



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 15 March 2018**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 15 March 2018**

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

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

## *Bills*

### **LIQUOR AND GAMING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

#### **Returned**

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

### **CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

### **GAMING MACHINES AMENDMENT (LEASING AND ASSESSMENT) BILL 2018**

### **REGISTERED CLUBS AMENDMENT (ACCOUNTABILITY AND AMALGAMATIONS) BILL 2018**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bills without amendment.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### **LIQUOR AND GAMING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

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

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 15 March 2018*

No. 9 **GRNS No. 9 [c2018-018]**

Page 19, Schedule 1.6 [9] (proposed section 75A), lines 8-12. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

(a) liquor in any form, or

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendment.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **STATE DEBT RECOVERY BILL 2017**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

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

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 14 March 2018*

No. 1 **GOVT No. 1 [c2018-016A]**

Pages 2 and 3, clause 3 (1), line 39 on page 2 to line 2 on page 3. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 2 **GOVT No. 2 [c2018-016A]**

Page 3, clause 3 (1), lines 24 and 25. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 3 **GOVT No. 3 [c2018-016A]**

Page 6, clause 12 (1) (a) (ii), line 45. Omit all words on that line.

No. 4 **GRNS No. 1 [c2018-017B]**

Page 12, clause 28 (2), line 36. Omit "14 days". Insert instead "28 days".

No. 5 **GOVT No. 4 [c2018-016A]**

- Page 16, clause 40 (1) (f), lines 18 and 19. Omit ", including licence suspension".
- No. 6     **GOVT No. 5 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 16, clause 40 (1) (k), lines 28-31. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 7     **GOVT No. 6 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 20, clause 53, lines 16-27. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 8     **GOVT No. 7 [c2018-016A]**  
Pages 22-24, Part 6, Division 3, line 32 on page 22 to line 5 on page 24. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 9     **GRNS No. 2 [c2018-017B]**  
Page 24, clause 65 (9), line 42. Insert "in the case of a corporation or 10 penalty units in any other case" after "units".
- No. 10    **GRNS No. 3 [c2018-017B]**  
Page 28, clause 77 (3), lines 22 and 23. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:  

(3)       A debtor may not make more than one application under this section in relation to the same State debt, unless the Hardship Review Board is satisfied that new material facts or circumstances have been disclosed to the Board that:  

(a)       were not previously disclosed, and  
(b)       could not, by the exercise of reasonable diligence, have been previously disclosed.
- No. 11    **GOVT No. 8 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 30, clause 85 (1) (b), line 29. Omit "debt, and". Insert instead "debt."
- No. 12    **GOVT No. 9 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 30, clause 85 (1) (c), lines 30 and 31. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 13    **GOVT No. 10 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 30, clause 85 (4) (b), line 43. Omit "served, and". Insert instead "served."
- No. 14    **GOVT No. 11 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 31, clause 85 (4) (c), lines 1 and 2. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 15    **GOVT No. 12 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 32, clause 91 (1) (b), line 31. Omit "registration, and". Insert instead "registration."
- No. 16    **GOVT No. 13 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 32, clause 91 (1) (c), lines 32 and 33. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 17    **GOVT No. 14 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 32, clause 91 (2) (b), line 39. Omit "served, and". Insert instead "served."
- No. 18    **GOVT No. 15 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 32, clause 91 (2) (c), lines 40 and 41. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 19    **GRNS No. 4 [c2018-017B]**  
Page 34, clause 95 (1), line 32. Insert ", unless the Chief Commissioner otherwise directs" after "order".
- No. 20    **GOVT No. 16 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 35, clause 96 (2) (b), lines 4-6. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 21    **GOVT No. 17 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 40, clause 113 (1) (c), line 33. Omit all words on that line.
- No. 22    **GOVT No. 18 [c2018-016A]**  
Pages 47 and 48, Schedule 2. Omit all words on those pages.
- No. 23    **GOVT No. 19 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 50, Schedules 4.1 and 4.2, lines 2-23. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 24    **GOVT No. 20 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 59, Schedule 4.10, lines 4-18. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 25    **GOVT No. 21 [c2018-016A]**  
Page 61, Schedules 4.14 and 4.15, lines 11-36. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 26    **GOVT No. 22 [c2018-016A]**



Page 64, Schedule 4.18, lines 14-23. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 27     **GOVT No. 23 [c2018-016A]**

Pages 66 and 67, Schedule 4.20, line 34 on page 66 to line 7 on page 67. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 28     **GOVT No. 24 [c2018-016A]**

Pages 70 and 71, Schedule 4.22, line 30 on page 70 to line 3 on page 71. Omit all words on those lines.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (10:16):** I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The State Debt Recovery Bill 2017 has been returned to this Chamber by the other place, having approved the bill with some amendments. I present the amended bill to this House for approval. The Government supports these amendments and, as I will explain in due course, I think they make for a better bill. The State Debt Recovery Bill provides the means for making debt recovery within the government sector not only more efficient but also a more citizen-focused process.

The framework established by the bill helps maximise the amount of debt recovered and returned to agencies and, ultimately, the taxpayer; substantially reduces costs on people who owe overdue amounts to public authorities; permits government bodies to leverage the specialist debt recovery skills and expertise of Revenue NSW, allowing those bodies to focus on core business; ensures that courts will not become involved in the resolution of that debt except where it is disputed; creates a complete and seamless process for the ultimate resolution of debts arising from non-payment of fees, charges and other amounts; and builds on the experience of Revenue NSW in collecting fines and debts, thereby enabling a more complete consideration of a debtor's circumstances in determining the most suitable way of dealing with their debts.

This is a win for the taxpayer, who can expect that more debt will be recovered for allocation to our schools, hospitals and other vital services, and for individual debtors who will experience a fairer, more efficient and less costly process. Before outlining the amendments approved by the other place, I would like to commend certain parties for their productive input into the bill. The Greens raised concerns about the bill in this Chamber but, as subsequent discussions revealed, they were broadly in support of the basic framework laid down by this legislation. Our discussions with The Greens have been constructive and we have agreed to various amendments which, I think, ensure that the bill strikes the right balance between fairness for the individual and the need to ensure that the framework encourages persons to pay their debts and minimises the potential for abuse of process by those who have capacity to pay their debts.

The Government also obtained useful feedback from Community Legal Centres NSW and Legal Aid New South Wales. These organisations have extensive on-the-ground experience in dealing with both fines and civil debts, and their input on procedural fairness and other matters affecting vulnerable persons in particular has been welcome. We have agreed to some amendments addressing their concerns and will address others through the debt recovery guidelines that will govern various aspects of the implementation of the scheme. As I have indicated previously, we will consult those and other relevant organisations during the development of the guidelines.

The Government also held detailed consultations with Local Government NSW. We are pleased that Local Government NSW recognised the benefits of the legislation and formally indicated its endorsement. In addition, we had discussions with representatives of private debt recovery businesses, who were concerned about the impact of this legislation on their business, and those concerns were echoed by the Christian Democrats. I acknowledge those legitimate concerns. The Government recognises that this legislation could take business away from those organisations—there is no question of that. However, I make three observations. First, my primary focus in bringing this legislation forward is the interests of the citizen. This bill provides for a more efficient, customer-focused debt recovery process, which will recover more debt for the State. While the existing system might be in the interests of some debt recovery firms, it is not in the broader interests of the community.

Secondly, the suggestion that the legislation breaches competitive neutrality is, with respect, misplaced. Government, like any other entity to which debts are owed, is entitled to adopt the most efficient and effective mechanism for collecting its own debts. It is almost perverse to suggest that competitive neutrality demands that government does not put in place a more efficient debt recovery system. The Government is not entering into the broader marketplace and offering a debt recovery service to individuals or private entities; it is simply extending a service that it already provides to local government in the form of enabling some local governments, if they choose, to ask Revenue NSW to recover their fines, and extending that provision to the recovery of debts from outstanding rate notices. Thirdly, we recognise that various public authorities have established close relationships with private debt recovery bodies and may wish to retain those services. For that reason, the legislation operates on an opt-in basis, which is an important feature of the legislation.

