Woy Woy. Mary Mac's offers food, assistance, advice, and access to services for disadvantaged and homeless people living on the Woy Woy Peninsula and, in some circumstances, to people from Sydney and Newcastle.

Christine works tirelessly to support and care for those who are less fortunate in our community and coordinates a team of volunteers at the Ethel Cox Centre in Woy Woy, serving up 100 meals a day, five days a week, using quality ingredients generously donated by the community and local businesses. Words cannot express how grateful our community is to Christine for her work. I could not think of anyone more deserving of this award. Without Christine and Mary Mac's Place, more local people would go without food or clothing, and more people would sleep rough each night. Mary Mac's Place would not survive without the hard work of Christine and her team of volunteers.

YOUTHMOVES PROGRAM

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:55): An innovative youth-led project on the South Coast, Youthmoves—Inspire. Create. Lead, was awarded \$48,000 in New South Wales Government funding to support young people to develop a range of skills that will assist them find employment. Bay and Basin Community Resources, the organisation responsible for the Youthmoves program, will target more than 100 local young people to organise and host a series of free events such as a summer family carnival, outdoor movie night and a performance workshop.

The program allows young people, who might otherwise have difficulty finding employment, to get a taste for event management in a supportive environment as well as create key networks, work in a team environment, and engage meaningfully with the local community. I applaud the work of the Bay and Basin Community Resources team, led by Chief Executive Officer Sue Clifton, for their hard work and dedication in developing and implementing the successful program. I wish good luck to the young people currently participating. I had the pleasure of meeting them recently during the visit by the Minister with responsibility for youth to the South Coast.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR CAROLYN BEAR

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:56): Last month was Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month—a crucial campaign to ensure that every woman knows the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer is an insidious disease, with symptoms that are easily missed or misdiagnosed. This often leads to a delayed diagnosis, which results in a heartbreaking survival rate of just 44 per cent. So today, on International Women's Day, I was really pleased to be able to announce Carolyn Bear as Swansea's Local Woman of the Year. After losing her

daughter Kylie to ovarian cancer some years ago, Carolyn has dedicated herself to raising awareness about ovarian cancer and raising much-needed funds for ovarian cancer research.

Carolyn and her husband have raised more than \$120,000. Her efforts as an advocate for women's health, ensuring that as many women as possible are aware of the symptoms, and raising money, are simply heroic. Carolyn takes every opportunity to cite the symptoms, and I would like to share them with the House now. They include bloating, abdominal or pelvic pain, frequent urination and feeling full after eating a small amount. I urge everyone to check out the symptoms; it could save a life.

MURRAY ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR SUE INGLIS

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (16:57): On International Women's Day it is my pleasure to congratulate Sue Inglis on being named the Murray Local Woman of the Year. Sue is a very active member of the Coleambally community. She has been the president or secretary of the local Coleambally-Argoon branch of the Country Women's Association for the past six years and president of the regional Sturt Group for the past three years. She has been a member of the Lions Club of Australia for more than 20 years, including a stint as the president in Coleambally. Over the past six years, Sue has been a driver for community transport, led the local garden club, organised craft activities for children with special needs, and chaired the local aged-care facility auxiliary. She has done all this while working part time at the local post office. In 2015 she was the Murrumbidgee Shire Council Citizen of the Year. Congratulations, Sue.

ROY AND JOYCE STREETER SEVENTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:59): I congratulate Roy and Joyce Streeter of Howlong on 70 years of marriage. Roy and Joyce were married in Tonbridge, England, on 21 February 1948 after acquiring a special licence to marry. Joyce was 18, and Roy was 19 and about to be posted overseas with the army. In 1963 Roy and Joyce became ten-pound Poms and travelled by ship to live in Australia, firstly in Melbourne and then in Howlong where, in 1977, Roy had begun building the family house they still call home. They have shared a keen interest in bowls, both as players and office-bearers. They celebrated their great milestone with their family, which includes three children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Congratulations, Roy and Joyce: We wish you all the best for this year, in which you celebrate your seventieth anniversary.

F6 EXTENSION

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:59): I recognise the hundreds of residents of the St George community who gave up their Saturday afternoon over the weekend to attend the F6 community forum at the Moorefield Bowling and Sports Club. It was evident in the room that our local residents are sick and tired of the uncertainty and chaos related to the seemingly endless run of Cabinet leaks and related stories we have seen on the F6 for the past two years. The residents of the St George region are not second-class citizens, and they deserve to have the Government front up to them and be honest about its plans. I offer my sincere congratulations to the event organisers, speakers and, most importantly, all the wonderful people who might not engage with politics on a regular basis but who, when the Government is trying to do them over, are not afraid to stand up and be counted. I thank all the locals who expressed their views to me. I look forward to continue to working with all my constituents to get a good outcome for our community.

RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS MADISON KNIGHT AND MITCHELL STEVENS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:00:0): I recognise the sporting achievements of Madison Knight and Mitchell Stevens of Grenfell. Mitchell, a member of the Australian boys under-19 rugby league team, and Madison, a member of the Australian girls under-19 rugby league team, recently participated in the 2018 Tag20 Rugby League Nations Cup, held in New Zealand. Mitchell was awarded the players' player for his efforts in his team's win in the finals, and Madison's team was narrowly defeated in the semifinals. Mitchell's and Madison's efforts were rewarded, as they have been both invited to compete in the Anzac test to be held in Canberra in a few months. I wish them both the very best in their upcoming games.

CUNDLETOWN AND LOWER MANNING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:01): I speak of the great work of the Cundletown and Lower Manning Historical Society and its extensive collection at the Cundletown Museum. I had the pleasure last week of inspecting the latest addition to that collection, a Peters milk can truck. The museum holds a large collection of items relating to the dairy factories from the Manning Valley, namely Peters and the Lower Manning Dairy Co-Op. During my visit I was pleased to announce \$108,000 from the Stronger Country Communities Fund for the museum to make upgrades to its home in the Cundletown Soldiers Memorial Hall. The upgrades will include solar panels, exterior painting of the hall, construction of a new resource room and concreting the car park and new footpaths. I congratulate the committee, including Margaret and Bert Love, Joanne Barlin, Wendy and

Bruce Gibson, Susan Bell, Pam and Warren Whitley and Wendy Weistmantel, for their tireless work in ensuring the rich history of our community is preserved for generations to come.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR LAYA SLAVIN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:02): I acknowledge Laya Slavin, who was awarded the 2018 Vacluse Woman of the Year by the member for Vacluse. I have known Laya, her husband, Rabbi Doctor Dovid Slavin, and their eight wonderful children, since I was elected the member for Heffron. Together they have run the phenomenal Our Big Kitchen at Bondi's Yeshiva Centre for 13 years, providing a non-denominational kosher kitchen facility for community groups to prepare and distribute meals to communities in need. Laya also runs annual community baking events for people of all ages to bake and package thousands of biscuits for distribution at Purim and Rosh Hashana. It takes a truly selfless person to devote so many years of their life to volunteering to improve the lives of others. The Psalms tell us, "The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously." Laya and Rabbi Dovid have given so generously to so many. I congratulate Laya as a most worthy recipient of the Vacluse Woman of the Year award, and I commend her contribution, and that of Our Big Kitchen, to the House.

GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT BRYAN PIRIE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:03): I acknowledge Bryan Pirie, who was recently awarded 2018 Citizen of the Year in the Georges River Council's Australia Day awards. Bryan is the Oatley Lions Club president and one of the key organisers of the Oatley Village Festival. He was also presented with a certificate at my annual St George Community Awards evening in 2012 for his service to the community. Bryan is well deserving of his recognition as Citizen of the Year, as his commitment to fostering a cohesive and inclusive community in Oatley is something to be praised. We have much to thank him for, including coordinating the raising of more than \$36,000 for a range of local community projects at last year's Oatley Village Festival. Bryan is an example of an individual who works tirelessly and persistently in giving back to the community, and it has been a great honour to work with him over many years to ensure Oatley Lions Club's vision is achieved. Oatley Lions is one of 46,000 clubs globally that promotes youth, medical research, aid to people with a disability, community service and disaster relief. I thank Bryan, on behalf of the broader Oatley Lions community and everyone in this Chamber, for the club's service and support.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:04): I acknowledge the fantastic efforts of the Maitland City Library in bringing International Women's Day into the heart of our community and in raising the profile of one of the most excellent women's events that has been held in Sydney. Last weekend a tribute—All About Women—was held at the Sydney Opera House. The conference was live streamed to the Maitland community, one of 30 communities that received the live stream in Australia. Today I spoke to Dr Anne Summers, who was a guest speaker at the Women in Local Government Conference I attended with the shadow Minister for Local Government. Dr Summers was very excited about the opportunities offered by live streaming to provide a great conversation that traverses the issues of discrimination, inclusivity and ensuring that women press for progress. I thank the Maitland City Library for making the Maitland community part of that conference. I also thank Dr Anne Summers for her generous contribution while she has been in Australia.

BOMADERRY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:05): As the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, I have the opportunity to visit many schools across our State. However, each time I return to my childhood school, the Bomaderry Public School, I feel incredibly proud and humbled to represent and support the very institution that provided me with the skills and foundations to achieve my goals in life. On 5 March I was honoured to visit my former school and present \$2,000 in funding to the Bomaderry Public School that will enable the school to purchase a much-needed new public address system.

When I was at the school's 150-year celebrations last year, it was evident that the old system needed to be replaced. The new PA system will provide a refreshing communications tool for the Bomaderry Public School. Furthermore, the grant illustrates that no matter the size of the school or the issue involved, this Government will continue to support educational opportunities across our State. I was very pleased to seek funding from the Premier of New South Wales. I thank Gladys Berejiklian for her support of the Bomaderry Public School—a great school in the Kiama electorate.

AUBURN GALLIPOLI MOSQUE ISLAMIC SERVICE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:06): I recognise in this House the Islamic service to mark the opening of law term 2018. Historically there have been various services to mark the opening of the law term in

Sydney. In recent years the Muslim Legal Network, in conjunction with the Auburn Mosque Committee, has invited members of the judiciary and the profession to attend an Islamic service to mark the opening of the law term. This is a welcome development, as is the very positive response by the judiciary and the profession.

The 2018 service was held on 15 February and, as has become customary, it was held at the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. Invitations were issued by the Muslim Legal Network President, Zaahir Edries. Those participating in the service included MLN members Kerim Pala, Aziz Abbas, and Zahra Al-Zaidi. Additionally there was an address on behalf of the Gallipoli Mosque by Dr Abdurrahman Asaroglou. The keynote speaker was Silma Ihram, who is the current President of the Australian Muslim Women's Association and who has a string of impressive academic qualifications. This is a quite important annual event, and I was delighted to attend.

CENTRAL COAST WOMAN OF THE YEAR TANYA DEGER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:07): On International Women's Day, I congratulate a Central Coast local resident, Tanya Deger, whom I was honoured to nominate as the Terrigal electorate's Woman of the Year for 2018. Tanya is a local volunteer firefighter who currently is serving as deputy captain for Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade. Tanya regularly puts her life on the line to protect people and property from the risk of fire. She also plays an important role in the training and mentoring of younger firefighter volunteers. Not only that, but she has also studied for a diploma, runs her own small business called Coastal Cake Co., and has two young children, including a newborn who is just over one week old. Tanya is very deserving of recognition for her outstanding contribution to my community. This morning it was great to join Tanya and her husband, Luke, at the International Women's Day breakfast at the International Convention Centre, and publicly recognise all that she has done. Congratulations, Tanya, and congratulations to all Woman of the Year award recipients.

SHEAR ABILITIES HAIR SALON

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:08): I acknowledge Desiree McDonald and the team at Shear Abilities, which is a hair salon in the Maitland electorate that focuses on providing salon treatment and services to clients with disabilities. Shear Abilities has been carefully adapted for clients with disabilities. The salon has stations that can be adjusted to allow for clients in a wheelchair. A station is fitted with a reclining seat that allows clients with mobility issues to lie horizontally. The wheelchair-friendly salon has a disabled toilet and a designated playroom full of sensory toys for children on the spectrum or who have other disabilities. A private room has been fitted out to allow women who wear headscarves—because they have lost their hair during chemotherapy—to have a wig fitted in privacy, which is really important for cancer sufferers. Ms McDonald is an inspiring disability advocate and an innovative business owner who is greatly valued by the people of Maitland. I congratulate Ms McDonald and her team for all the fantastic work they are doing in the Maitland community.

POTTSVILLE BEACH SPORTS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:09): I congratulate Pottsville Beach Sports on securing funding for an emergency power generator. As the club is classified as an emergency evacuation centre it is imperative to ensure that the community has access to a fully operational facility in the event of an emergency or power outage. It was great to welcome Minister for Racing Paul Toole to the Tweed electorate to deliver the exciting news to General Manager Michael Judd and a number of board members. I congratulate Pottsville Beach Sports.

Private Members' Statements

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:10): I draw to the attention of the House the impact of the merger of Rockdale City Council and Botany Bay City Council on Mascot, East Lakes and Rosebery in my electorate. It is a case study of the failure of the amalgamation process. For a number of years I warned this House about the folly of council amalgamations. I said that despite the Government anticipating savings, the administrator reported that the cost of the merger of those councils would be \$18 million at the end of the first year. I repeatedly warned the Government of the day that there is no political return on amalgamations and it would pay a heavy price. I have been shown to be right in that respect.