It was disappointing that some members opposite chose not to engage constructively with the bill and instead engaged in scaremongering, particularly in relation to people who need to use the Ambulance Service of New South Wales. A trial has been carried out already and it has proved to be successful. I encourage those who have concerns about the bill to look at the history of what has taken place, particularly in relation to Revenue NSW collecting fines on behalf of councils in New South Wales, and see how efficiently it has worked. No concerns were raised about that process.

I will outline briefly now the amendments detailed in the schedule. Amendments Nos 1 to 3, 4 to 8, 11 to 18 and 20 to 28 concern the power of the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue to direct the suspension of certain occupational licences detailed in schedule 2. As I previously indicated, this power is an additional power to those recovery powers the chief commissioner currently exercises for various debts including tax and fines debts. The power could only ever be exercised as a last resort and is directed at those persons who, despite having capacity to pay, refuse to engage with Revenue NSW.

Nonetheless, the Government appreciates the strong concerns that various parties have in relation to this new power and we therefore moved the above amendments in the other place to remove the licence suspension provisions. These amendments do not affect the integrity of the legislation. Notwithstanding that the Government moved the amendments in the other place, the suggestions for the amendments first came to me from The Greens. After I had discussions with Mr Justin Field from The Greens I undertook further interrogation of my agency in relation to the occupational licence provisions. Following that interrogation I was satisfied that the proposals put forward by The Greens were legitimate. That is why the Government moved the amendments in the other place.

Amendment No. 4 extends the time frame in which a debtor is required to provide any additional information to a responsible authority for the purposes of an internal review, from 14 days to 28 days. We support this amendment in recognition that meeting the 14 day requirement may be too onerous for some people. Amendment No. 9 reduces the maximum penalty for failing to provide the chief commissioner with information or evidence concerning a debt, from 100 penalty units to 10 penalty units for an individual. The Government appreciates that a penalty of 100 penalty units may be too severe for individuals already facing financial difficulties. However, the maximum should be retained for corporations.

Amendment No. 10 permits a debtor to make more than one application to the Hardship Review Board in relation to the same State debt if new material facts are disclosed to the board. We recognise that changed circumstances can impact on people facing hardship, and this amendment ensures a remedy to allow further applications in light of those changed circumstances. Amendment No. 19 ensures that a discretion is available to the chief commissioner not to impose debt recovery costs where that is appropriate. In conclusion, the Government is satisfied that the scheme for debt recovery introduced by this bill achieves the correct balance between improving the State's collection of overdue revenue and the rights of individual New South Wales residents. Again, I commend the constructive dialogue we have had with other members, particularly with The Greens. We appreciate that dialogue and, because of the engagement of The Greens, this bill is now a fairer bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:26):** Labor will support all the amendments. They are good amendments and they improve the bill, which was the point of the contribution I made to the second reading debate. The action that has been omitted from the bill in relation to licences and licence suspensions is also welcome. The path that the Labor Opposition took during the course of the debate in referring the bill to a committee was to try and iron out some of the problems in the bill. It is our belief that some of those problems still exist in the bill.

In his response, the Minister briefly mentioned competitive neutrality. It is my firm belief that competitive neutrality still has not been reached. It could have been, and I gave some suggestions in my contribution to the second reading debate about how that might have happened, but we have not gone down that path. Nevertheless, I believe that the bill in its amended form is better than the original bill that first went through this House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Budget*

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

**Debate resumed from 8 March 2018.**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (10:28):** I continue my contribution and move from discussing roads to other infrastructure projects, which include \$920,000 for a new fire station at Henty and \$2.12 million to supply

more social housing in the Albury electorate. Councils in the electorate were also provided with access to significant new grants programs in order to get works done that had been sitting around on the books. New funding opportunities include \$1.3 billion for the Regional Growth and Stronger Country Communities funds; \$400 million for the Fixing Country Rail program; \$200 million for the Bridges for the Bush program; and \$ million for the Fixing Country Roads program. Local councils have been applying for funding for many of these projects. As the rounds continue, hopefully council will support more local organisations to get their projects through the grants process.

Sport has been well supported this year. The New South Wales Government is proud to secure the 2018 and 2022 Australian Deaf Games via our tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW. In January in Albury and Wodonga, the Games were held to great acclaim and were a terrific start to the year. Athletes, their families and supporters travelled to Albury from across Australia and Fiji. Families are the big winners from this year's record \$400 million sport budget, with parents in New South Wales eligible to obtain a \$100 rebate to cover sporting club fees—including for important activities such as swimming lessons—for every school-aged child.

The Active Kids benefit took off in February, when more than one quarter of a million parents in New South Wales downloaded an Active Kids voucher in the first 10 days of availability. This equates to an amazing saving by New South Wales parents of \$25 million. That is a practical help with the cost-of-living pressures for families. Albury Wodonga Football Association President Mark Leman was quoted in the local newspaper as calling the program "fantastic" and noting that Football NSW had ensured that the organisation and clubs knew how children were to get the most out of the scheme. He said, "The kids are reaping the benefits." He added, "We'd like to see it available for every child in Australia."

Sporting grants are always well received in the Albury electorate and the Local Sport Grants Program has provided funds to football and netball clubs, for dressage, water polo, tennis and rowing. The reach and range of this program is significant and is meeting its aim to increase regular and ongoing participation opportunities in sport and active recreation in New South Wales. Stamp duty is a hurdle for first homebuyers, so to give residents a fair go the Government has abolished stamp duty for all first homebuyers on properties costing up to \$650,000 and is providing stamp duty discounts on properties up to \$800,000. This means most local first homebuyers in my electorate are now paying no stamp duty. The budget also provided for stamp duty to be abolished on lenders' mortgage insurance for first homebuyers. This is another bonus that leaves more money in people's pockets at a time when they are spending heavily and essentially investing in the future financial wellbeing of their families.

While there are no easy solutions for affordable housing, residents who are saving to buy their own homes are already benefiting from these reforms. The most recent figures are revealing. Over the seven months from July 2016 to January 2017, the number of first homebuyers in the Albury electorate who took up stamp duty exemptions was 124. One year later, for the seven months from July 2017 to January 2018—that is, post-budget—the number of first homebuyers in the Albury electorate who took up stamp duty exemptions rose to 449. The message is getting through.

Interestingly, Victoria is luring first homebuyers across the border, offering larger savings in stamp duty and grants to those building in regional areas. However, New South Wales has elements that are more persuasive. We have jobs, a thriving economy, and the new and renewed infrastructure such as the projects I have outlined today. Ultimately, while tax concessions and exemptions are valuable they are less important in supporting communities, jobs and initiatives than fixing an economy. It is not a race to the bottom—that is, a race to see who can offer the deepest discounts; it is a race to the top, to see which State is creating the best opportunities. New South Wales sits securely at the top.

Throughout Australia we hear of situations where governments and private organisations are called to account for past errors and are made to pay compensation to affected individuals. Over the past year or so we have been looking at how best to deal with a disaster that was not of this Government's making. I am talking about the mess left behind by the Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos problem, where ordinary people have sustained unaffordable losses. While it had its most massive effect in the Australian Capital Territory, the town of Holbrook faced a loss of 15 per cent of its total residences. Due to the failure of the Mr Fluffy business, there was no-one to sue for damages. Although there was no obligation to pay what might be called compensation, I am proud to say this Government nevertheless stepped in and picked up most of the cost of rehabilitating the affected home sites while assisting owners to rebuild.

Once the program was underway, the Minister came to Holbrook to listen to individual problems and difficulties in that town. He committed to make additional payments of support, and an extra \$380,000 in funding was allocated to assist with matters such as connection of utilities, transport costs charged by Albury-based contractors or tradespeople, storage and more. In essence, we were working in Holbrook to help residents overcome the looming burden of unsafe homes and immense personal financial difficulties so the town could

retain its residents. The assistance from this Government, which is valued at hundreds of thousands of dollars per property has been essential and valuable to this community. It was hard hit by the Mr Fluffy crisis and was facing an impossible clean-up task and rehousing burden. I thank the Minister for attending, listening and acting on the needs of the Holbrook community

The Tumbarumba to Rosewood rail trail is about to be constructed and will be the first rail trail in New South Wales. We have a \$5 million budget from the Restart NSW Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund. The Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 was passed in Parliament and land transfers are underway. I acknowledge the hard work of the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail Steering Committee, which was led by Owen Fitzgerald and Grant Harris, and the council which has worked with the community and landholders on this project.

Other tourism opportunities are emerging through the new \$300 million Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund. Grant funding will improve and upgrade how locals and tourists experience the Murray River as it winds through Albury out to the west. Several councils are working with the Government to create something special along this wonderful riverside. I am proud that this Government has quickly understood the significance of this joint project and is strongly supporting the development. [*Extension of time*]

We are living in a golden era where grants are made available to councils and community organisations on a never-before-seen scale. For example, work on the Albury Airport terminal upgrade is well underway. It is funded mainly by a New South Wales Government grant of \$3.29 million through the Restart NSW Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund. Albury Airport is only one of two airports in the Murray region with regular public transport services. Therefore, it plays a central role in supporting services such as Air Ambulance and facilitating the arrival of tourists to the area. This project will create more opportunities for regional investment and boost the local economy by increasing visitation and associated tourism expenditure.

Arts and culture grants support artists and the cultural life of our towns and regional cities. This year Albury artists and arts organisations have received funding of more than \$500,000 from the New South Wales Government. Most recently, Albury City Council received \$70,000 to help facilitate a new annual program at the Murray Arts Museum Albury, best known as MAMA. The annual program is aimed at increasing access and engagement as well as building capacity across specific art forms. Red Dirt Road Productions was allocated \$13,000 towards its Country Halls Tour, which included a visit to Tooma.

I welcome the more than \$60,000 in New South Wales Government funding to fit out the National Youth Circus headquarters in Albury, which is home of the internationally renowned Flying Fruit Fly Circus. Albury residents will benefit from several arts funding programs including \$50,000 for one applicant whose studies will take him overseas, and three individuals who each received \$10,000 scholarships designed to assist young artists to progress their careers. Today I announce the success of a dancer who will attend workshops in Melbourne and London to progress her career. It is a fantastic opportunity for young talented artists in regional areas, and every year artists in Albury have been successful in obtaining scholarships. Recently, \$20,000 of Regional Flagship Events funding has been put towards the major regional writers' festival, Write Around the Murray.

Under the Heritage Activation Grants program, \$90,000 has been awarded to Murrumbidgee Council for the refurbishment of Willows Museum at Jerilderie, which will become a hub for activities and exhibitions engaging artists and artisans across the Murrumbidgee. The Willows Arts and Cultural Centre will also provide a public space for showcasing local Indigenous culture. At present no dedicated gallery, arts or performance space exists in the Jerilderie area. Jindera is celebrating its 150 years of European settlement this year. I acknowledge the grant of almost \$100,000 provided by this Government under the Local Heritage Strategic Projects program to the Jindera Pioneer Museum and Historical Society for it to carry out works to restore the stable and blacksmith shop. The Federation Council will receive more than \$25,000 to deliver the Federation Youth Council project. The program aims to assist young people to develop life skills and increase participation in the community.

The Albury electorate is celebrating the receipt of more than \$3.5 million in funding, which will breathe life into local community projects as part of the Government's \$200 million Stronger Country Communities Fund. In the Albury City Council area \$398,000 has been approved for Noreuil Park Foreshore public infrastructure, \$300,000 for Lavington Playspace improvements and \$300,000 for Monument Hill improvements. In the Federation Council area, \$100,000 has been allocated for improvements to Urana Caravan Park, \$596,672 for toilet block improvements and \$371,041 to extend the Corowa cycleway to the golf club.

In Jerilderie, \$252,005 has been allocated to improve amenities at Jerilderie District Race Club and the showgrounds and for Snowy Valleys Council area; \$308,000 has been allocated for upgrades to Tumbarumba Sportsground; and \$149,500 for a Tumbarumba bike pump track. The vast range of grant options will reach deep into our communities to revitalise their local infrastructure and will pull people's focus towards enjoying active living, cultural awareness and celebration, and attract better prospects for growth. It is exciting to think what will

be achieved by the Government's announcement of a doubling of funding of round two of the Stronger Country Communities Fund. I failed to mention that Greater Hume Shire Council last week secured \$798,000 of the Stronger Country Communities Fund. Walla Walla Early Childhood Hub will receive \$252,225; a grant of \$186,898 was allocated to upgrading the stairs and viewing platform at Morgans Lookout; and two skate parks—one at Culcairn and one at Jindara—each received \$179,438.

Ministerial visits can be critical in an electorate. They encourage business operators to take issues direct to the Ministers and staff in a more personal way. The feedback, of course, goes in two directions. Residents also get the opportunity to make their concerns known. This is democracy in action, protests and all. Over the past 12 months I have been pleased to welcome all who travelled to Albury, and especially those who attended the community cabinet meeting held in November 2017. It was terrific that so many Ministers seized the opportunity to visit infrastructure under development and to meet with local departmental staff, as well as residents, students and business operators. I thank all who went above and beyond the call of duty during their time in Albury and at various locations around the electorate. Many kilometres were covered as members criss-crossed the geography and made themselves available. Businesses appreciate the support and patronage when a Minister, or even the Premier of the State, calls in. So, too, do the public servants working faithfully in our regional and rural towns and cities.

**Business interrupted.**

*Bills*

**COMPANION ANIMALS AMENDMENT (DINING AREAS) BILL 2017**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Jamie Parker, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (10:42):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I appreciate the opportunity to introduce the Companion Animals Amendment (Dining Areas) Bill 2017 to the House. It is most commonly known as the "dogs in pubs bill". Having a drink with one's dog has long been a feature of life in the inner west. As the member for Balmain I include a whole range of suburbs in the inner west including, of course, the great suburb of Balmain. Many local pubs have welcomed well-behaved dogs and their owners into their pubs and the presence of dogs is a much-loved part of the unique atmosphere of many venues.

However, local council officials in the inner west began visiting pubs, telling the publicans that they can expect patrons to cop a \$600 fine if they bring their dogs inside licensed premises. Council has cited laws that prohibit dogs being within 10 metres of food consumption. The definition of "food" includes drinks, whether it be a soft drink or a beer. For the first time many pubs in my local community—pubs such as The London Hotel and The Dry Dock Hotel—have been forced to turn owners away. It is time to restore the tradition of having animals in pubs not just in the inner west but also throughout New South Wales. It is very common throughout rural and regional New South Wales to see someone in the front bar of a pub with their dog that will sit quietly next to the person as he or she has a beer or something to eat. However, the regulations now prohibit such action.

For decades many pubs in my local area have allowed dogs to come into pubs but publicans have been instructed it is now prohibited. We have discussed this with local councils and local government representatives and have undertaken community consultation. The feedback from my community has been overwhelming that, with the acquiescence of the publican, people should be able to bring dogs into certain areas of licensed premises. We know that people can bring dogs into outdoor areas. The law was changed in 2013 to allow dogs into outdoor areas. This bill proposes something very simple: That if publicans agree, they can set aside parts of their pubs as places where companion animals can come.

The objective in introducing the bill is to have legal restrictions lifted so that it is no longer an offence to allow a dog to be in an area where food is consumed. A range of criteria need to be satisfied: First, the dog must be under the effective control of some competent person and be restrained by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash that is attached to the dog; the person does not feed the dog or permit that dog to be fed; the dog is prevented from being in any part of the area that is used for the preparation of food; and, finally, the dog is not a dangerous, menacing or restricted dog.

The relevant legal restrictions are the provision of the Companion Animals Act 1998 that prohibits dogs being in a food preparation or consumption area, that is, any public place within 10 metres of any apparatus provided for the preparation or consumption of food, and the provisions of the Australian and New Zealand Foods

Standard Code, for which compliance is made mandatory by the Food Act 2003 that prohibits food businesses from permitting like animals in areas where food is handled.