The biggest problem with the amalgamation process is the direct impact felt by my constituents when two disparate councils are merged. My area is represented by very able councillors in Christina Curry and Scott Morrissey, a very able mayor in Bill Saravinovski and an immensely capable general manager who yesterday was highly commended at the Minister's local government awards. They are working hard and endeavouring to bring the councils together. Despite this, the fact of the matter is that the quality of service by the merged council is nothing short of dreadful. The merger is impacting council services because the two organisations have different cultures. It is also impacting local business owners who are no longer able to rely on their council for services and the jobs they create. Day in and day out my office staff and I receive a stream of

complaints from community groups and individuals who are not being serviced to the standard that they should be.

I left Botany Bay City Council in 2012 and upon leaving decided that I would not interfere with or be involved in its decision-making process unless I was asked. They never thought that I was a fit and proper person to seek advice from. Nevertheless, even under the stewardship of councillors at the time the quality of service was often outstanding. Community groups attending council functions are now being provided with poor-quality catering services. The exceptional caterers that Randwick City Council and others use are either not asked to give a quote or refuse to provide one because of predetermined decisions, when electricians, who for decades performed outsourced council work tendered at cost to Bayside Council and could not have been beaten in the tender process, did not receive the work.

The council is trying to address this problem, but it never will because it does not know what quality of service has been provided to the people of Heffron. It will take a number of years for the council to improve the quality of service it provides or, alternatively, the community will have to get used to the poor-quality service it receives. I am told by the people of Rockdale—but maybe the member for Oatley knows better—that the quality of service in Rockdale was far better when the council stood on its own. Anecdotal complaints about the quality of service received or seen are somewhat overwhelming. I have written hundreds of letters to Bayside Council on behalf of constituents and some of that correspondence has not been answered for almost a year. It is a case study on what not to do with amalgamations.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:15): I refer the member for Heffron to an article by Ben James in the *Southern Courier* on 16 February 2018 entitled "Bayside Council: We're saving thousands through merger". The article states:

Bayside Council bosses have hit back at critics, saying they are saving thousands of dollars on events since the merger.

Bayside Council has come under fire in recent weeks following some residents' claims that it is ignoring the former Botany council area, which merged with Rockdale to form Bayside.

But mayor Bill Saravinovski said the newly formed council was producing huge savings—often hidden to ratepayers. "We have our own in-house events department, who plan and operate all council events, saving us from having to pay for contractors," Cr Saravinovski said, referring to Botany's former practices.

"I am proud to host community events but equally proud to see new community infrastructure changing the look and feel of our valuable playing spaces and putting a smile on people's faces."

I urge the member for Heffron to refer to this article, which details what money is being saved by Bayside Council.

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR BEVERLY LAZAROU

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:16): Thursday 8 March 2018 is International Women's Day—a day to celebrate the achievements of women throughout history around the world. This morning I had the privilege of attending the 2018 NSW Women of the Year Awards ceremony which was held in honour of women in New South Wales who have made a significant contribution to their communities. The awards successfully recognised the women's outstanding achievements and celebrated their contributions. The Local Women of the Year Awards recognise remarkable women across New South Wales for their achievements and contributions in their careers, businesses and communities. The event is well acknowledged in my electorate. I recognise Heathcote's 2018 Local Woman of the Year Beverly Lazarou for her dedication and hard work in the Heathcote community and throughout New South Wales.

Beverly's commitment to bringing positive change for women throughout her 31 years of working in domestic violence women's services made her an outstanding candidate and an extremely worthy recipient of this prestigious award. Mrs Lazarou was accompanied by her husband, George, at the breakfast this morning. He commented to me that Beverly was an extremely deserving recipient of the award. He said that throughout her career she has had a driving desire to help people and that her arms are always open to anyone who needs help, regardless of their background. Since 1987 Mrs Lazarou has shown dedication, ongoing support and advocacy through her employment in domestic violence women's services.

Beverly has taken on roles in women's refuges, women's housing programs and the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services. From 1987 to 1992, Beverly was employed in women's refuges as a support worker and advocate for domestic violence victims. From 1992 to 1995, she was employed as a support worker and advocate for tenants in women's housing programs. From 1995 to 2007, Mrs Lazarou took on the role of coordinator at the Southern Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. In this role, she developed the services for both Sutherland Local Court and Kogarah Local Court and worked closely with the NSW Police Force and with the courts.

The service was recognised as a best practice model in delivering high levels of service to women and children experiencing domestic violence in the Sutherland shire and St George areas. Since 2007 she has been employed at Legal Aid NSW in the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program. As the mentoring project officer, Beverly provided advice and support to 28 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services across New South Wales and advised Legal Aid NSW in relation to domestic violence and other issues. In 2014 she was promoted to senior project officer and in this position she has worked on the implementation and rollout of Safer Pathway to provide more efficient, streamlined services to victims of domestic violence across New South Wales.

I acknowledge Beverly's dedication and longevity in working in a sector that, although it can be extremely rewarding, requires levels of energy and passion that only certain people can maintain. Through her work, she has changed people's lives and we have all benefited. Beverly joins a prestigious list of previous recipients and I take this opportunity to acknowledge them. Heathcote's 2017 Woman of the Year was Bernadette "Bernie" Spedding. Bernie was surprised and delighted last year when she was selected for the 2017 Local Woman of the Year. She has contributed to our community through her work with Engadine Gymnastics and Gymnastics NSW.

In 2016, I was thrilled to join Pru Goward, then Minister for Women, in surprising Meikle Bennett with her award. Ms Bennett was nominated for her outstanding contribution through many years of hard work and dedication to disadvantaged children in our community. It is the hard and often thankless work of women like Beverly, Bernie and Meikle that make communities great places to live and embodies the Australian spirit of giving back. It truly is a privilege to be able to acknowledge Beverly's great work in the community and I formally recognise International Women's Day.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:21): I too acknowledge today as International Women's Day. The Minister for Women, who is doing an outstanding job, today announced the Woman of the Year awards at the International Convention Centre. I congratulate the member for Heathcote for bringing this matter before the House and, in particular, I acknowledge Beverly Lazarou, who for 31 years has provided wonderful service in the Heathcote electorate and across the Sutherland shire and St George areas. Since 1987, she has been a leading advocate and has shown leadership, helping victims in the area of domestic violence and working closely with police. She is worthy to be awarded the Heathcote Woman of the Year. I congratulate Beverly on her outstanding work in the St George and Sutherland shire areas.

MANNING RIVER SPORTS STADIUM AND SPORTS CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:22): I call on the Government, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Sport to provide funding in support of the proposed Manning Regional Sports Stadium and Sports Centre of Excellence in Taree. The stadium will be located at the Taree Recreation Grounds, which already features touch football fields, a bicycle criterium circuit, hockey fields, a basketball stadium, netball courts and cricket fields. The proposal by the MidCoast Council, one of the newly formed amalgamated councils, to build this sports stadium and sporting centre of excellence includes a 10,000-capacity stadium, 1,000-seat undercover grandstand, 500-lux lighting, four to five additional multipurpose training fields, four to five synthetic fields, media broadcast facilities, change rooms, coaches' boxes, a canteen with bar facilities, barbecue facilities, corporate hospitality meeting spaces, an elevator, and a self-draining surface that will allow play to continue regardless of the weather. Such facilities are taken for granted by people in Sydney, but they are needed in regional centres.

Taree is a major regional centre that has a major highway, a railway line, an airport and a river. Taree has produced many sporting champions. For example, the current captain of the New South Wales Blues rugby league team, Boyd Cordner, played at Old Bar while attending school there. I played rugby with his father. Danny Buderus, former New South Wales captain and a member of Australia's Kangaroo squad, is a Taree boy. Gary Bridge played for the Balmain Tigers. I could go on naming players from the Manning Valley who have played rugby league for New South Wales and Australia. But what has the Manning Valley got? The only undercover patron facility is a 50-seat weatherboard grandstand built more than 100 years ago at the Johnny Martin Oval. Last week the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Sport and I announced funding of \$511,000 to upgrade the Wingham sportsground—it currently has some seating with an awning over the top. We want the same sorts of facilities that those in the metropolitan area take for granted.

One of the driving factors for me becoming involved in politics was the fight for parity between metropolitan areas and regional New South Wales. There is no reason for this divide. I am calling on the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Sport to fund this application. The people in the Manning Valley deserve it and I will continue to fight hard for it. In the same precinct is the basketball stadium. That stadium, which was probably built about 30 years ago, has had nothing done to it. It is a two-court facility. A funding application has been submitted. I again call on the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Sport to grant the application so that the stadium can be extended. Those changes are estimated to cost about \$6 million or \$7 million and will include more change

rooms and an additional three basketball courts. There has been a boom in the number of people playing basketball in the area, including a couple of Aboriginal girls who have been selected for the junior Australian basketball train-on squad. The amount of sport tourism these two projects will bring cannot be overlooked.

Taree relies upon event-led tourism. Through these two facilities we can expect to gain more country championships and more New South Wales titles. First division teams will also come to play trial games. We will have Waratahs trial games and A-League trial games. If we get the stadium, the Newcastle Jets have committed to have trial games there and to conduct coaching clinics. It will be the home for soccer on the mid North Coast. It will also be used by rugby union, union league and those sports that use a rectangular field. Our basketball associations have been offered a number of championships, including Australian championships for juniors, but they have not been able to take advantage of the offers because they do not have the facilities. These facilities will fill that gap. The people of New South Wales expect it and I implore the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Sports to get on board and fund these two projects.

MULGOA ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR SALLY SMITHARD

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (17:27): Today marks International Women's Day, a time for recognition and celebration of the invaluable contributions women make within our society. In light of today's significance I acknowledge and commend, as well as celebrate and recognise, the hard work, determination and dedication of Sally Smithard, Mulgoa's Local Woman of the Year. Sally was nominated for her demonstrated outstanding leadership not only as relieving principal at St Clair High School but also for leading and directing the school's massive rebuilding infrastructure program. She has been a member of the St Clair High School community for eight years. Sally first filled the role as head teacher, Human Society and Its Environment [HSIE]. She then became deputy principal and, for the last 3½ years, has filled the role of relieving principal. But the story of St Clair High School took a devastating and unexpected twist. On 29 June 2014 a massive fire ripped through 80 per cent of the teaching, learning and staffing spaces.

On 5 August 2014, I spoke in this place about that event and the remarkable response from within the school, the wider community and the Department of Education and Communities to ensure that the students could continue their schooling when they returned for term 3—a short two weeks after the fire. In this speech on 5 August 2014 I highlighted the extraordinary effort of Sally at this time by talking about, "Sally Smithard, co-principal, who was at the school every day from the morning of the fire through to the commencement of the school term, often with her young children in tow." Shortly thereafter she took on the relieving principal role and also took on the project management of the school rebuild. Over the past 3½ years the rebuild has faced numerous hurdles and challenges, as every massive infrastructure project does. Sally has steadily, patiently, confidently and emphatically led the school during this time.

Sally Smithard has taken a hands-on role in the school's rebuilding process, overseeing all aspects of the \$24.6 million rebuild. But the \$24.6 million budget was not always what was on the table for St Clair High School. Initially, the insurance payout was projected to be around \$7 million to \$9 million, which would have enabled only the replacement of the existing 35-plus year old school on fire-affected foundations which, when presented to me, was a concept I totally rejected. I fought hard to ensure that my team, the New South Wales Liberal and Nationals Government, backed my community in delivering an additional \$15 million for the rebuild project budget. To this day, I acknowledge the then New South Wales Treasurer, Andrew Constance, for his total and unwavering support of my community and the St Clair High School family by providing this additional budget to enable St Clair High School to have the advanced educational facilities that it deserves.

The project has become a personal passion for Sally, who has always aimed to ensure that St Clair High School rises from the ashes. She has faced a tough workload, but has risen with grace and strong leadership to ensure her school community will receive the very best result from this rebuilding project. The rebuild of St Clair High School is taking shape as an air-conditioned innovation centre where 16 new teaching spaces, a research area, lecture hall, a kitchen, a cafe and break-out areas are featured. Alongside the innovation centre, a tiered outdoor learning space shaped as an amphitheatre, new basketball courts and car parking are also being constructed. Since the 2014 fire, Sally has led the school community with purpose and dedication through the process to ensure the new learning, recreational and meeting spaces are quality, future focused and responsive to the emerging needs of a modern school and wider community. The innovation centre reflects St Clair High School's important partnership with the Western Sydney University and local community groups.

Sally has been relentless in her advocacy for all members of the school community. She has juggled this exceedingly demanding time with her role as relieving principal and balancing her personal commitments during this four-year period. Sally is a passionate, committed public school educator who is determined to ensure that every student at St Clair High School is known, valued and cared for. Sally makes certain each member of staff is supported to deliver quality education experiences to improve the learning and life outcomes for every student

at the school. Sally works in partnership with parents, carers and members of the wider community to ensure that students are best supported in their education.