This bill addresses the Companion Animals Act and the Australian and New Zealand Foods Standard Code, about which I will speak in detail later. Neither of these restrictions applies to assistance animals being used by a person with a disability, so no new provisions are proposed that will limit the access of assistance dogs to dining areas. The provisions in the bill already include further exemptions applying to outdoor dining areas and off-leash areas. Those further exemptions will continue to operate in dining areas. The amendments do not confer any entitlement on a person accompanied by a dog to enter or use any dining area without the permission of the operator of the relevant food business and does not affect the other requirements of the Australian and New Zealand Foods Standard Code and the Food Act 2003 relating to hygiene and cleanliness.

That goes to permission. The right is always in the hands of the publican or owner of the premises to decide whether a dog should be allowed on those premises. Many venues in my electorate would welcome dogs and are defined as dog-friendly pubs. There are also some that have a different approach; they have a different type of clientele and a dog in a pub may not be something they are fully focused on. Therefore, they have the right to say that their pub will be a dog-free pub.

Many pubs in Sydney and throughout New South Wales welcome dogs and The Greens want to ensure that the legal liability to fine patrons is lifted. Late last year an article in a News Limited publication highlighted that pubs such as Vic on the Park in Marrickville keeps Schmackos behind the bar for better-behaved patrons. The Greens on the North Shore makes its own dog biscuits. A range of different venues in New South Wales such as the London Hotel in Paddington, West Village in Petersham, The Carrington in Surrey Hills and—on weekends—The Collector Hotel in Parramatta encourage patrons to bring their dogs along for a doggie beer or a pup-acino from 2.00 p.m. during what they call "yappy hour".

What these venues have in common is that dogs are allowed in their outdoor areas. Some pubs are smaller and they do not have outdoor areas, or an outdoor area has to be accessed by walking through the pub. Under the current law, if a patron has a dog with them they would be prohibited from entering. We want publicans to have the right to say that it is okay for dog owners to have their dogs with them while they have a drink in the front bar. Many venues in Sydney are supportive of this bill. Giving them the right to allow well-behaved dogs into their venues is reasonable and the Government should support the bill. The provisions in this bill have a legitimate purpose and that is to legalise a safe, appropriate and popular practice that has been going on in New South Wales and around the world for many years.

The bill will recognise the role that dogs play in our community by allowing them to legally accompany their owners into a pub. The change will benefit not only owners but also their dogs. We know that dogs have a significant impact on the experience of their owners while they are together out of the house. A 2017 Latrobe University study found that dogs have a positive effect on the social lives of their owners because their presence makes it more likely for passers-by to strike up a conversation. This was particularly true for people with disabilities. Anyone who has taken their dog for a walk will know that it is a great opportunity to strike up a conversation. This is especially so for people who are subjected to long work hours and unable to meet others in traditional places.

Dogs will also benefit. A 2015 Latrobe University study surveyed more than 2,300 Victorians and found that 63 per cent of dogs were not walked daily and that many pets were left alone for long periods. That issue can be ameliorated by this bill because it would allow for people to take their dogs with them to a local pub while they meet up with friends for a drink. Only 26 per cent of people took their dog on an outing once per day and 17 per cent did it less than once a week. Queensland RSPCA spokesman, Mr Michael Beatty, said that it was hard for Australians to spend time nurturing their pets because of legal restrictions that determine where dogs are permitted to go.

In my electorate the pattern of development is very old. The house I live in is 130 square metres, which is considered to be a big property in my suburb. If people have a pet in their back garden, it is a small area. People should walk their dogs regularly so they can enjoy the fresh air and socialise with other dogs. This legislation will encourage that. It will benefit owners, dogs and local businesses. A lot of pubs are struggling. The demographics in Balmain are changing. When my dad came to Australia he worked in the Balmain shipyards fixing ship engines. After work the men would walk home from the docks via 20 different pubs that were on the peninsular at that time. They would have a drink while they talked with their mates and they would be involved in social activities.

With the reduction in manufacturing and a working harbour, the pubs and clubs are changing. We want to ensure that all publicans have an opportunity to invite patrons with well-behaved dogs on to their premises. Publicans do not want have to do that if they do not want to. It is important to look at other jurisdictions around the world. Australia is unusual with its restrictive dog laws. Many members in the House and many people

listening today will have travelled around the world and have possibly visited Europe. They will know there is a different attitude to dogs in the United Kingdom and Continental Europe. In many countries around the world dogs are a normal part of a person's everyday life. Dogs are seen in restaurants, pubs and cafes.

Those countries have a culture in which dogs are a part of the community. If a publican or business owner allows it, then well-behaved dogs should be permitted to enter. In other developed countries it is common for dogs to accompany owners to many places including cafes, restaurants, on public transport and in licensed premises, but this bill only prescribes pubs. In the United Kingdom dogs are allowed to enter indoor dining areas. The only legal obligation on the owner is to ensure there is no risk of contamination to food and that all food preparation areas comply with specified hygiene standards. The relevant United Kingdom national law, which is a European Commission regulation, states:

4. Adequate procedures are to be in place to control pets. Adequate procedures are also to be in place to prevent domestic animals from having access to places where food is prepared, handled or stored (or where the competent authority permits in special cases, to prevent such access from resulting in contamination).

This law does not exclude animals from entering where food is served. The 10-metre prohibition rule in New South Wales is very restrictive. It makes it impossible for publicans who would allow dogs in their front bar to do so. Let us not forget that in New South Wales "drink" is considered to be in the category of "food". Even in an areas where only drinks are being served, dogs are prohibited. In the United Kingdom food businesses are responsible for ensuring their food safety management procedures identify and control food hygiene. These measures include preventing domestic animals from having access to places where food is prepared, handled and stored. The local authority is the competent body that enforces food businesses to comply with regulations and it should be satisfied that food businesses have adequate controls in place to prevent the risk of contamination. The decision to allow a dog into a public area of a food business is a matter for the food business operator. Some businesses in the United Kingdom may have a no-pets policy while others welcome well-behaved dogs in public areas.

More people in the inner west and around New South Wales want to own a companion animal. We would like the United Kingdom law established in New South Wales. The licensee or publican decides whether it is appropriate. Some businesses may benefit from marketing their premises as being dog-friendly. They will be able to say, "You can bring your dog here." In Leichhardt in my electorate, Cafe Bones focuses on dogs being walked in its outdoor area. Publicans have told me that they want the right to allow well-behaved dogs to enter their pubs so hopefully they can build up their clientele. The Erko in Erskineville welcomes dogs and uses that as a way to encourage patrons into the venue. Its owners would like to ensure that they are not subject to potential fines by allowing that to happen.

In the United Kingdom, a council would advise food businesses that dogs may not be permitted to enter areas where food safety could be compromised. For example, the areas where food is stored, prepared or cooked. Typically customers would not be entitled to gain access to those areas anyway. In France, European Commission Regulation No. 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs is incorporated into French law under the Arrêté du 20 Mai 2009. Accordingly, dogs are permitted on premises where food is served. This is also true in Germany. Forty-nine out of 50 states in America possess public health regulations based on the Food and Drug Administration guidelines which publishes the Food Code.

Under the Food Code, which has limited exceptions, dogs are not permitted to enter establishments where food is being prepared. However, state and local governments can enact laws and ordinances to allow dogs in outdoor areas. Only eight states specify that dogs are permitted in outdoor dining areas—California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Tennessee. A few states, such as New Hampshire, prohibit local governments from setting ordinances to allow dogs to enter dining areas. However, the majority of state legislatures feel that local government is better-equipped to deal with such issues and local government has allowed dogs in areas where food is consumed.

Many places around the world allow dogs in pubs and, importantly, other jurisdictions have set legislative standards. Food safety is a critical consideration and one of the important issues raised in consultations and in risk assessments. A comprehensive risk assessment was prepared by Food Standards Australia New Zealand as a supporting document for the 2013 change in Commonwealth legislation that allowed dogs into outdoor dining areas. That risk assessment states:

Situations where human illness has been caused by consumption of food contaminated by pathogens originating from an infected dog are most likely rare and no reports have been identified in a literature scan.

Food hygiene and safety regulations in most jurisdictions include basic measures to restrict the movement of companion dogs in outdoor dining areas such that food prepared and/or served by food businesses would not come into direct contact with companion dogs or dog faeces. It is therefore considered that transmission of pathogens by companion dogs in outdoor dining areas to consumers ... is unlikely.

The overall level of food safety risk arising from the presence of companion dogs in such settings is expected to be very low to negligible...

Adherence to good hygienic practices in food preparation and service, maintenance of cleanliness, and proper pest control by food businesses should contribute to the minimisation of any potential risk of foodborne transmission of pathogens potentially carried by companion dogs in outdoor dining areas...

In 2013 Food Standards Australia New Zealand undertook that analysis which sets out clearly the "very low to negligible" risks. Since dogs in outdoor dining areas pose almost no threat to food safety or health it is clear that dogs simply being indoors would not substantially increase the risk to humans. If anything, since dogs are house-trained, the already negligible risk from contact with faeces would be lessened. It is important to review the risk to public health and safety of dogs being permitted in outdoor dining areas. I have additional details which I will be circulating to members. I have spoken to staff of the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Agriculture, and I have consulted with Labor Party and local government representatives on this issue. If all members support this uncontroversial bill, which will work well, the Government would have to take the next important step of amending the food safety code.

Dogs are allowed in outdoor dining areas around the world. This bill will ensure that people are given the option of deciding what should be permitted in their businesses. This bill will ensure that prohibitions in the Local Government Act are removed and Food Standards Australia New Zealand could then be requested to change the food safety code to allow dogs in outdoor dining areas. There is no reason why the 2013 study should not be used as the basis for those changes. The handbook sets out clearly what changes should be made. I am confident that any changes to the food safety code by Food Standards Australia New Zealand would be supported. I commend this bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF INJURED WORKERS) BILL 2017**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 21 September 2017.**

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:03):** I continue my contribution to the debate on the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017—a non-government bill. The reforms introduced by this Government provide protections for those injured workers who need it most, which includes providing minimum weekly payments for injured workers; protecting young and low-paid workers who are tragically injured in the workplace resulting in a permanent impairment of 30 per cent or more; and providing minimum payments of \$814 per week regardless of pre-injury earnings.

For injured workers who are severely injured and assessed as having 56 per cent whole person impairment, the increase is even more dramatic—from \$146,850 to \$320,540, which is more than double. This Government provides real protection and support for injured workers. In 2015 this Government added an additional benefit to assist all injured workers to return to work. An amount of up to \$1,000 is payable to help remove any barriers such as short-term child care, clothing and equipment, or even travel. [*Extension of time*]

The bill introduced by the member for Cessnock, which proposes a return to a financially unsustainable scheme, will put all those protections at risk. What would this bill do to help injured workers? An unsustainable, unfunded and unaffordable system would not help injured workers; they require a stable management of benefits and policy settings that delivers affordable premiums for employers and fair and effective support for workers. The member for Cessnock cares about workers but I do not think he has thought too seriously about this bill. This Government is committed to a sustainable workers compensation system that provides support for injured workers. I do not support the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (11:08):** I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017. I thank the member for Cessnock for drafting and tabling this private member's bill and for introducing it in this House. Like the member for Cessnock, I have received a lot of calls from injured workers whose lives have been devastated by the current workers compensation scheme. In my view every worker is entitled to expect to go to work and to come home in one piece. I think all members share that view. In the event of an accident workers should be duly compensated for an injury sustained in the course of their employment. Although this bill is just a small step towards restoring fairness to the workers compensation scheme in New South Wales, it will make an enormous difference in the lives of those who will be affected.

I echo the comments of the member for Cessnock in the second reading speech about moving beyond politics on this issue. At the end of the day, as elected representatives and legislators we have an obligation to the people of New South Wales. We have an obligation to ensure that our actions and the actions of government do



not impose undue hardship on the lives of the most vulnerable—and injured workers who are feeling the brunt of the 2012 workers compensation reforms are incredibly vulnerable. When there is a lever of government that we can pull to rectify wrongs we have an obligation to ensure that we pull that lever.

In 1910 Premier Charles Wade of the Liberal Reform Party introduced the first incarnation of our current workers compensation scheme into the New South Wales Parliament. Reading speeches from more than 100 years ago, I could not help but be struck by the similarities between then and now. Advocates of fairness and justice on both sides of the political divide supported the Workmen's Compensation Bill 1910 because the existing common law doctrines had become "productive of hardship". Both the Government and the Opposition were able to put politics aside and focus on what was right for workers.

In 1910 New South Wales was well behind comparable jurisdictions such as Queensland, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Such is the case today, when we have the most draconian workers compensation laws in the country. More than a century later, we are again talking about the same issues in this place. The bean counters opposite may look at the figures of the workers compensation scheme and think that they have done a great job, but they have failed miserably in calculating the human cost associated with their draconian laws. They are not saving anyone money; they are simply pushing people off workers compensation and onto welfare. In some instances, they are casting injured workers into abject poverty, purely to make the bottom line look better. In 1910 Premier Wade said in relation to introducing a workers compensation scheme:

We will not pay, in my judgment, one single cent more than we are paying now. We pay it all now just the same. Do not think for a moment we are not paying it. We are paying it in the hospitals, in the poorhouses, in the degradation, in the pulling down of all these people where they are swept under and become the submerged tenth, simply because we are not doing justice to them.

I stress that the workers compensation scheme in its current form is not delivering justice to the workers of New South Wales. This bill is not generous; it is modest at best and makes just a few small, affordable changes to the scheme that will go some way towards restoring fairness. The changes in the bill would have the effect of: restoring the entitlement to make a claim for injury incurred on the journey to and from work; redefining "suitable employment" to reflect the reality of an injured worker's situation, including their skills and their place of residence; removing provisions that limit the payment of an injured worker's expenses for medical, hospital and rehabilitation treatment and services; creating 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; and removing the five-year cut-off period for weekly payments of compensation to injured workers.

Since 2015 I have met with constituents receiving workers compensation payments and their families. For them the five-year limit imposed by those opposite loomed large. Since then, as we know, their payments have been terminated—piling severe financial hardship onto them on top of their work-related injuries. In March last year I met with Mark, whose wife, Yvette, worked at BI-LO until 2000 when she suffered a spinal injury. Still living with the ramifications of her injury, Yvette is unable to work. She cannot stand or sit for long periods and she is often in pain. Yvette has been assessed as having whole person impairment of 12 per cent, though some doctors have suggested it is higher than 20 per cent. Mark told me that when Yvette's workers compensation payments ceased in November they would have to sell their house because they could not manage the repayments on his wage alone.

I also met with Susan, who injured her back, neck, and shoulders and left sacroiliac joint whilst at work in 1995. Between 2012 and 2015 Susan underwent four work capacity decisions, four internal reviews, two merit reviews and two procedural reviews. She described the effect her injury has had on her life. She cannot lift her arms above chest height, which means she cannot do simple tasks such as brush her hair. She cannot do many household chores. Her work capacity is currently assessed as being up to two hours per day, four days per week, but that takes a significant toll on her health and she spends weeks recovering. Susan was assessed as having 7 per cent whole person impairment by the insurer. Her own doctor assessed her as having 17 per cent whole person impairment.

Regardless, both Susan and Yvette have less than the arbitrary 20 per cent whole person impairment required in the legislation. It is those women and people like them who had their payments unceremoniously terminated last year and who have been pushed into financial hardship by legislation enacted by this Government. Susan and Yvette are just two injured workers I have met with, and there are many more in my community. Though each has a different story, there is a common theme for all: pain, suffering and hardship. The bill does not ask for much. It simply asks that we do not make these people's lives worse than they currently are.

The other entirely arbitrary aspect of the scheme is the time limit on medical expenses. The Act states, "Compensation is not payable to an injured worker in respect of any treatment, service or assistance given or provided after the expiry of the compensation period." It further says that if the injury has resulted in a degree of permanent impairment assessed to be 10 per cent or less a compensation period of two years applies and if the permanent impairment is between 10 per cent and 20 per cent a period of five years applies. Let us think about

that. Permanent impairment by its definition means irreversible, lifelong, irreparable damage. The time frame is not based on any reason or logic. It was whimsically plucked out of the air with little regard for the devastating impact it would have on an injured worker's life.