Sally is an outstanding school leader and educator, and is deserving of recognition as the Mulgoa Local Woman of the Year. I once again congratulate the 2018 Mulgoa Local Woman of the Year, Sally Smithard, and thank her for the inspiration that she is. Today she attended the International Women's Day event at the International Convention Centre with her husband. They and every other recipient of the Local Woman of the Year Award were made to feel very special, as they should be. They are all appreciated.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:33): I congratulate the 2018 Mulgoa Local Woman of the Year, Sally Smithard and note that Rosemary Bishop is the 2018 Oatley Local Woman of the Year. 3Bridges Community Chief Executive Officer Rosemary Bishop received the award in recognition of her dedication and hard work in the St George community. Ms Bishop's commitment to bringing positive change to the local area made her an outstanding candidate. Ms Bishop has a background of working in the not-for-profit sector, bringing a wealth of experience to her current role at 3Bridges Community. Ms Bishop's outstanding leadership ensures the organisation's mission continues to flourish and grow. The 3Bridges Community is dedicated to supporting the local community through a variety of services for children, young people, families and seniors. This local award is designed to acknowledge the wonderful women in and around New South Wales. I particularly acknowledge Ms Bishop, who is from my electorate.

NULON MOTOR OILS DEVELOPMENT

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:34): I advise the House of very grave concerns about and strong opposition to the Nulon Motor Oils development on Bringelly Road. The concerns and objections of my constituents are entirely correct. This is the wrong facility for this place. I have rarely seen such a unanimity of local opposition to a proposal. The proposed development is adjacent to the suburbs of Carnes Hill, Horningsea Park and Greenway Park. It is just within the State electorate boundaries of Liverpool, adjacent to the State electorate of Camden and not far from the State electorate of Mulgoa. The Department of Planning and Environment has advised of a State significant development application from Nulon Motor Oils. The consent authority is the Minister for Planning. The department describes the proposal as follows:

The proposal involves the construction and operation of a light industrial facility within the Bringelly Road Business Hub including ancillary office space, car parking and landscaping. The proposed light industrial building will be used for the preparation of automotive industry products, including the manufacturing of oils and storage of aerosols.

This will involve not only aerosols but also hydrochloric acid, caustic soda liquid and combustible liquids. There are a number of problems. The first is the patently absurd proposition that the manufacturing of oils is light industry. That description does damage to the plain meaning of the words in the English language. It is certainly not what anyone in Liverpool thinks is light industrial. It is telling that until the nature of this Nulon Motor Oils proposal became known, I detected no opposition to what most people thought was going to be light industrial development. Employment-generating, non-offensive light development did not seem to cause difficulties. This proposal, which no-one seriously believes is light industrial, does. Approval by the State Government for this development is akin to the dumping of Hunters Hill radioactive waste at Kemps Creek.

Nulon is hardly without a track record, regardless of what blissful assertions are made to the contrary. Not that long ago, in 2015, Nulon Products Australia Pty Ltd was convicted of a breach of its licence conditions, which was mentioned in the EPA Annual Report for 2015-16. Nulon was ordered to pay a penalty of \$120,000 to the NSW Environmental Trust, provide a written apology to nearby workers and publicise details of the offence in, among other places the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Liverpool Leader*. It was also ordered to pay investigation costs and costs of \$64,530. The judgement is in *Environment Protection Authority v Nulon Products Australia Pty Ltd* [2015] NSWLEC 153. I found it instructive reading. I also note the upholding of a complaint by the New Zealand Advertising Standards Authority in 2015 concerning a radio advertisement for Nulon Oil.

Residents Russell and Violeta Whittard are horrified that what is clearly a manufacturing facility is being treated as a light industrial site. They point to the completely inadequate notification provided to residents, and to incidents at the Nulon site in Moorebank. The Whittards have been important in preparing and compiling a petition opposing the development, which has attracted a significant number of signatures. Another constituent, Maria Fabian, has pointed to many problems with the proposal. She writes:

The project has a range of potential impacts on the local community and environment which include (but are not limited to) traffic, air quality, bushfire risk, contamination risk, water run-off quantity and quality, safety, loss of green space, loss of recreation space, visual amenity, noise/lighting, flora and fauna impact, potential conflict with the Jemena gas main and potential contamination risk to the heritage listed Sydney Water Channel.

She highlights the inadequate consultation, the proximity of the development to childcare centres and homes, and the carrying of combustible goods on already busy nearby roads. She says:

We have a lovely community. It is a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. It is a growing area with new homes being built every day in this area. We would hate to see it destroyed by this development.

In common with other residents, she supports job creation, but she says, "surely this type of development would be better housed in a designated industrial area where risks to the local community can be reduced". I have also spoken to Steven Bautovich, presently a resident of Horningsea Park. His mother has lived for more than 50 years in a single-storey house on Bringelly Road, immediately adjacent to the development site. She still raises cattle there for sale. She is now confronted with a 24/7 industrial manufacturing process right next to her. There has been no substantive discussion between the developer and the Bautovichs. Apparently, they are expected simply to lump it. The development company acting for Nulon, Commercial & Industrial [CI] Property, tried to persuade Mr Bautovich in an email that the proposal "is only for storage and distribution", which is clearly not what the department says. The first contact Mr Bautovich received from the development company was an email at 3.00 p.m. on Christmas Eve last year. Mr Bautovich says:

I was never against the business park and what was proposed at the time, but this application has no place within the confines of the parkland. This type of industry is more suited out near the proposed airport away from residential development.

My colleague the Federal member for Werriwa, Anne Stanley, has spoken in opposition to the proposal. The State Labor candidate for Camden, Sally Quinnett, has expressed her opposition to the development, as has the Labor candidate for Mulgoa, Todd Carney. Liverpool council adopted a resolution on 28 February 2018, moved by Councillor Hagarty, opposing the development at this site. Labor councillors Waller, Hagarty, Kaliyanda and Shelton, and Liberal councillor Hadchiti voted for the motion. Independent councillors Harle and Rhodes, and Liberal councillors Balloot and Ayyad voted against it. The NSW Rural Fire Service has expressed concerns about the inadequacies of the application. The Minister for Planning should reject this application without equivocation.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE GOLF TOURNAMENTS

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:39): I thank a large number of people for the fantastic events that were staged in Coffs Harbour over the past two weeks—the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Destination NSW and Golf NSW. From Golf NSW I particularly thank Government Relations and Communications Manager Bernard Bratusa; Chief Executive Officer Stuart Fraser; Chairman Peter Mitchell; National Coach Dean Kinney; David Tease, Chris Allen, John Robinson, Darryl Watts and Les Wallace who are directors of Golf NSW; Graeme Phillipson, Olivia Wilson and Nicole Bessant. I also thank Karen Lunn, Chief Executive Officer of the Ladies Professional Golf Association.

The first event was the Bonville Ladies Classic, which was endorsed by Tournament Director of the Ladies European Tour Jaro Pinto. We were privileged to have 65 European professional lady golfers in Coffs Harbour for the ladies classic, which was recognised as part of the Ladies European Tour. A week later in Coffs Harbour, 35 European professional lady golfers played in the NSW Women's Open. From the Bonville Golf Resort I thank Chairman of Peter Montgomery and Chief Executive Officer Brad Daymond, and a number of other businesses owned by Peter Montgomery. From the Coffs Harbour Golf Club I thank President Russ McConchie and Chief Executive Officer Paul McAra, staff, members and volunteers.

At Bonville, 146 women and men from the Coffs Harbour area volunteered to marshal the course and to start and monitor the field. At Coffs Harbour, 140 volunteers were in pink T-shirts, which looked phenomenal. Any members who are interested should look at my Facebook page to see the great events that occurred over that weekend. These events put Coffs Harbour on the international map yet again. Fox Sports telecast into 75 countries from Bonville, and the local television stations covered the NSW Women's Open. It was the first time that the Australian Ladies Classic was held in Coffs Harbour. The Bonville and Coffs Harbour courses were in tip-top shape. I especially thank Bernard Bratusa. He and I worked on those events for many months and, eventually, with the help of the Premier, Deputy Premier and the Minister for Tourism and Major Events we were able to secure those two events for Coffs Harbour.

The sacrifice I had to make was that the NSW Women's Open will now be held in different venues across New South Wales over the next five years. Next year it will be held in Queanbeyan. The officials from Queanbeyan visited Coffs Harbour. I have been flooded with emails from the overseas players thanking me for the hospitality that they received whilst they were in Coffs Harbour. I thank all the families that billeted the girls. They looked after them and showed them the magnificent sites and tourist attractions of Coffs Harbour. We had more than 7,000 visitors to the Coffs Harbour and Bonville golf courses during those two tournaments. Dame Laura Davies, who has been a professional golfer for 33 years, teed off the competition in Coffs Harbour.

I do not know how many millimetres of rain we received on the last day at Bonville, but four inches of water was running down the eighteenth fairway, with five holes to play. Dame Laura admitted to me afterwards that she was taking bets in the players' room that the show would not go on and that we would have to return on the Monday to finish it. I compliment Brad Daymond for raking the bunkers. It was the first time I have seen him

rake a bunker when he was not playing. Twenty minutes after the rain had stopped the course was ready to play on. Play commenced in 45 minutes and was completed. I had the honour of playing in the pro-am with Hannah Green, a great Australian from Western Australia who came third in the Women's Australian Open in Adelaide. The girls and the people who were associated with these events were very pleasant. The tournaments not only put Coffs Harbour on the map but it also gave me a taste for ladies golf that will never leave me.

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:44): Community groups across my electorate of Terrigal are benefitting from a total of \$300,000 in funding as part of the 2017 round of the Community Building Partnership program. I am pleased to say that every dollar of this \$300,000 investment is going to our hardworking local sporting groups, community associations and schools in my electorate. This funding will certainly deliver positive recreational, social and environmental outcomes for our Central Coast community. Over the past few weeks I have travelled across the Terrigal electorate meeting with these community groups and presenting them with a cheque.

Everything that these sporting groups, community associations and schools do is focused on making the Central Coast a better place to live, to work and to raise a family. I am extremely pleased to be able to support their work financially through the Community Building Partnership program. Empire Bay Community Association is a very effective community group. I was delighted to attend its recent meeting and to announce a grant of \$12,000 for air conditioning in the community hall, which is used regularly by seniors, parents groups, drama groups and the Sea Scouts. The installation of air conditioning means it can now be made available for all types of events and activities. I acknowledge President Carolen Barripp and Vice-President Craig Hillman for their passion and commitment to making Empire Bay and surrounding suburbs better places to live.

In addition, \$15,000 is being provided to Kincumber-Avoca Cricket Club to replace the synthetic turf in each of the four cricket bays at Erina Oval. It was a pleasure to meet with John, Stephanie, Mark, groundkeeper Steve and others to announce this funding commitment. I look forward to returning in a few months to view the completed work. The Kincumber-Avoca Cricket Club has also made exciting progress at Heazlett Park in Avoca. I look forward to joining the members in a few weeks for the opening of the recently upgraded cricket nets.

Woodport Public School is a growing school, with an extra class added at the beginning of the year to cater for increased demand. That is why I am extremely pleased to be able to provide \$20,000 to fix the sports field seating area. I visit the school frequently and on many occasions I have seen how the current seating area has many trip hazards and uneven surfaces—it is not fit for purpose. I thank parents and citizens representative Belinda Orriss and the fantastic principal, Judy Boland, both of whom are incredible advocates for their school community. I have been told that this year is Woodport Public School's 125th anniversary. I look forward to joining the school community at other events throughout 2018 to celebrate this significant milestone.

Green Point Community Centre is a very active not-for-profit organisation that runs computer and internet classes, and provides justice of the peace services, a men's support group, tax help, counselling, and playgroups for local families and senior citizens. Throughout my three years as the member for Terrigal, I have been delighted to support the centre as much as I can. As part of the 2017 Community Building Partnership grants, I am very proud to provide more than \$6,000 to establish a community-focused garden called the "community patch". Last year I was able to secure funding for a new coffee cart, and next week I will hold a listening post at the Green Point Community Centre, when I am sure the new coffee cart will be well utilised.

Finally, I will acknowledge briefly the other sporting groups, community associations and schools across the Terrigal electorate that will benefit from a share in the \$300,000 Community Building Partnership funding. Erina Heights Public School will receive \$21,000 for a digital school sign; Brisbania Public School will benefit from more than \$50,000 towards the cost of its outdoor areas; the outdoor seating and landscaping around The Haven oval will be upgraded with \$9,000 being granted to Terrigal Rugby Club; Davistown Progress Association will receive \$10,000 to supply and install air conditioning in its hall; the tee area around Breakers Golf Club will be upgraded; Saratoga Sailing Club will receive \$2,500 for a new hall floor scrubber; and the Coast Christian School will receive \$3,000 towards the Adventure Playground Project.

The fantastic Pretty Beach Public School will receive \$21,000 for a digital school sign; \$25,000 has been granted to support the fantastic work of the volunteer firefighters at Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade, which will fund the extension of its well-overdue additional shed; and the Gosford City Basketball and Sports Stadium will receive more than \$50,000 for equipment and internal refurbishments. All of these community groups work hard to make the Central Coast a better place. I congratulate everyone who has secured funding. Funding applications for new projects will open in May. I encourage all sporting groups, community associations, schools, and other groups in my electorate of Terrigal to apply. This Government is committed to making every community across New South Wales better off. I am thrilled to have been able to secure \$300,000 in the past year to support local community groups. I will continue to work for everyone in the Terrigal electorate throughout 2018 and beyond.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:49): I thank the fantastic member for Terrigal for his outstanding work in obtaining \$300,000 in Community Building Partnership grants that will help the electorate of Terrigal, the Central Coast and, indeed, all of New South Wales. These grants provide important funds for new community infrastructure projects and enhance much-needed local facilities. The funding will create more vibrant, inclusive communities and deliver positive, social, environmental and recreational outcomes. This grassroots funding will go a long way. I thank the member for Terrigal and other members in the Chamber for their outstanding work in their local communities.