More than a century ago, both sides of politics recognised that the lack of protection for injured workers was a gross injustice that required a remedy. Today we have the opportunity to ensure that we not moving backwards. Members opposite have the means to do what is right and to get this done. The workers compensation scheme is now more than \$2 billion in surplus. When these laws were enacted in 2012, the Government justified its abject cruelty by arguing that the scheme was in deficit and the changes were necessary. Whether or not that was true then is not the issue today. The fact is that the justification that the Government relied on in 2012 is no longer applicable. These changes are affordable, and it would be plain old mean spirited to vote against them. *[Extension of time]*

Let us look at journey claims, which amount to only about 2.5 per cent of all claims for workers compensation. The current definition is so prohibitive that to date only one or two cases have met the criteria of "real and substantial connection with employment." Workers in regional areas like my electorate face a higher risk of accident or injury on their way to and from work purely because they need to travel further. Because of that, they have carried a greater burden since 2012 when journey claims were scrapped. Restoring journey claims would have a minimal effect on the workers compensation scheme but would ultimately mean that people injured through no fault of their own on the way to or from work would have some income throughout their recovery. Such a tiny amendment, which would have a minimal impact on the bottom line, would make a world of difference to a worker who needs it.

What about suitable employment? It is no surprise that injured workers refer to the current definition of "suitable" employment as the "fantasy land cut-off." The current legislation specifically states that insurers will make decisions about suitable employment regardless of whether the work or the employment is available, or whether the work or employment is of a type or nature that is generally available in the employment market. It also states that insurers will make decisions about suitable employment regardless of the nature of the worker's pre-injury employment or the worker's place of residence. Let us think about that for a minute. The current legislation directs insurers to disregard some of the most important factors when making decisions about suitable employment. That direction does not exist in any other jurisdiction in Australia.

I often wonder whether those opposite intended to create the legislative form of Frankenstein's monster when they were piecing together this workers compensation scheme—that is, assembling the ugliest parts of other schemes into something cruel and callous and then adding some extra horrible bits. Today, those opposite have the opportunity to make these minor adjustments to help the 4,500 injured workers around New South Wales—injured workers like Yvette and Susan. It will not make their lives better, but it will not make them any worse. That is the choice. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (11:20):** I make a contribution to debate on the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017. At the outset I acknowledge the member for Cessnock for introducing this private member's bill. This Government is committed to supporting and protecting injured workers, whilst ensuring that the workers compensation system is sustainable and affordable for New South Wales employers. Prior to the changes being made to the workers compensation system, it was spiralling out of control. The system was unviable and unable to meet the needs of injured workers. But this bill is not really about the protection of workers—workers cannot be protected by an insurance system that is financially unsustainable.

Meaningful and genuine protection of workers can only be achieved if a system is sustainable. The system also needs to be focused on injured workers returning to work and providing extra support where it is needed most. The right balance is required to rehabilitate workers so that they can return to the workforce and make a meaningful contribution in the community, rather than sidelining them. That is also very important to their mental health. In 2012 the Government increased the amount paid to the vast majority of injured workers and it also 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 that amount to \$736.72. Today those figures are \$494.30 and \$828.72. That is an increase of more than 60 per cent. This Government is looking after injured workers and providing a variety of pathways for them to return to work.

If the old scheme was still in place, an injured worker would be expected to survive on an amount of \$494.30 per week. A quick search of property data tells us that the current median weekly rental in Blacktown is \$430 per week and in Penrith it is \$420 per week. Even in Cessnock the median weekly rental is \$300 per week. I note that the member for North Shore is in the Chamber. These statistics do not represent North Shore suburbs, just normal Sydney and regional suburbs. How can an injured worker be expected to survive when the difference between weekly benefits of compensation under the old scheme and the current median weekly rent is less than

\$65 per week? That is unsustainable. As I said, in 2012 the Government increased the weekly benefits for injured workers. Those workers injured prior to 2012 are now paid \$828.72 per week. That is an increase of more than 60 per cent.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Apples and oranges.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I note the interjection of the member for Cessnock. Those workers can now afford to buy apples and oranges. Healthy eating helps to enhance the rehabilitation of injured workers and leads to a healthy lifestyle. As I said, how can an injured worker be expected to survive when the difference between weekly compensation benefits under the old scheme and the current median weekly rent is less than \$65 per week? In the Blacktown example, that amount of less than \$65 per week is now almost \$400 per week. The weekly compensation for those injured after 2012 is now much closer to their pre-injury earnings. They continue to be paid based on their earnings, not on a statutory value that has no meaning to them.

The Government recognises that pre-injury average weekly earnings can be complex. We have agreed with the recommendations of the Law and Justice Committee in its first review of the workers compensation scheme and simplifying pre-injury average weekly earnings. As complex as the calculation of pre-injury earnings can be, the modern payroll and salary system is very flexible. The changes brought in by this Government in 2012 mean that injured workers are paid compensation more closely reflecting their individual circumstances—for example, if an injured worker was earning \$1500 per week, he or she would be paid for the first 13 weeks compensation based on 95 per cent of that value, or \$1,425 per week.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** That part is actually correct.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** From week 14 onwards the injured worker would be paid based on 80 per cent of that value, or \$1,200 per week. That is significantly more than the \$494.30 per week that would have been available under the old broken scheme after 26 weeks of payments. It seems that the member for Cessnock is not across some of the detail on these numbers so I am happy to provide him with a copy. The reforms introduced by this Government provide protections for those who need it the most, including providing a minimum weekly payment for injured workers with the highest needs. They also provide protection for young and low-paid workers tragically injured in the workplace resulting in a permanent impairment of 30 per cent or more, a minimum payment of \$814 per week regardless of what their pre-injury earnings were.

In 2015 the Government increased the amount payable to an injured worker's family in the event of a tragic death in the workplace from \$524,000 to \$750,000. That is an increase of more than 40 per cent. Today, that amount is \$781,000. We are looking after those who need it the most. Also in 2015, this Government increased the amount payable to those who are injured at work and suffer a permanent impairment of more than 10 per cent, as assessed by a medical specialist. This increased the amount payable at an assessed permanent impairment of 20 per cent from \$30,250 to \$50,760—an increase of more than 65 per cent. For an injured worker who was severely injured and assessed at 56 per cent, the impact and increase is even more dramatic: from \$146,850 to \$320,540—more than double. This is real protection for injured workers, providing support where it is needed most. [*Extension of time*]

To assist injured workers return to work, in 2015 the Government added an additional benefit of up to \$1,000 to help remove barriers to an injured worker returning to the workforce. Ultimately, that is what injured workers want to do; they want to find a pathway to get back into the workforce and they want to be rehabilitated so that they can make a meaningful contribution to their workplace. Those barriers could be short-term child care, clothing and equipment, or even travel. The Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017 introduced by the member for Cessnock puts all of those protections at risk because it proposes a return to a financially unsustainable scheme. The member for Cessnock wants to strip the opportunities and assistance from injured workers who would like to get back to work, and he wants to take away the \$1,000 that helps them to overcome barriers to their return to work. The member for Cessnock wants to go back to the bad old days of there being less money to assist injured workers.

This bill proposes to leave injured workers supported by an unsustainable, unfunded and unaffordable system. That does not help workers, and it is not what the New South Wales workers compensation system needs at this time. Stable management of benefit and policy settings is required to ensure that the workers compensation system can continue to deliver affordable premiums for employers and fair, effective and sustainable support for workers. This Government is committed to a sustainable workers compensation system that provides support to injured workers who need it. I reject and oppose the bill, which is unfair and strips benefits from those who need them most. This Government is looking after injured workers by providing a pathway not only to financial assistance but also to rehabilitation so that they can make a meaningful contribution to their workplace and to society.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I welcome to the public gallery students who are taking part in the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program, a program of the incredibly well-run Parliamentary Education Unit in New South Wales Parliament House.