CENTRAL SHOALHAVEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:50): I am proud to stand in this Chamber today and inform the House of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government's track record in delivering for the residents of the Bay and Basin, or Central Shoalhaven—the central part of my electorate. Since 2015 these communities and villages have seen major investment by the Government directed towards improving roads, health, education and community services. In 2015 I made an election commitment to deliver two especially vital projects for the Bay and Basin community—a new police station and a new ambulance station. I am proud to say that, thanks to securing multimillion-dollar commitments from the Berejiklian Government, we will soon deliver on both projects.

For a long time the community and I campaigned for the construction of a centrally located police station to curb petty crime, hooning and vandalism. For example, perpetrators know that the villages of Sanctuary Point and St Georges Basin are 30 minutes from the nearest police station, which gives them enough time to abscond before police arrive. The police men and women of the Shoalhaven do an incredible job policing the region, as evidenced by Shoalhaven's crime statistics consistently remaining stable or trending down. However, even the best police force cannot reduce response times without a centrally located station.

So I am thrilled to report that after some considerable time a suitable site, selected by New South Wales police, has been secured in the heart of Sanctuary Point, with two adjacent blocks of land on Kerry Street purchased and earmarked for imminent construction of the station. It will be a fully operational police station with its own first locally based inspector, under the new officer-in-charge model, who will serve the local community and provide opportunities to coordinate resources across the broader Jervis Bay area. It will also have the latest technology and provide working areas for visiting highway patrol officers and detectives. Once the station is complete it will provide the whole area of the Bay and Basin with increased safety and police presence while allowing local police to have a world-class facility.

The New South Wales Government's largest transformation of regional NSW Ambulance infrastructure in the organisation's history has seen construction begin on a new ambulance station at the site of 445 The Wool Road in St Georges Basin. The station will be supported by the existing facility at Huskisson and enable paramedics to better meet current and future demand as the area's population continues to grow. It will give them a purpose-built, first-class base to service the area and provide emergency medical attention. With completion anticipated later this year, the community will soon benefit from quicker response times and our highly trained paramedics will have a modern facility to better support their clinical capability.

I have fought very hard to secure major infrastructure upgrades for the Bay and Basin areas, or Central Shoalhaven, that missed out completely during Labor's term in office. Even though upgrades were greatly needed, nobody paid attention when Labor was in government. Listed among the milestones this Government has delivered since 2015 are the \$1 million upgrade of the precarious Princes Highway intersection at the Tomerong Log Cabin and almost \$859,000 for safety improvements on the Princes Highway at Andrews Road and Gardener Road intersections, to be delivered later in the year. More than \$1 million will see the long-awaited completion of the iconic Round the Bay Walk and construction of a pedestrian bridge across Moona Moona Creek, making it safer and easier for locals and tourists to visit the beautiful beaches and reserves of Jervis Bay.

Boating infrastructure is also being revitalised at key locations such as the Woollamia regional boat ramp, the Sanctuary Point boat ramp and the now complete \$1.2 million redevelopment of Huskisson Wharf. Under the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program, \$85,000 was secured to help the Sanctuary Point Men's Shed construct a new, larger facility to house its growing membership. The new men's shed has since opened and is providing the men—and women—of Sanctuary Point with a safe, friendly and welcoming place to work together, feel connected and contribute to their community.

Schools in the Bay and Basin are also benefiting, with record investment to ensure they have the best learning environments, best programs and supported teachers. Only this week I announced a further \$40,000 to assist St Georges Basin Public School with the construction of a covered outdoor learning space. While our track record speaks for itself and much has been achieved, there is still more to be done over the coming years. I look

forward to working with the communities of the Bay and Basin to deliver the services and infrastructure they waited so long to achieve and are now seeing come to fruition.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:54): Today I speak about an issue of great importance to many people in my electorate: the provision of appropriate, quality social housing. I will take the House through some of the issues I have come across in my electorate office in the past few months—examples in Maitland of ageing infrastructure and houses that are falling down around people's ears. One night a couple of weeks before Christmas last year a lady from Metford contacted me through Facebook to tell me her roof was collapsing. She told me she had rung Housing NSW and had been unable to get onto anyone who could assist her. The situation was not helped by the fact that when people call the maintenance line about problems with social housing they are directed through Link2Home. My constituent is not homeless; she is a client of social housing. Yet she has to ring a homelessness line to get assistance to get her house repaired.

My constituent finally got through to someone and was told that there would be a wait of up to three weeks to get the roof fixed. This was at 7 o'clock on a Friday or a Saturday night. A huge storm was coming—my electorate is famous for its storms and the damage caused by hail and so on. She contacted the State Emergency Service [SES] to tarp the house but that could not be done because the area that needed to be tarped was too large and it would have been dangerous. The only option the SES had in this case was to tarp inside the house and hope that if the water got through the roof and it collapsed, my constituent would survive. At no time did Housing NSW tell her that she should leave the house that night—it just gave her the three-week deadline.

Later my constituent eventually got through to someone and they came to her house on Monday morning—we escalated the matter as much as we could. When they finally arrived they said, "You had better get out of here straight away. You cannot go back into your house. You are going to have to move." The history of the house is that several years before termites had been found on the fence that adjoined a private property. My constituent reported this to Housing NSW, which obtained a quote for a new fence to fix the termite problem, but nothing was done. It is disgraceful.

When I entered the house I saw that on the right side facing the road there was a plank of wood bolted in underneath the ceiling—that was the attempt by Housing NSW to address the collapse on that side of the house. But the roof was collapsing on the left side as well. Tiles were falling through and there was a huge gap in the roof. It was a huge risk. This woman, who is in her fifties, and her elderly mother, who suffers from dementia, were both living there. They were told, "Now you have to get out in two weeks. We've found another place for you to go. You'll lose your third bedroom. We'll pop you into a two-bedroom townhouse. Can you get that all done by Christmas? Thanks." It was totally inappropriate.

Housing NSW had failed my constituent on three counts. It finally agreed with her that she was living in a dangerous house and decided to shift her into other accommodation but then gave her the two weeks before Christmas to move. This is just one example of the problems that exist in my electorate. Another woman in my community who lives in Woodberry has been told by the Minister for Social Housing—who has not visited her house, I might add—that the kitchen is okay. I have been there with my staff and had a look, and that kitchen is not okay. It is a disgrace. It is an old house that has seen fair wear and tear, and after 20 or 30 years it needs replacing properly. It is a disgrace that my constituent has to live in those conditions.

Another fellow moved from a social housing property in my community to another area because they could not address systemic problems with bullying and antisocial behaviour: They moved him on. He has a son with asthma. He has moved into a house with mould. There are problems with the bathroom. They have tried to repair it but they cannot do it properly. When you walk into the house you can smell the mould. The Department of Housing is saying, "No, you won't get new carpet on that. We're not going to do the floor." When they had a hole in the floor, they put a piece of wood on top of the carpet while they fixed it. It is outrageous. Housing in my community needs to take responsibility. This comes from the Minister and a lack of resourcing. This Government is failing my community. I urge the Minister to take action immediately.

REGIONAL BANK CLOSURES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:00): I relay to the House my serious concerns about the closure and proposed closure of banks in some of the towns in my electorate of Cootamundra and across regional New South Wales. The impact of this rationalisation—I can only use the term "rationalisation" to describe it—is enormous and the reverberations can be heard echoing down the streets. I am talking about towns such as Temora with a population of 4,693 people, Grenfell, with a population of 1,996, and Ardlethan, with a population of 389 people—small towns, but certainly not insignificant. When we talk about the erosion of commercial services

in country New South Wales, we know that this is a heavy step on the thin shell that protects these small communities.

I care little for the march towards automatic teller machines, internet banking and the justifications the big banks throw at us for these decisions. It means little to me when these corporations post billions of dollars of profit in one year, but the loss of jobs for people employed by these institutions is immense and the impact this rationalisation will have on them as individuals and their families also is immense. These are small communities, and these specialist jobs are not in large supply. One family leaving is another tear in the fabric of this community's existence. This is not good enough. There are elderly people who have lived in those communities for decades and are not internet savvy. They have placed their trust and savings in institutions such as these. They know the people they transact with. What becomes of them? Where do they go, and how do they get there? Notwithstanding the fact that we are at the mercy of scammers and cybercrime, what of the elderly?

Businesses will now have to pick up and travel an hour each week to bank at another institution. Do they to move to another bank? Where? In Orange or Wagga Wagga? This is not good enough. I am weary of a commercial world where profits come before people. I cannot fathom the growing chasm between the corporate end of town, with their big houses, their big cars, their big bonuses and their big bank balances, and Mrs Smith, who has lived in her weatherboard house in my electorate for six decades. She volunteers with the Country Women's Association and picks her oranges to make marmalade each year. We are people too. We are people who live in country towns for myriad reasons—for lifestyle, for family. We support businesses, we support regions, and we have supported these banks since their beginning.

Last week I spoke publicly urging people to let their feet do the talking and to move to the model of community-based banking. I told bank managers critical of this message that they need to heed this warning, to think about offering jobs to those who have been let go from competitor institutions, to take the opportunity to reaffirm their presence in these small towns and to fight on behalf of us. As yet I have heard little to nothing from that quarter. Silence is very loud in small communities. I have another message for the people of our electorate: Forget convenience—walk into your bank and transact with a human. Do not give banks, or any other large corporation, any reason to let technology and convenience be their excuse to let people go. One day that silence might mean there is nobody left in these small towns. I do not think anyone in this Chamber wants to see that.

IVANHOE ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (18:04):

Ivanhoe Estate is a critical part of the Ryde community. Ivanhoe Estate is the Housing NSW estate situated opposite The Ranch and what used to be the Stamford Grand on the corner of Epping and Herring roads. The Ivanhoe Estate is the first major project being delivered under the Future Directions policy and the Communities Plus program. The Ivanhoe Estate project will see the transformation of 259 social housing properties on the 8.2 hectare site into a socially integrated neighbourhood of more than 3,000 properties, including up to 1,000 social and 128 affordable rental apartments.

In August 2017 the New South Wales Government announced the awarding of the Ivanhoe Estate tender to the Aspire Consortium: Fraser Property Australia, Mission Australia Housing and Citta Property Group. Our community will benefit from new infrastructure, with \$120 million worth of community facilities such as a multifunction community centre, including a hall, gymnasium and pool; a community hub and village green, where community-focused activities can be run; a retail centre, including a plaza, supermarket, shops and cafes; parks, play areas and exercise stations for all ages; and community gardens.

In addition, more than \$21 million of funding will be generated through the redevelopment to be invested in social housing programs. Mission Australia Housing will provide tailored support to assist social housing residents with education, training and employment services. Employment and training opportunities will be facilitated through links to businesses within the Ivanhoe precinct, such as the high school, childcare facilities, aged care facilities, and retail and community facilities; links with businesses in the wider Macquarie Park area; and links to construction opportunities through the developer and its subcontractors, including landscaping and other on-site operators.

Childcare facilities also will be provided through two 75-place childcare centres. The project also will meet the needs of tenants aging in place—a significant demographic on the housing register—through the provision of a 120-bed residential aged care facility; 141 purpose-built social housing and 132 private independent living units; and a wellbeing centre. The Ivanhoe Estate redevelopment is a leading example of the Government working with the private and non-government sectors to activate a diverse, healthy and sustainable urban redevelopment due to its excellent proximity to jobs, education, transport and community facilities.

Consultation with community on the master plan was conducted from September to December 2017. Social housing residents, local businesses, non-government organisations and private households were mailed and invited to attend a range of information sessions and workshops. More than 3,500 points of contact were made throughout the consultation period. Feedback from the consultation indicated support for the proposed master plan, including the provision of green spaces, pedestrian links, school facilities and planned upgrades to existing traffic conditions.

A range of improvements were suggested to and subsequently included in the master plan, including changing townhouse designs to include street garden frontages; a separated bike path and pedestrian boardwalk along the Shrimpton's Creek corridor; and a new skate park to activate the space beneath and next to the new Shrimpton's Creek bridge. The community consultation has confirmed the finalised master plan and allowed for the preparation of a State significant development application with the Department of Planning and Environment. The master plan will be lodged in the next few months, with public exhibition to commence shortly thereafter through the Department of Planning and Environment. Frasers Property Group is working with Catholic Schools to plan for the new 1,000-student secondary school as part of the master plan.

I remember when representatives of the Department of Housing approached me a number of years ago in relation to the Ivanhoe Estate and said that the department wanted to put more social housing and affordable housing on that big site. The department wanted to knock the whole site down and start from scratch. I said that it would have my support on two conditions. The first condition was that the department would not put only social housing there and create a ghetto but instead would salt and pepper the site by putting social housing and non-social housing side by side so that the place is not stigmatised. The department has done that. I insisted on a second condition—social infrastructure such as schools, the high schools that the Catholics are going to build and the other community facilities that I mentioned. Because of that, we have achieved a great outcome for the citizens of Ryde.

BOMADERRY OLYMPIC SWIMMING POOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:09): As member for Kiama I cover a wide electorate—from Albion Park and Calderwood in the north to Falls Creek and West Nowra in the south. I love all my towns and villages but for me, I grew up in Bomaderry, I went to school in Bomaderry and I am a proud to call Bomaderry home. Last year I was contacted by Rosemary Sutherland who was concerned at proposals by the Shoalhaven City Council to close the Bomaderry Olympic Swimming Pool. This plan was buried in the Bomaderry-Nowra Regional Sporting Complex Master Plan—a \$70 million unfunded council proposal to develop sporting facilities and amenities in the northern Shoalhaven.

While the plan was conceptualised under the former elected council, it has been confirmed by the current council. The plan has resulted in the acquisition of homes, the proposed relocation of sporting facilities such as the Croquet Club and, until recently, the proposed closure of the 50-metre Olympic swimming pool at Bomaderry. Last year I contacted the Mayor of the Shoalhaven to discuss the proposal and I asked her to consider revising the plan. I need to declare my interest—not just as a ratepayer in the Shoalhaven. I used to train at this pool as a swimmer. Indeed, I was the sports house captain of Jordan in year 10. This pool is within walking distance of three large schools and, with the Bomaderry-Nowra Structure Plan and council's local environmental plan projecting growth of several thousands in the northern Shoalhaven, it made no sense to close a 50-metre pool in Bomaderry for a growing community.

As members of the House would be well aware, I have pushed the Government to help establish the Active Kids Rebate to encourage children to lead healthy and happy lives. At a time when childhood obesity is on the rise, closing activities for local young people is not in the interests of our community. Indeed, we have seen the current Shoalhaven City Council increase rates and cut services. When I was a councillor this was not the sort of policy approach that I took. Is it any wonder that when I called a public meeting at the Bomaderry RSL on Wednesday 21 February more than 350 people turned up to express their view in relation to this proposal.

Rarely have I seen public meetings of this size in Bomaderry but the spread of people in the audience said it all. Many would not have been Bomaderry pool users but they saw this proposal for what it was—a total lack of old-fashioned common sense. Present were experienced swimmers such as John Bracher and members of the Bomaderry Swimming Club. Commenting on council's proposal to replace the 50-metre pool with a 25-metre pool, one brave young swimmer said, "If you were building a football field from scratch you would not do half the job."

On the evening there were many outstanding contributions—from former respected principal, teacher and educator George Windsor to my own mother, who I called to the microphone with some reservations. They were all fired up and spoke with passion about the need to preserve an asset that is much loved by our community. But one of the most significant contributions came from Mr Stephen Johansson of Cambewarra—a highly

regarded sports and aquatic architect with decades of experience. Mr Johansson has delivered outstanding work all over New South Wales and his expertise was critical in this debate. Mr Johansson told the *South Coast Register*:

I do assessments on pools all around the State, and have refurbished many old country town pools. I would be surprised if it [the pool] was past it.

It's very level, it does not leak water, that's usually the first warning sign.

He said that if space was a concern for council it could condense the design and explore the option of building a gymnasium on the top floor. I extend a special thank you to Mr Johansson. I have no doubt that his statements helped the council to realise the error of its ways. I acknowledge and thank Lindy Reid from the Bomaderry Swimming Club and all the swim club members who attended the meeting to express their strong views. I also acknowledge my friend and parliamentary colleague the member for South Coast, Shelley Hancock, who came to the meeting to join me and the community to express our strong concerns.

I thank councillors Mitchell Pakes, Andrew Guile, Bob Proudfoot, Patricia White, Mark Kitchener and Nina Cheyne for attending the meeting. In particular, I thank Mitchell Pakes and Andrew Guile, who took the lead in having this matter reconsidered by the Shoalhaven City Council. I thank everyone who attended the public meeting. There were other things that they could have been doing on that evening but they chose to stand up and fight to save this important public asset. The council reconsidered this matter and I am pleased that it listened to the voices of locals who spoke up and said that they wanted to keep their 50-metre pool. Whilst it may be unusual for a State member of Parliament to involve himself in a battle like this, no-one ignores the people I represent—not a council, not anyone. No matter where people reside in my electorate, I will always ensure that the voice of my community is heard at all levels of government. I will never walk away from a fight when it comes to representing people in any part of my electorate.

TRIBUTE TO VILMA RYAN

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:14): I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, who are the traditional custodians of the land where this Parliament sits, and pay my respects to elders, both past and present. It is with sadness that I report to this House the passing of Vilma Ryan, a local community hero, an icon of the Blacktown city region and a great Indigenous activist. Vilma dedicated her life to her family, her culture and her community. Vilma was a mother, grandmother, great grandmother, friend to many and champion of all. She was a recipient of the New South Wales Senior Citizen of the Year Award and a humble woman who was embarrassed by any fuss made over her.

Born in 1939, Vilma was from the Wiradjuri clan, from Cowra, New South Wales. Vilma was born in a disgraceful era in which she was registered under the Wildlife and Fisheries Act and therefore was seen as a class of wildlife rather than as an Australian citizen. Thankfully this was corrected in the 1967 referendum. Vilma married and raised five children in Seven Hills. Vilma and her family battled and overcame many struggles, not the least being racism. Vilma also suffered domestic violence due to her husband's alcoholism. At the young age of 32, Vilma survived a heart attack and divorced her husband. This strong woman was left to look after five children alone. In 1972 she began volunteering at the Murawina preschool in Sydney, and her passion for Aboriginal rights and social justice was ignited.

Vilma's activism allowed her to engage with international celebrities. In 1987 Michael Jackson came to Australia to promote his album, *Bad*. Vilma and her friends went to see Michael Jackson at the Sydney Airport. Vilma was interviewed by the media and she did not miss the opportunity to say, "That Michael should meet the Indigenous community first." Vilma wrote a letter to Michael Jackson explaining that her community was in need of inspirational uplift and that they could not afford concert tickets. A day before the concert, Michael responded and, with Vilma, went to the Murawina preschool to meet with kids and the community. Michael Jackson organised photographs that were used for his album. He left 100 concert tickets for families. Vilma created a unique opportunity for people to meet a superstar and that forever changed their lives.

In 1988, at the age of 49 years, she began a lecturing career in Aboriginal studies and also attained an Associate Diploma in Adult Education. Vilma saw that education was the key to self-improvement. Charles Perkins took an interest and decided to help fund the research trip of Vilma and her colleagues to a school in Santa Fe in America to explore culturally appropriate programs. This attracted the attention of and resulted in a discussion with Whoopi Goldberg. Vilma and her colleagues started the Pemulwuy High School, and educated both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The school helped students who could not fit into mainstream schooling. Unfortunately, less than three years later, the school was forced to close, and Vilma was heartbroken. But her spirit was not crushed.

Vilma started and helped many Indigenous organisations, such as being the founder of the Blacktown Koori Eels, which later was named the Blacktown Western Warriors, and the Blacktown Aboriginal Corporation. In collaboration with Corrective Services, Vilma created the Aboriginal circle sentencing program so that

Aboriginal protocols could be used by Aboriginal men and women facing legal issues. She launched the label of authenticity, which promoted Aboriginal artists and ensured that people could not infringe on the copyright of their work. Vilma supported home care, welfare, children's services, Corrective Services, Church of England Homes and Riverstone family services.

In 2000 Vilma received a Community Award, and the community honour of being the Olympic torchbearer at Eastern Creek. At the age of 61 she ran with the Olympic torch at 6.00 p.m. in the rain. Vilma took off her shoes, pulled out the Aboriginal flag, and waved it around in the air. She wanted to run barefoot with the torch so she was in touch with the earth. She used that as a symbol to say how proud she was to be an Indigenous woman. Vilma's work as a political activist ended in 2007 as a result of a car accident, but she continued to be a guiding light for her family and her community—passing down her riches of knowledge and language. Vilma was fearless and fierce in her commitment to her people and contributed as a force for good in building the community of Blacktown in Australia. We are richer for the honour of having her and poorer for her loss. Vilma Ryan's funeral will be held tomorrow, Friday 9 March 2018, at the Castlebrook Memorial Park Cemetery, starting at 1.00 p.m. Vale, Vilma Ryan: May you rest in peace.

CENTENARY OF ANZAC GENERAL SIR JOHN MONASH

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (18:19): I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of Lieutenant Colonel John Moore, OAM, RFD, ED. I thank him for his contribution to Veterans Affairs, and particularly Reserve Forces Day. As part of the Centenary of Anzac I have had the opportunity to travel around New South Wales—from Brewarrina to Balmain, from Cootamundra to Cessnock—collecting soil for the Anzac Memorial. During those visits I have been able to pay my respects to diggers across the State, both past and present. Nevertheless, today I am stopping to think about one digger—General Sir John Monash. I say at the outset that I am a great supporter of the posthumous promotion this year of John Monash one step up in rank to field marshal, which is known as the Jerilderie Proposition. It reads:

Following on the outstanding contribution of Sir John Monash to State and Nation before, during and after World War One and reflecting the fact that Sir John Monash received no Australian Awards or Honours post 11 November 1918, the Prime Minister approve by Government Gazette publication, the posthumous promotion of one step in rank of General Sir John Monash to the rank of Australian Field Marshal, with effect 11 November 1930, one year after Sir John Monash was eventually promoted to the rank of General.

In a letter to his cousin, a 17-year-old John Monash once wrote:

To what country and people do I owe most? To that which I have never seen, with which I have no connection, but that it is the home of some of my relatives? Or to that in which and among whom I was born, have grown up, where I have learned all that I know, to which I owe all happiness that I have experienced? Shall I, in return for this, look upon it as a foreign land, to be deserted at the first convenient opportunity? No, it is my native land, and I have contracted from it a heavy debt, and it will ever be to me a prominent object, in some measure to repay that debt.

Later, on 4 July 1918, an older Lieutenant General John Monash led 6,000 diggers of the Australian Army Corps and 2,000 American soldiers to a small but significant victory in the Battle of Hamel, freeing the Hamel village in only 93 minutes—just three minutes longer than he anticipated. Monash had a striking quick-witted intelligence, an analytical mind and razor-sharp attention to detail. He was fearless in battle, took considerable risks and displayed an uncommon empathy for his troops. Following the war Monash openly declared that he wished only to give back to the community. He proclaimed one ought to "adopt as [their] fundamental creed that you will equip yourself for life, not solely for your own benefit, but for the benefit of the whole community". I hope that philosophy inspires and touches the hearts of all Australians. We should never take the defence of our nation for granted. We must always remember what our fallen and our standing protectors have heroically sacrificed to allow our beloved nation to flourish today.

It is for those reasons that I call upon all members of this House to support the posthumous promotion of General Sir John Monash to the rank of field marshal by the end of the year, as a salute to one of Australia's greatest generals and a remarkable citizen. I thank my colleagues in the Commonwealth Parliament, both past and present, for their support of the move—particularly Tim Fischer, Josh Frydenberg and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who said before his elevation to his position that he supported the promotion.

When I reflect on his life and service I think back to the "heavy debt" a young John Monash thought he owed to Australia. I think we can all agree that the debt was paid in full at the Battle of Hamel, which we will commemorate the centenary of this year. Finally, as a salute to all members of the First Australian Imperial Force in World War I and all soldiers who have served this country, including the 102,000 who gave their lives and the many Australian Defence Force veterans, I call upon all members of this House to support the creation of a cemetery similar to Arlington Cemetery in the United States to immortalise the legacy of our fallen as part of the Centenary of Anzac.

LISMORE ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (18:24): Tonight I recognise organisations and individuals in the electorate of Lismore. I congratulate a Medal of the Order of Australia recipient from my electorate, Bruce McKenzie, who was named in the Australia Day 2018 Honours List in recognition and appreciation of his significant service to veterans and their families. Bruce served the community as Kyogle RSL Sub-Branch President from 2009 to 2015. He is a past executive member of the Far North Coast District Council RSL Sub-Branch and a former Kyogle RSL Sub-Branch delegate. Bruce is also an ongoing supporter of the Far North Coast Legacy. It is wonderful to see Bruce recognised for his contribution.

I congratulate and recognise another important member of the Northern Rivers community, Marge Graham. Marge is not only a talented country music singer and songwriter but she is also a long-time Lismore radio announcer, hosting her own Saturday breakfast show on River FM. During a recent ceremony in Tamworth, Marge was inducted into the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame in recognition of her more than 40 years of support for the music industry. This award is well-deserved recognition of Marge's hard work and dedication to her field and local community. I was so pleased to see Marge acknowledged in this important way and I wish her all the best for the future.

In Tenterfield recently I had the opportunity to attend St Stephen's Presbyterian Church to inform the community that they had received a \$100,000 grant to go towards the revitalisation of the church's historical site. The grant will be used on a visionary project led by John Bradford and in collaboration with Reverend Jim Seymour, Tenterfield Presbyterian Church, Tenterfield Shire Council, Tenterfield High School and local builder Tom Murphy, who will manage the project. The project involves the repair of the church which will enable it to reopen and provide onsite educational opportunities for year 11 carpentry and joinery students from the Tenterfield High School. The funding was made available through the New South Wales Government's Heritage Near Me incentives program. I congratulate all involved in this project.

The flood issues in Lismore have been well documented. Both Lismore and Murwillumbah were affected by the flood event. We call it a "rain event" now; it is not called "a flood" anymore. REDinc, which is based in Lismore, has done a great job in the area for the past 30 years delivering a wide range of personalised disability services. Following the devastating 2017 flood, the organisation lost its driving simulator, which is used to teach individuals to drive. REDinc applied for a grant from the Government's Community Building Partnership program and, together with Telstra, the Government provided funding to the organisation to purchase a new, state-of-the-art driving simulator. The new driving simulator is more advanced than the REDinc's previous simulator. Recently, when I officially launched the driving simulator I saw firsthand its impact on both the organisation and the users.