*Bills***WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF INJURED WORKERS) BILL 2017****Second Reading Debate**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:34):** The Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017, which was introduced by the member for Cessnock, deals with journey claims, weekly payments and other matters. Labor's shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property introduced this bill to seek to redress some of the most extreme and harmful negative impacts of the O'Farrell Government's changes in 2012 to the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme. The New South Wales Liberal Government has a very poor record on workers compensation matters. Those opposite like to moan about the 16 years of Labor, but their real gripe was with working-class people. They took the first opportunity to go after them with punitive, regressive legislation while shielding this bastardry with the cover of their new Government's honeymoon period.

When the Parliament debated minor amendments by the Baird Liberal Government to workers compensation legislation in 2015, I made the observation that the rate of workplace injury is probably no lower or higher from one electorate to another and that it certainly would not necessarily fall along party lines. I do not believe for a second that there are more injured workers living in my Blue Mountains electorate compared with the Liberal-held electorate of Penrith, which is next-door. Therefore, if we assume that the rate of workplace injury is consistent from one pocket of the State to the next, we must ask ourselves what it is about these constituents and their needs that attracts such antipathy and disdain from the Government. I wager that injured workers—not the property developers, business lobbyists and toll road operators the Government members opposite like to cosy up to—would find it very difficult to get an audience with their local Liberal member.

That is the difference between Labor and the Liberal Party, which is illustrated by the introduction of this bill by the member for Cessnock. For example, I am very concerned to read in the Unions NSW review of the Liberal Party's workers compensation framework that, since the 2012 changes were introduced by the O'Farrell Government, tens of thousands of injured workers are estimated to have been excluded from the compensation arrangements to which they ought to be entitled. Delving further into the Unions NSW review makes for distressing reading. For the benefit of members opposite who refuse to engage with the trade union movement or even with their own working class constituents, I will read out section 2 of the report, which deals with the mental health impacts of the Government's legislation:

For many injured workers, the feeling of absence of hope and helplessness that arises from their severe pain, constant abuse from the employer or insurer, constant denials of even the most basic medical and other care or services, extreme financial distress and even the prospect of permanent disability may cause such prolonged periods of extreme stress or emotional upset that they have suicidal behaviour.

The review goes on to lay the blame squarely at the feet of the O'Farrell Liberal Government's 2012 amendments and the removal of an ongoing financial and medical safety net. It is in that context, with injured workers reporting suicidal thoughts, that I am absolutely gobsmacked to note that in the 2016-2017 annual report of icare—the Liberal Government's insurer—there is a massive \$2 billion surplus in the organisation's financial position when icare's liabilities are deducted from its assets. If at June 2017 the Government has \$2 billion in cash and assets to hand over, above its anticipated liabilities, it defies belief and good conscience that the Government would seek to throw more people off the scheme than it did back in December last year—six months after the reported surplus. This proves beyond a doubt that the scheme is not overdrawn or in a weak financial position at all, as the Liberal Party would have people believe.

There is no justification for the cruel tightening of eligibility criteria that excludes workers with long-term injuries and disabilities. This Government is going after injured workers because of their well-documented antipathy and disdain for working-class people. The anti-worker ideologues controlling the legislative agenda of this Government are, on a spectrum, not so far removed from the anarcho-capitalists who would say that workers deserve no assistance or protection whatsoever. Sadly, the anti-work blame game that originates within the twisted ideologies of the lunar-right faction of the Liberal Party is given legitimacy by this Government's legislation and seeps into the consciousness of human resources [HR] managers in industry and the public service.

I was very concerned to hear about an injured worker employed at Parliament House, whom I will call Gillian. I will change some of the details of this story to protect her identity. Early one morning, well before the

9.00 a.m. expectation, Gillian arrived at work in Parliament House and sat down at her desk. She checked some emails and after a short time she went back to her car. She injured her wrist there and after seeking first aid, went to the Department of Parliamentary Services to inquire about workers injury compensation and some time off to recover. In the first instance she was told that it looked to them to be a journey claim and they refused to progress the claim—despite the fact that the injury occurred on the premises of Parliament House. Her journey to work that morning had well and truly ended. In the end the department would only progress her claim after she made the observation that she had logged on to her computer that morning, which proved that she was on duty at the time of the injury. It is absurd and unjust for an injured worker to have to fight basic for employer assistance.

The Government has moved the bulk of its workers onto the kind of flexible workplace arrangements that benefit HR departments, such as having work emails on workers' smartphones and paying small allowances in lieu of overtime and fixed daily hours, but on the other hand it seeks to implement rigid interpretations of when and where a working day begins or ends to deny it has a duty of care to an injured worker. This example of low- to medium-level workplace bastardry and harassment of vulnerable workers is repeated throughout government, and in business and industries of all sizes. With this private member's bill Labor seeks to address the cruel and punitive measures in the Government's legislation, and to ensure that the recovery and livelihoods of workers are not held to ransom by insurers and uncaring HR managers.

The bill makes four key changes to the framework. Labor will remove the five-year cut-off date for weekly payments to injured workers in section 39. It will redefine "suitable employment" in part B of section 32A to make it necessary that a job actually exist and is in reasonable proximity to the injured worker. Labor will amend section 248 to rebalance the responsibility of the employer so as to not allow for termination of an injured worker after six months without offence. Finally, Labor will restore coverage for journey claims. As for the five-year cut-off, nearly 4,500 workers with a long-term injury or disability have been thrown out of the safety net and made to fend for themselves by this Government. There is no sound basis for this and it is unconscionable. All of these workers have been tested and shown to be still suffering from injury, and are unable to find suitable work. I defy any member of this Government to stand here and record in *Hansard* their belief that this is fair or just. When it comes to finding suitable employment, the deck is stacked against the injured worker. [*Extension of time*]

I record in *Hansard* the story of Brenda, whose name I have changed to protect her identity. She came to see me in my office about a workplace injury sustained in her role as a surveyor. One morning at work she suffered horrendous injuries when a truck became caught in power lines and brought down those powerlines, throwing her about 10 metres into the air. When she fell to the ground she was close to death. She broke all of the bones in her face and her tendon was torn off her wrist. As well as horrific physical injuries, she now has post-traumatic stress disorder. Her marriage has broken down as a result. The treatment following the accident was just awful. On the afternoon of the accident her employer came into the hospital and asked her to complete a report. Then she felt pressure to return to work, in spite of her injuries and a significant level of physical and psychological disability. She was told, "Because you can sit for three hours, you can work." Workers compensation? Not on your life!

Labor will restore some reasonable tests to the definition of "suitable". For example, the current legislation allows for the insurer to identify so-called suitable jobs that do not actually exist in the workforce market in the local area. This is another example of the jaw-dropping stupidity of the Liberal Government's 2012 reforms. An injured railway worker from Bell in my electorate of the Blue Mountains should not be told to take a new job in Penrith, some 80 kilometres away. We will strengthen the employers' obligation to workers injured in the course of work under their care. Too often workers are being let go after six months because they fall into the too-hard basket.

Labor wants employers to have an enduring responsibility to their injured workers to encourage a meaningful and productive return to work. I have referred to journey claims, but I note that it is especially important that workers are covered for claims arising from motor vehicle accidents or public transport injuries where fatigue at work is a cause of an accident to or from work. With employers demanding more and more in overtime, and the casualisation of so many industries, more and more workers find themselves on our roads at all hours of the night or day after long shifts. It is absolutely appropriate that the workers compensation framework provides support and care for workers injured on their way to or from work. I commend the bill to the House.

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Earlier I welcomed student leaders as part of the Secondary Student Leadership Program. I welcome the students who have now joined them in the public gallery.

*Bills***WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF INJURED WORKERS) BILL 2017****Second Reading Debate**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (11:47):** I acknowledge the student leaders in the public gallery. It is a pleasure to see them here in Parliament House. On 21 September 2017, the Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017 was introduced by the member for Cessnock who is in the Chamber. He is liked by many around the precinct. He is a good person. I give him credit because he gives it a crack. He is not always on the right track but he tries his best, and that is what he has done with this bill.

As Minister Dominello stated, the bill is not about the protection of workers because workers cannot be protected by an insurance scheme or system that is financially unsustainable. This bill would immediately plunge the New South Wales workers compensation scheme back into financial unsustainability. The system was broken. It did not provide the necessary support for injured workers who needed it most; it was financially unsustainable and needed to be fixed.