Providing people with special needs the opportunity to drive in a simulator helps determine whether they have the ability to take the next step and get into a vehicle. The experience in the simulator tests them and provides them with challenges. The users were appreciative of the contribution made by Telstra and the community and the grant from the Community Building Partnership. The event was an example of a community working together to support others. I congratulate REDinc and thank the organisation for the work it does in our community.

BALMAIN ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR LIZA SCHAEPER

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (18:29): On International Women's Day it is appropriate to consider the contribution of Liza Schaeper, the 2018 Balmain Local Woman of the Year. On this day we recommit ourselves to a collective mission to achieve equality for women locally and globally. Today in this place we have heard about the huge challenges faced by many women, including things as straightforward as being recognised for their contribution to the community. It is well known that women often work against the odds when participating in roles traditionally held by men and that they are generally forced to take on the lion's share of unpaid domestic and caring work. Liza Schaeper has made a fantastic contribution to my local community and to the community of the inner west in general.

Liza Schaeper is the President of the Leichhardt Saints Football Club Committee. She has pioneered a leadership role within a sport, a club and an association that is dominated by men. She has used her role as president to push the focus of the Leichhardt Saints Football Club in the areas of female participation and development with quite dramatic results. Liza has introduced a range of recruitment strategies focused on women of all ages. She has launched more than 30 women's teams to accommodate mums, and enlisted the help of former Matildas Heather Garriock to recruit youth interest. Over the past five years those strategies have seen a 25 per cent growth in total membership for the club, and women's and girls' participation has grown 200 per cent to 17 teams—what an incredible achievement.

Liza has also pushed to represent women beyond the club. She was the first female director to sit on the Canterbury District Social Football Association. While at the association Liza helped to found its committee for

female football. Last year, that committee established a women's development officer to increase girls' and women's participation in soccer throughout the district. Liza's story illustrates the powerful potential of female leadership to transform our local communities. I was delighted to join Liza and three of her children this morning at the International Women's Day event, which was held at the Sydney International Convention Centre. At that event the Premier and the Minister for Women joined us for some photographs but, more importantly, they took the time to talk about the important role of sport. They also spoke about the important role that women can play in community organisations and why it is important for their voices to be heard.

However, in many organisations—whether in Parliament or in the boardrooms of organisations such as football clubs—women's voices are often absent from decision-making. We must do everything we can not only to encourage their participation but also to empower and support women to ensure that the barriers presented by traditional structures are reduced. This will enable everyone in our community to participate. International Women's Day is a time to reflect on what is yet to be achieved in our effort for women's equality. I would be remiss not to mention the astounding contribution of my two Greens colleagues in this House: Jenny Leong, the member for Newtown, and Tamara Smith, the member for Ballina. Both of these extraordinary women work tirelessly to represent their electorates in this Parliament.

I should also mention that the staff in my office is now all female. Each one of those incredible women does a fantastic job. In particular, I welcome Madeleine Lush, Eleanor Nurse and Sharon Butt and thank them for the fantastic work they do in the community. I was so proud to celebrate and acknowledge the work that Liza has already achieved for women and girls. She has brought up an incredible family and has wonderful children. I congratulate Liza and all of those involved in sport in our community. I encourage them to keep participating. On International Women's Day I commit myself to do all that I can to work tirelessly for equality for women. Thank you, Liza. Happy International Women's Day.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:34): I take this opportunity to speak on the impressive record of Liberal governments, both State and Federal, in the protection of our marine environment, important work that I will seek to continue and encourage during my time in this place. As the Hon. Robert Hill, AC, former Federal Minister for Environment and Heritage in the Howard Government, said, "We are all, at heart, conservationists ... however, being a conservationist doesn't necessarily mean you are 'green'. In fact, as Liberals, we regard our shared concern for the future as rather a deep blue." As such, I am proud to stand here today to speak on my party's tradition in marine conservation. The record is impressive: The end of whaling in Australian waters, the proclamation of the Great Australian Bight Marine Park in 1998, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park commencing in 1979, the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve in 1991 and the South East Commonwealth Marine Reserves network consisting of 13 marine reserves are all State or Federal Liberal government initiatives.

From the Howard Government's expansion of green zones in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to the Greiner Government's establishment of the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve, Coalition governments have a proud history of marine conservation that we should continue to champion into the future. The Great Australian Bight Marine National Park, which the South Australian Liberal Government proclaimed in 1995 as a marine park whale sanctuary, was, together with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the largest marine park in the world. Conservation in the 1990s was critical, as we grappled with giving much-needed protection to our vulnerable oceans and marine life, whilst also protecting important access for industry to keep Australia moving, and protect Australian jobs and livelihoods.

I will speak more on the Great Australian Bight Marine Park, which, as I previously stated, was originally proclaimed by the State Coalition Government and subsequently expanded by the Howard Government. This marine park, which is perhaps less well known by us than the Great Barrier Reef, is a vital conservation corridor from the South Australian coast extending outwards into the bight. The Commonwealth park declared in 1998 was made up of two overlapping zones. Adjacent to the South Australian park is the marine mammal protection zone that is intended to provide protected calving waters for both the southern right whale and Australian sea lion colonies. The Federal Minister for the Environment noted at the time that the Benthic Protection Zone was, "... the first major marine park in any part of the Southern Ocean that seeks to protect such a large area of the ocean's floor" and that will "provide protection for an area that will be of enormous importance to the nation's scientific efforts to understand our marine environment."

That this incredible legacy in one of Australia's—if not the world's—most important marine environments can be a significant point of pride for my colleagues, which I will seek to carry on in New South Wales. One of Australian's greatest environmental and economic assets, the Great Barrier Reef, also has a strong history of protection under Coalition governments. Since the marine park was first proclaimed by the Fraser Government in 1979 until the marine park zoning plan was implemented in 2004 under the Howard Government,

the areas protected from fishing or extraction rose from just 4.6 per cent of the park to more than 33 per cent. These are all major achievements of which we as a Coalition Government can and should be proud. We should not vacate the debate on marine conservation, nor should we hide from the fact that these decisions take courage.

In my electorate of Manly, the Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve provides an insight—of course, on a much smaller scale—into the importance of the Greater Barrier Reef and other marine parks. I was fortunate to welcome professional skater Tony Hawk to Manly recently. Of all the places he could snorkel in New South Wales during his visit with Destination NSW, he came to Manly because our sanctuary at Cabbage Tree Bay is working and provides amazing snorkelling opportunities, while at the same time supporting a thriving tourist economy. The direct relationship between sanctuaries, tourism and the local economy is real and provides a commercial incentive for those who seek one as part of this debate.

I remind members in this place of the words of the Hon. Robert Hill, AC: "We believe that a comprehensive and representative system of marine parks is an essential component of our efforts to protect Australia's unique marine biodiversity." I am proud to stand in this place as a strong advocate for our local marine environment. I will continue to support greater protection for the important marine areas of my electorate, backed up by the best science and expert advice available.

BOSNIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:39): In February I had the pleasure of representing Premier Gladys Berejiklian at the Bosnian Independence Day High Tea in Parliament. I acknowledge the New South Wales Honorary Consul General of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Demila Gabriel, and her husband, Chris Gabriel. I thank them for inviting me and hosting what was an amazing high tea with more than 150 attendees, including the Hon. David Clarke, from the other place, and the member for Chifley, Ed Husic. Their support and commitment to the relationship between New South Wales and Bosnia and Herzegovina is greatly appreciated. I also recognise the number of consuls general and representatives from many nations around the world who were also in attendance at State Parliament. I know how important it was to Mrs Gabriel to have the support and encouragement of representatives from other nations.

This event is more significant than many in the House may realise, and it will be remembered for many years to come. This was the first time that a Bosnian Independence Day celebration event had been held in a House of Parliament anywhere in the world. Held on 1 March, Bosnian Independence Day is a public holiday observed by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to celebrate the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992. As part of a globalised network of countries, it was inspiring to see that we can celebrate each other's wins, but also mourn and stand beside each other in times of hardship. We have stood in solidarity with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina as we celebrated their independence since 1992, and this was their twenty-third annual Independence Day since formal recognition in 1995.

Although political allegiance has usually been based on ethnic identity since the end of the Bosnian War, democracy is absolutely paramount to the promising and potential-filled future of this nation. A right to liberty, equality and safety and the opportunity to learn and own property are vital aspects of participating and contributing to society. They construct the underpinnings of a fair and just world. I am still amazed at the outcome of the referendum that took place in 1992. When people were asked if they favoured the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a State of equal citizens and nations of all religions and backgrounds, the result was overwhelmingly supportive—99.7 per cent of those who participated in the referendum voted for independence.

That vast majority shows us how crucial it is to take into consideration the beliefs and convictions of a population when the trajectory of a nation is being planned. People must be involved in deciding their own country's future. However, freedom often comes with a price. After the declaration of independence, a series of atrocities followed, including genocide and ethnic cleansing—a period in which more than two million Bosnians were displaced. May we never forget the fight and struggle the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina endured for their freedom and independence. Today I ask that members in this House honour, respect and reflect on this nation's heritage. My involvement and interaction with the Bosnian community in the past seven years might be brief, but it has always been an enriching experience.

In my electorate of Oatley, according to recent census data, many people identify as having Bosnian ancestry. Whilst it may seem a marginal population, Oatley has the eighth-highest population of Australian Bosnians out of 93 State electoral districts in New South Wales. The district of New South Wales that I have the honour of representing in Parliament has one of the most multiculturally diverse communities in the State. I have had the privilege of meeting local Bosnians in my few visitations to the Penshurst Mosque, which is only a two-minute drive from my electorate office. I congratulate the Bosnian community in my electorate and across

the State on their Independence Day event. I hope their festivities were reflective, celebratory and enjoyable as they commemorated with family, friends and the broader community.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:44): Happy International Women's Day. With pride, I sit here today as the first woman using a wheelchair in the New South Wales Parliament. Women's rights have come so far. My family fought my school to allow me to study woodwork and metalwork, without success. Now young women across New South Wales study all aspects of technology and applied science, and rightly so. This morning it was fabulous to see women who are blazing trails in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in Aboriginal education recognised in our NSW Women of the Year Awards. The Premier announced progress towards the target of gender equality among senior leaders in the public service, with female representation currently at 37 per cent. The target is to achieve gender equality by 2025.

I am proud to sit on this side of the House and speak of social inclusion, with 41 per cent of women on this side compared with 20 per cent on the other side. I have a brochure entitled "Progress", which is a 2017 snapshot of the NSW Public Service. As a person with a disability, I have seen the number of people with disabilities employed in the New South Wales public service reduced from 4.2 per cent to 2.7 per cent in the past 10 years. It is not good enough. That statistic appeared on the page entitled "Building Diversity and Inclusion".

I thank the honesty of the report, which states, "Representation continues to decline and the experience of the workplace is quite negative for many people with a disability." So what do we do? During this exciting time when the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] is being rolled out and so many people with disabilities listing employment as one of their goals, how can this Government let people with disabilities down? This Government's goal is to increase the number of people with disabilities employed in New South Wales to 5.6 per cent by 2027. Why wait? I ask the Premier and the Liberal-Nationals Government to ensure that people with disability are employed in our government workplaces long before 2027.

I bring this issue to the attention of the House because of the looming government cuts to disability. On 30 June this year, the Government will cut its \$13 million advocacy funding that the Federal Government has asked it to continue. Approximately 50 New South Wales groups advocating for people with disabilities receive \$13 million a year from the State Government, and at least half of those organisations will be wiped out, which is already beginning to impact people with disabilities across New South Wales. People with disabilities are now rallying across the State as they realise the impact of the looming advocacy cuts on 30 June. People with disabilities from more than 20 advocacy groups using the hashtag "standbyme" met in Parliament House last year to convince the Government to continue advocacy funding.

Leigh Creighton, who has Down syndrome, said he came to Parliament House specifically to ask the Premier to reconsider her cuts to advocacy services. Leigh stated that advocacy groups are like a telephone line that help people with disabilities to be heard clearly. People with disabilities have protested in Redfern, Wagga Wagga, Gosford and the Illawarra, and there will be more. People with disabilities represent 15 per cent of the population and they are realising that funding will be cut. Last year I wrote to the Minister for Disability Services expressing my concerns. The Minister wrote back, saying he is constantly meeting with people with disabilities who are accessing supports which they previously could not under the former State-funded specialist disability system. I too am meeting with people whose lives have improved under the NDIS, but that is not the problem.

The problem is that the NDIS does not cover everything, such as a paltry \$13 million for independent advocacy compared to what the Minister described as an "unprecedented" \$6.5 billion NDIS spend. Regardless of whether or not we receive support from the NDIS, people with disabilities still need a voice. Organisations such as the Central Coast Disability Network, which has been an important part of my local community since 1979—the member for Terrigal knows it—has provided disability services, including advocacy, for the past 39 years and it will close in June this year. This organisation supports a lot of my friends with disabilities across the Central Coast. Its experts have worked there for years and have established relationships and friendships; they are our voices. Next year I would love to celebrate their fortieth anniversary, but with funding cuts looming they probably will no longer exist.

The NDIS does not solve all problems that people with disability face. The NDIS is not a panacea. We are still not employed equitably in New South Wales and still cannot access local train stations. The Government found \$2.6 billion to fund the knockdown and rebuild of two sports stadiums in Sydney. The Queensland and Victorian governments are committing to advocacy funding during this difficult transition. Why is it so difficult for New South Wales? Like Leigh Creighton, I am asking the Premier to please reconsider the \$13 million cuts to disability advocacy funding. [*Time expired.*]

WYONG EMPLOYMENT ZONE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:49): I draw the attention of the House to the Wyong Employment Zone. Now that the Central Coast has been deemed to be one area, it will rely heavily on the employment zone to provide jobs for the growing population. One of the biggest issues confronting the area is that precincts 11 and 13 do not have water and sewerage services. Potential developers have two choices: First, they can spend millions of dollars installing services; or, secondly, they can go to Lake Macquarie and save a great deal of money. Unfortunately, the Central Coast is missing out on potential jobs because there are no services in precincts 11 and 13, which are privately owned.

I was pleased when I met recently with the acting chief executive officer of the Central Coast Council to hear that the Central Coast Co-ordinator General had convinced the council finally to apply for funding from the Housing Acceleration Fund. I heard rumours that no application had been made by the council. That concerned me, given the rapid rate of population growth in that part of my electorate. I was buoyed by the fact that the acting chief executive officer had agreed to lodge some applications. I hope that the Government will consider them carefully and that it understands the urgency of providing water and sewerage services in precincts 11 and 13, and in the Warnervale Business Park, which is in precinct 14. Doing so will create hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs on that part of the Central Coast, which will benefit the entire coast.

I spoke yesterday in this place about the parking problems at Warnervale Station—the car park is full very early in the morning. All members, including the Temporary Speaker, the member for Terrigal, are committed to creating more local jobs on the Central Coast so that our constituents are not required to commute. One issue that brings us together is the detrimental effect of our constituents having to travel away from the Central Coast for work. It affects families and social infrastructure such as sporting groups and volunteer organisations. Hopefully, the Wyong Employment Zone will reach its potential once those services are established.

I have been frustrated for a long time about this issue. The Labor Government rezoned that area, but development came to a screeching halt because unfortunately the then Wyong council, and for a short time the Central Coast Council, focused on a Chinese theme park and the growth of the airport. I always argued that if the council were to divert the money being spent on those projects to providing services in precincts 11 and 13 it would create many more jobs. Finally, it appears that the new council has some sense and the mayor is listening. I will meet with her, general manager Mike Dowling and a few others in the coming weeks to talk about this issue. Even though the area concerned is in my electorate, it is a problem for the entire Central Coast. We need to open up this industrial land to create more local jobs.

This is all part of the development puzzle. Houses are being built at a million miles an hour, but we need jobs. Our constituents drive past that empty land every day, knowing that it has the potential to be developed for industries that will create jobs for them. It is great that the Government has established the Housing Acceleration Fund and that the council has finally applied for funds. I do not know why it has not done so before now, but I am pleased that it is now happening. Hopefully, we will finally see that industrial land opened up to create the additional 40,000 jobs that we need to keep up with population growth.

RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:54): The electorate of Riverstone is currently served by the Richmond railway line. From 2019 it will also be served by the Sydney Metro Northwest. At the moment the distribution of population means that more people rely on buses for public transport than rail but from 2019, with the arrival of the metro, that balance will change. In that context, I note the announcement made last weekend in connection to the Western Sydney City Deal, which includes a commitment to a north-south rail link connecting Badgerys Creek airport with the main western rail line near St Marys. A commitment was also given to investigate the feasibility of a future connection from the St Marys area to Schofields.

The Government is building the 23-kilometre north-west metro line from Chatswood to what is proposed to be named Tallawong station in the electorate of Riverstone. It has also identified and marked on relevant planning instruments a reserved corridor for future extension of the rail line from Tallawong to Marsden Park town centre. The extension will place the future rail line only about eight kilometres from the main western line in the vicinity of St Marys. Connecting the two would transform the Sydney rail network from its current hub-and-spoke radial structure to a loop structure, which would allow people to move across the metropolitan area to various destinations and not just travel to and from the central business district. I strongly support the possible St Marys-Schofields link as it would greatly benefit the residents of Riverstone and surrounding areas for whom access to employment, education and recreation would be greatly enhanced.

I note also that the draft Future Transport 2056 plan was exhibited last year and is open for public submissions. I understand that the final version of this plan will include clarification that future duplication of the Richmond line beyond Schofields as far as Vineyard remains a goal of the Government in future. This, too, is a proposal that I strongly support. Almost the whole of the Riverstone electorate lies within the North West Priority Growth Area. This area will be home to tens of thousands of additional residents in future. This additional population growth, as well as the current population, will require more frequent services on the Richmond line than are currently possible beyond Schofields. That is because Schofields is at the end of the dual line; beyond Schofields it is a single track to Richmond. One cannot run more frequent services when more trains must run in both directions than are currently scheduled on that line.

Duplication is critical to providing better services for that growing area in future. While the opportunity for duplication of the line north-west of Schofields remains some years away, given the enormous projects to which the Government has committed already, I believe it is critical that when we take that opportunity in future we lift the railway line in the vicinity of Riverstone township onto a viaduct. That will improve not only the capacity of the Richmond rail line but also the capacity of the road network to serve the area. The road affected most critically by this plan would be Garfield Road, a planned arterial road through the north-west sector that currently has a level crossing at the rail line. That level crossing and the associated intersections with Railway Terrace and Riverstone Parade are a focus of congestion throughout the region. This inhibits the growth of the region and causes great stress to the township of Riverstone.

For obvious safety reasons, any proposed upgrade of Garfield Road depends on removing the level crossing and replacing it with a grade-separated option. The decision has been delayed for years because of the difficulty in identifying the correct option—one that satisfies the needs of the community. I believe the correct option is rail over road—that is, lifting the railway line onto a viaduct. That delivers greater benefits on more fronts than any of the various road-over-rail options that have been proposed in the past. It is a better town planning option, a better transport option and a better environmental option. It certainly means greater flood immunity for the rail line than is possible with any of the road-over-rail options. For all those reasons, when the time surely comes in future for a decision on the duplication of the Richmond rail line and replacing the level crossing—which I expect is about seven or eight years away—I strongly urge the Government to adopt the rail-over-road option, lift the rail onto a viaduct and score a big win for the whole Riverstone community.

ALBION PARK RAIL BYPASS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:59): Earlier this week, I found two videos. I had decided to take a look at how and when this Government decided to change its position on the Albion Park Rail bypass and the Yallah interchange in particular. As every member of this House would be aware—because I have been talking about this for a long time—one day the Yallah interchange was being sold to our community as a critical and fundamental part of the project, the next day those opposite were telling us that it was "subject to funding availability and traffic demand" and "supplementary" to the rest of the project.

The two videos that I found were both produced and funded by the New South Wales Government, and they were virtually the same. The two videos use the same flyover animation of the entire Albion Park Rail bypass project and, for the most part, the same script, that is, right up until the mention of Dapto, West Dapto and the Yallah interchange. The first video was uploaded to YouTube and produced for the Government in October 2015. The second video was also produced for the Government but is dated September 2017. That video is currently available on the Roads and Maritime Services interactive web portal for the Albion Park Rail bypass project. Both videos start in the exact same way:

The Albion Park Rail bypass—the "missing link" ... between Sydney and Bomaderry.

The bypass would deliver significant benefits to local communities and motorists by reducing congestion at a notorious Illawarra bottleneck.

Subject to approval, construction would start in early 2019 and is expected to take three years to build.

During construction the proposed Albion Park Rail bypass is expected to generate around 550 jobs.

Safeguarding the future, the motorway would be built with two lanes in each direction, with capacity for a third.

Then everything starts to go off track. In the 2015 video, the Yallah interchange is pitched as an essential element of the project. I quote:

Interchanges at Yallah, Albion Park and Oak Flats would provide important access to Calderwood, Tullimbar, Tallawarra and West Dapto ...

The interchange at Yallah would provide free-flowing connections to and from Albion Park Rail, Dapto and Yallah.

The 2017 video was the same, but the Government lazily slapped the words "subject to funding availability and traffic demand" at the bottom of the image in small white writing.

Mr Geoff Provest: That's not nice, Anna. Be nice.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I am not here to be nice. Similarly, rather than saying that the interchange will provide "free-flowing connections to Dapto" like the earlier video, the voice over now states:

Timing for the construction of the interchange at Yallah is subject to funding availability and traffic demand.

What once had been an integral part of this project is now being spruiked as "supplementary" to the rest of the bypass. The difference between those videos shows what I have always known to be true: the decision to bring the Yallah interchange into question is nothing short of a blatant backflip and an outright deceit to local residents. To add insult to injury, the member for Kiama—the self-proclaimed infrastructure champion of the Illawarra—has sided with this decision, effectively abandoning the current and future residents of West Dapto, all 55,000 of them.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! The member for Shellharbour knows that a private member's statement is not to be used to attack other members.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I am not attacking him.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I draw the member's attention to my earlier ruling.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Only last month the member for Kiama revealed that the Yallah interchange was being "discussed as a supplementary item for consideration". The member for Kiama also revealed that tenderers had been asked to "consider it when costing the project but it needs to fit within the budget". To put it simply, the Government is telling the tenderers for this project to cut the Yallah interchange in order to fit within the Government's budget. The member for Kiama once spruiked the Albion Park Rail bypass project as something "our community and commuters deserve". Less than six months ago, he was releasing statements saying the bypass would "provide easy access to Dapto". What a difference six months can make.

It is clear that this Government is panicking and cutting back on a critical element of the bypass because it has suddenly realised that it is going to blow the \$550 million it promised for the project. To sell this project to the West Dapto community for the last seven years and suddenly pull the rug out from under them is nothing short of shameful. I stand with the residents of Dapto and West Dapto, and I call on this Government to build the bypass and build it properly. The Government should stop the deceit and stop cutting corners because of its own incompetence in budgeting. It is quite amazing that this Government can find \$2.7 billion for a couple of stadiums in Sydney but is happy to build a half-baked bypass on, according to the NRMA, one of the most hated roads in New South Wales.

TWEED ELECTORATE WATER SAFETY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (19:04): A number of tragic incidents have occurred in the Tweed. Since 2015 we have lost four people through drowning at an iconic area called Fingal Head and Dreamtime Beach. Young people have lost their lives their by being swept out to sea, and it has been an ongoing issue. Recently a 22-year-old Japanese man, Tomoe Ogisu, was swept out to sea where he died and then was pounded against the rocks. I am pleased to announce that in the past few weeks we held a roundtable at which Crown Lands, the Aboriginal Land Council, Tweed Shire Council and the police were represented. More importantly, also in attendance with a number of his operatives was that great man Steve Pearce, the Chief Executive Officer of Surf Life Saving NSW.

We viewed the sites and are in the process of installing two angel rings. Stan Konstantaras is the angel ring coordinator for the NSW National Sportsfishing Association, which installs angel rings and maintains them up and down the coast. I point out that I do not want people to get a false sense of security because of angel rings. The area I am speaking about is a very dangerous place. It looks very similar to Hawaii with the black basalt rocks, but there is an enormous rip between there and the Cook Island Aquatic Reserve. A lot of people swim at the iconic Dreamtime Beach. It is one of the top 10 most picturesque beaches in Australia, but it is extraordinarily deadly.

The roundtable decided on the installation of angel rings and the setting up of an emergency beacon on the beach. A defibrillator will be located on the outside of the Fingal surf club and Surf Life Saving NSW will instigate training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation for all local residents who put up their hands. It is a great initiative. Will it save lives? I hope so. But people need to take responsibility for their safety. Warning signs will be erected stating not just that the area is dangerous but that, "In the last three years four people have died from swimming on this beach." It is an extraordinarily dangerous area. The Government, the community and the organisations have come together and we are working through the issues.

As a member of Parliament I have always relied on the knowledge of professionals, whether they are doctors, nurses, paramedics, police or schoolteachers. They are a lot smarter than I am in their chosen profession;

I am only a politician. The Surf Life Saving volunteers at the meeting said, "This is exactly what we need, member for Tweed." We are installing the angel rings and the emergency beacon and we are providing the training. But I was annoyed and devastated that the local Federal member, Justine Elliot, said four days ago that it is a State issue and campaigned for lifeguards to patrol Dreamtime Beach without any reference to the local lifesavers. With her innate knowledge of the subject, she wants our volunteers to patrol the beach and put their lives at risk. She is politicising the deaths on our beaches. She should hang her head in shame. Members opposite might defend her, but she is a shocking individual who wants to put people's lives at risk just to score political points.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It is not appropriate to attack members in a private member's statement.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: She is in another place. She is the Federal member.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is still not appropriate to be attacking another member of Parliament.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! The member for Tweed will cease debating across the table.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: She should hang her head in shame, putting people's lives at risk by demanding the State Government put volunteer lifesavers on that beach without even talking to the lifesavers or to Steve Pearce from Surf Life Saving NSW. I spoke to Steve Pearce only 10 or 15 minutes ago and he is devastated that a politician would interfere in the ongoing rescue efforts of our volunteers on our beaches. How dare she do that; it is just shocking. I am 100 per cent for our local lifesavers.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (19:09): I congratulate Maitland Local Woman of the Year Amorelle Dempster who attended this morning's breakfast for the Women of the Year Awards. I pay homage to all the winners of these awards: the NSW Premier's Award for Woman of the Year, Professor Hala Zreiqat; Aboriginal Woman of the Year, Julie Shelley; First State Super Lifetime Achievement Award, Norma Ingram; the Harvey Norman Young Woman of the Year, Shaza Rifi; the Rex Airlines Regional Woman of the Year, Juliet Duffy; the Community Hero award, Dr Raji Ambikairajah; and Business Woman of the Year, Kristy Chong.

Many other finalists were recognised: Dannielle Miller, Natalie Isaacs and Nina Funnell for the NSW Premier's Awards; Associate Professor Faye McMillan and Selena Archibald for the Aboriginal Woman of the Year Award; Julie Anne Mitchell for the lifetime achievement award; Jackie Dujmovic, Juliet Duffy and Suzy Miller were finalists for the Business Woman of the Year Award; Associate Professor Faye McMillan, Jan Edwards, Juliet Duffy and Vicki Wilson were recognised as finalists for the Regional Woman of the Year Award; Andreena Kardamis, Anna Hush, Dr Cathy Zhao and Josephine de Costa were finalists for Young Woman of the Year Award; Christine Mastello, and Kay Schubach—a strong campaigner against domestic violence—The Founders of Lou's Place and Michelle Ellery were finalists for the Community Hero award. International Women's Day recognised the achievements of all those women.

Today I joined the President of Local Government NSW Councillor Linda Scott and Chief Executive Donna Rygate at the inaugural Local Government NSW Women's Day lunch. Dr Anne Summers, PhD, AO, has been doing amazing work in this community. It is important to recognise women in our community for the contributions they make. I am concerned about the behaviour of many men in our community who troll on Twitter and attack women publicly. It is a problem that must be dealt with. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians addressed these issues over the past few years. I am the chair of the New South Wales branch of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, which has been looking in particular at violence towards female parliamentarians. It is an issue of concern. Members will recall the tragic death of member of Parliament Jo Cox in the United Kingdom.

There have been assaults on women in this Chamber. Some male members have crossed the floor in breach of the Westminster process when women have been speaking at the despatch box. I urge male members of Parliament to address the way in which they conduct themselves on social media and in the Chamber and take stock of how they address women at different times. The community is sick of hearing that women have no right to be in this Parliament. Some men in this Chamber have stood next to me and pointed their fingers at me, and that has occurred also outside this Chamber. It is the responsibility of members in this Chamber to conduct themselves with decorum. Members can sometimes get hot under the collar in question time but it is inappropriate to abuse or attack women in this place. Today is an important occasion on which to raise these issues. The "Then and Now" report which refers to women's participation in society was released earlier this week. In 1973 there was one woman member of Parliament. Today there are 27—not 28 as the Minister for Women said. We cannot inspire women to stand for public office if the women in this Chamber are constantly being attacked.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): The member for Maitland mentioned Suzy Miller, who is a resident of Macmasters Beach and was a finalist in the Business Woman of the Year award. I was delighted to see that Suzy Miller was one of the four finalists.

VISSLA SYDNEY SURF PRO

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:14): I am delighted to update the House on the incredible success of the Vissla Sydney Surf Pro, which ran from Saturday 24 February to last Sunday 4 March, and was held at North Steyne on beautiful Manly Beach. In a week when Manly was named the number one beach in Australia by TripAdvisor and the surf held up, we witnessed a community coming together to support a truly awesome event. I was incredibly proud to work alongside the team at Surfing NSW—in particular Luke Madden, John O'Neill, Harry Hodge and the entire Surfing NSW board, the World Surf League, Northern Beaches Council, Hotel Steyne, local businesses and boardrider clubs throughout the electorate of Manly—to see the Vissla Sydney Surf Pro come to life in such a short time and provide an important economic boost to and cultural impact on the Manly community.

Surfing has a proud history in Manly. Way back in 1903, the then Manly Council lifted the ban on "all day bathing" at Manly Beach, and by 1915 surfing had found its way to our beautiful northern beaches all the way from Hawaii. In 1964 the inaugural World Championships were held at Manly Beach, where Australians won the men's, women's and juniors' events before a crowd comprising tens of thousands of fans. With the listing of Manly Beach as a World Surfing Reserve in 2012 and with the Australian Open of Surfing being held there between 2014 and 2017, history shows that Manly can support a premier surfing event and that surfing is part and parcel of life in our beautiful part of the world.

The Vissla Sydney Surf Pro was built on the ethos of upcycling, which is about turning waste into want. Our community thoroughly embraced the upcycling theme of the event and I was proud to secure a temporary Return and Earn reverse vending machine for the event. The Return and Earn program is testament to this Government's commitment to reducing litter and waste in our local environments. The machine proved to be incredibly popular at the event and collected more than 5,000 items in a matter of days. I thank the hardworking team from Tomra who worked with Northern Beaches Council and Surfing NSW to bring the reverse vending machine to the event at such short notice.

I pay tribute to the incredible local businesses which worked together to support the event and which, through that support, made the event possible. The community partners included Q Station; M. Barber Manly; Manly Cycles; Village Chiropractic Manly; *COVERED* magazine; Belgrave Cartel; International College of Management, Sydney; Manly Surf School, Gelatissimo Manly; Manly Beach Health Club; Novotel Manly Pacific; and Maestro & Co. These local businesses demonstrated their willingness to support an event that they know not only delivers a commercial return for them but also strengthens the social fabric of our community.

The incredible work undertaken by the Manly Business Chamber and the Hello Manly Tourism Booking and Information Centre was critical to bringing together business support and projecting the beauty of Manly to international and interstate people and to people from all around New South Wales. In particular I thank Meegan Clancy. I also pay tribute to the strategic partners of the event, including Lifeline Northern Beaches, which held its Lifeline High Schools Challenge with great success, and where I had a turn in the commentary box alongside Dave Thomas of Lifeline. I also thank Freshwater Community Bank and SeaLink Travel Group for their support for the Vissla Sydney Pro.

I congratulate Deivid Silva and Nikki Van Dijk on winning the inaugural men's and women's events respectively. They both leave the event with the all-important qualifying score of 6,000 points for the year ahead. Over the past few months we saw a sport, a community and a number of key stakeholders come together to ensure a world-class event was retained in Manly. The success of the event also illustrated the obvious opportunity that exists for many years ahead. I place on the record my ongoing support for the Vissla Sydney Pro and I look forward to 2019. I commend the Vissla Sydney Surf Pro to the House.

WEST DAPTO INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:18): On 20 January this year the *Illawarra Mercury* reported that a development proposal had been lodged with Wollongong City Council to create the first multistorey apartment complex in West Dapto. In the same article, Wollongong City Council predicted that a completed West Dapto will house more than 55,000 people and reaffirmed that this is an area that will end up having multiple town and village centres. In February it was announced that the new releases of coalmining land in Horsley and Huntley were currently being considered by the council, which would introduce an additional 2,300 new homes to the area.

Likewise last month, Wollongong City Council also began to consider a proposal to build a massive development of seniors living units on a site in West Dapto. All of these proposals were launched in the space of a few weeks. It should be clear and undeniable that West Dapto is becoming one of the fastest growing areas in New South Wales. Every week it is reported that new blocks of land are being released, developers are launching new proposals and construction is firing on all cylinders. Sadly, the New South Wales Government is simply not keeping pace with West Dapto. In fact, it is not even trying.

Dapto station is currently the sole station catering to West Dapto. It services commuters from Dapto, Brownsville, Kembla Grange, Horsley, Avondale, Cleveland, Kanahooka and Koonawarra. Unsurprisingly, demand for car parking spaces already outstrips supply five to one at Dapto station, and this is only getting worse. I have people coming in to my office complaining about congestion near Dapto station and cars spilling out onto the street and making the entire area unsafe for pedestrians, residents and other drivers. Those opposite have been promising to "consider" the needs of West Dapto for years, but that is not going to cut it anymore.

The community of West Dapto needs concrete commitments—or better still, they need to see construction, shovels in the ground, and real progress. Sadly, this Government's approach to new schools for West Dapto is no different. Thanks to the upcoming developments, it has been estimated that there will be a need for an additional eight primary schools and three high schools in the area. The Government so far has not even acquired any land on which these schools could be built. Dapto Public School was the first school to be built in West Dapto back in 2004, and to this day remains the only school in the area. Since its construction just 14 years ago, this Government has been forced to install 12 demountable classrooms to cater for demand.

West Dapto is one of the largest growth areas in New South Wales and the community deserves long-term planning and investment in local educational infrastructure. Demountables are meant to be a temporary solution for growing communities but my community is seeing a reliance on cheap and ineffective demountables as permanent structures within schools—thanks to those opposite and their poor planning skills. Last year the Government announced Dapto Public School would be receiving an upgrade. However, it is yet to disclose what funding has been allocated to the upgrade, the nature of the upgrade itself, a start or completion date for the project and how many additional students Dapto Public School will need to accommodate following the completion of the upgrade. Dapto is still in the dark.

Even if this upgrade solves a small fraction of the issue, it is still not a long-term solution, considering the rate of growth in the area. There are also no new schools or upgrades planned to cater for the upcoming growth in high school-aged residents in the area. Dapto High School is already at or over capacity, like most of the high schools within my electorate. There is a real demand for school places today and the problem is only going to get worse. The time for action is now. West Dapto needs real investment and planning today, if not yesterday. I am calling on this Government to put aside party politics, stop thinking in terms of swing seats and build for our State's future by investing the money where it is needed and putting the lives of local residents and students first. Dapto needs it now more than ever. If this Government can invest \$2.7 billion in knocking down and rebuilding stadiums in Sydney, surely it can invest in all of our electorates instead of wasting money. I do not know when stadiums became more important than education or health. As far as Labor is concerned, education and health has always been important and they always will be more important.

GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (19:23): On behalf of the women of Maitland and NSW Labor, I urge the Government to push for progress on International Women's Day. The Government is running currently up to two years behind on a number of key pieces of legislation and policies that will help to achieve gender equality in this State—and this is across a number of portfolios, not just the Women's portfolio and the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault portfolio. The lack of a strong female presence amongst senior Cabinet Ministers in this Government has stymied the voice of women and is leading to a policy wasteland. The Berejiklian Government has a number of key failures in developing a comprehensive strategy to improve gender parity. Work on a New South Wales sexual assault strategy was announced on 14 October 2015. It was supposed to take six months, but more than two years later we are still waiting for that strategy to materialise. Changes to the New South Wales Residential Tenancies Act to protect—

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: Point of order: The purpose of a private member's statement is to speak about a matter that is connected to one's electorate, not to make a general criticism of the Government and review of legislation that is not before the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! I uphold the point of order. I draw to the attention of the member for Maitland that private members' statements are intended to enable members to reflect on issues in their electorates.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. You have been in the chair and in the Chamber for some time this afternoon while I also have been in the Chamber. You will be aware that I raised social housing issues and other matters affecting my electorate. I prefaced my contribution by commenting on the impact of this issue on my electorate. Mr Temporary Speaker, I can tell you that women in my electorate who are subject to sexual assault are very much feeling the lack of progress by this Government. The women in this State who are being forced to stay in houses because they have a residential tenancy lease that penalises them for property damage or rental debt caused by a violent partner are very angry with this Government.

Women in this State, particularly women in my electorate, who are looking for a cohesive and comprehensive strategy on women's issues are very angry with this Government and its lack of legislation and policy. The women who read the 28 February 2018 *Daily Telegraph* report stating that Sydney experiences twice as many rape complaints as New York City will be thinking about the levels of rape in the Hunter and in Maitland and will realise that there is a problem. Those who have been impacted by this Government's cruel cuts to refuges in 2014 will also be very angry at this Government's way of dealing with women's issues. I thank the member for Davidson for mansplaining to me the rules of the House.

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: Point of order: I take exception to that accusation. I ask the member for Maitland to withdraw it. That was not what I was doing; I was taking a legitimate point of order. If the member for Maitland wishes to pontificate, I ask her to please adhere to the same standards as she expects Government members to adhere to. I ask the member for Maitland to withdraw that comment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! The member for Maitland has been asked to withdraw that statement.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. I will not withdraw it because I was not out of order and I did not need that earlier point of order to be taken against me. I have been lectured in this House about the Government adopting a whole-of-government approach to the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault. That issue is of central concern to my electorate. Maitland is one of the fastest-growing communities in the State and experiences one of the fastest-rising rates of domestic violence in the State. It is a disgrace for this Government to lecture Opposition members about a whole-of-government approach when during question time today the Minister for Women could not tell the House anything about the Sexual Assault Strategy. These matters concern me, and I am concerned on behalf of women in my community.

The Labor Opposition calls on the Government to stand by its words. On International Women's Day, the Labor Opposition is asking the Government to push for progress instead of defensively trying to protect its record. The record shows that the Government is two years behind in producing legislation, the Sexual Assault Strategy and a women's strategy. In relation to residential tenancy leases, 600 days have passed since the announcement was made, yet no action has been taken. The Labor Opposition is saying to the Government that each and every woman in each and every New South Wales electorate deserves better than what is being served up by this Government. I speak for the women in my electorate. It is shameful that Government members are not speaking up for the women in their electorates.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:28 until
Tuesday 13 March 2018 at 12:00.**