I come to this House with certain experience in workers compensation matters, not particularly in this system but certainly under many other systems. I have been in roles where I have managed workers who have suffered injuries at work. I have had colleagues who have been injured at work. I have been involved with the legal framework and scenarios where persons have been injured and become medically unfit for their duties or occupation. The most important thing for those workers is that they have dignity and an opportunity to return to the workplace. From my experience many workers express a desire to continue to contribute, not only for their own wellbeing and for their family's wellbeing, but also for a sense of worth to contribute to society. That would not be possible unless a sustainable system was in place to look after them. That is the hallmark; that is what underpins this side of the House when we put forward legislation concerning these types of systems.

I thank my colleagues for their contributions to this debate, particularly the member for Tamworth and the member for Drummoyne. Their contributions highlight how the Government is responsible in its management of the Workers Compensation Scheme in New South Wales. Workers cannot be protected by an insurance system that is financially unsustainable. In 2012, this Government had to make a choice between supporting injured workers who need help the most or leaving New South Wales with a broken workers compensation scheme. The system was broken; it did not provide support for the injured workers that needed it most—it was financially unsustainable. In 2012 the Government sought to achieve a balance between helping injured workers return to work, providing ongoing support to workers with high needs and ensuring the system was financially sustainable, thereby enabling New South Wales employers to access competitively priced premiums.

This bill seeks to remove time limits for entitlement to medical benefits. As a responsible Government we are committed to supporting injured workers who need the most support. Medical and related expenses are available for life for injured workers with high needs; that is, assessed as having a permanent impairment of greater than 20 per cent. For those with an assessed permanent impairment of between 11 and 20 per cent it is five years from the cessation of weekly benefits. This can be up to 10 years for medical benefits. For all other injured workers medical benefits are available for up to two years after cessation of weekly benefits. Part (d) from the objects of the bill introduced by the member for Cessnock states:

- (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,

That is correct: It is 12 months. New South Wales does not have a 12-month limit on medical benefits. The provision of crutches, medical aids or spectacles, including hearing aids or hearing aid batteries, the modification of a worker's home or vehicle, and secondary surgery are available to injured workers for life. These provisions are generous when compared to other jurisdictions. This side of the House takes injured workers seriously and ensures that they are given some of the best protections across the nation. Victoria has a one-year limit for the payment of medical expenses from the cessation of weekly benefits, which is significantly less than that of New South Wales.

Likewise, in South Australia medical benefits for non-seriously injured workers cease after one year of medical benefits ceasing. In Tasmania medical benefits cease after one year unless a tribunal determination is made. Western Australia applies monetary limits of \$66,567 plus \$50,000 in special circumstances. Given the cost of medical treatment in Australia one would understand that this would not go very far. The provisions introduced in 2012 and 2015 seek to provide a balance: a balance between providing for and protecting those injured workers who need the most protection and ensuring a sustainable scheme. This Government provides support and protects those injured workers who need it the most by providing lifetime medical support for high-needs workers. This bill seeks to put this at risk by returning the scheme to unsustainable levels.

The impact of the changes proposed to medical caps on the liability of the nominal insurer is in the region of \$430 million to \$650 million, with an annual impact exceeding \$100 million; that is \$100 million per year in increased business costs for New South Wales employers. The amendments to section 248 of the 1987 Act seek to make it an offence to dismiss a worker at any time if the worker is not fit for employment because of injury. The current provisions provide that this is an offence within the first six months, or greater if subject to a suitable industrial agreement. When were the provisions inserted into the Workers Compensation Act? The answer is 2006. Prior to that similar provisions existing in the Industrial Relations Act 1996 under part 7, protection of injured employees, provide appropriate protection for injured workers while not restricting businesses ensuring their own viability. I oppose the bill.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:56):** I am conscious that time is short. It has been said time and again that one can judge a society by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens. Unfortunately, the picture in front of us is this: The Coalition Government has cut 4,423 workers from a scheme that is meant to be a lifeline. Of those, 1,882 had their funding cut over the 2017 Christmas period. What does that say about our society? This Government will say that it can no longer afford to fund the scheme. It will say that it has had to make cuts for the sake of all the people of New South Wales. It is simply not true. In 2018, with a surplus of more than \$ billion, this Government is not forced to cut workers from the scheme, rather it is a Government that chooses to cut workers.

I know that all members have been meeting with various constituents. But some people, such as my constituent Pierre, have been assessed as having 25 per cent whole person impairment. Pierre has a major depressive disorder and post traumatic stress disorder brought on by a severe workplace accident. As a result of the accident Pierre has experienced and continues to experience headaches; pain in his neck, arms and back; hearing loss; tinnitus and nosebleeds. Spending just five minutes with this gentleman convinced me that he would be unable to work for a long time and I doubt that he is assessed at 26 per cent. Pierre was officially cut from the scheme on 25 December—Christmas Day—because his five-year limit was up. The additional pressure to secure income has heightened his anxiety, stress and depression, not to mention the pressure to secure an income at that time of year. It was hard to meet Pierre and not be moved by his story. He never could have imagined that a workplace accident would have such a detrimental impact on his life. I had to encourage him not to feel shame in asking for assistance, because that assistance is what makes us the lucky country. Unfortunately this Government is choosing to erode the safety net.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** I move:

That the question be now put.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....44  
Majority.....10

#### AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Donato, Mr P  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T (teller)  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

#### NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Barilaro, Mr J  
Conolly, Mr K  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr A

Ayres, Mr S  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L

## NOES

George, Mr T  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Humphries, Mr K  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Grant, Mr T  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Roberts, Mr A  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

## PAIRS

Cotsis, Ms S  
Foley, Mr L  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N

Coure, Mr M  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Rowell, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E

**Motion negatived.**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:05):** In reply: I commend the bill to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....44  
Majority.....10

## AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Donato, Mr P  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T (teller)  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

## NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Barilaro, Mr J  
Conolly, Mr K  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
George, Mr T  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr A  
Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Humphries, Mr K  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D

Ayres, Mr S  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L  
Grant, Mr T  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Roberts, Mr A



## NOES

Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

## PAIRS

Cotsis, Ms S  
Foley, Mr L  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N

Coure, Mr M  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Rowell, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E

**Motion negatived.**

*Motions***HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:08):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the record investment of the Government in delivering brand new and redeveloped health facilities and infrastructure that are vital to communities.
- (2) Supports the continued investment of health infrastructure funding with \$7.7 billion to be invested over the next four years. Since coming to government the Liberals and Nationals have opened more than 65 new or upgraded health facilities right across New South Wales. To date we have invested more than \$7 billion in delivering world-class facilities where they are needed most. This represents record expenditure in health infrastructure funding, and we have not finished yet. his Government has committed more than \$7.7 billion in health infrastructure funding over the next four years. I am proud of those numbers and of the Government's vision in working with our local area health districts. This funding will go to new and redeveloped hospitals, multipurpose services, community health and primary health facilities, ambulance stations in metropolitan, rural and regional New South Wales, other vital health facilities and new car parks. There is no better example of this investment in regional areas than the investment in the Central Coast. I note that the member for Wyong is in the Chamber. Between the electorates of Gosford and Wyong and my own electorate of Terrigal, the Central Coast is receiving some \$548 million—more than half a billion dollars—in infrastructure spending at Gosford and Wyong hospitals, with \$348 million going to Gosford Hospital and \$200 million to Wyong Hospital.

As part of those renovations, we are investing \$32 million in an important 800-spot car park at Gosford Hospital. Redeveloping hospitals is one thing, but car parks at hospitals are vital to the infrastructure and growth of our health services, especially on the Central Coast—I know the member for Wyong would feel the same way. Given that the Central Coast will gain an additional 75,000-odd people in the next 12 to 15 years, it is vital that the fantastic staff at Gosford and Wyong hospitals, as part of the Central Coast Local Area Health District, receive the infrastructure spending that they so deserve and require.

In addition to that \$348 million investment at Gosford, the early delivery of the Gosford Hospital Redevelopment has allowed the State Government to invest an additional \$20 million into a medical research unit in conjunction with a \$35 million investment from the Federal Government and \$20 million from the University of Newcastle. This collaborative effort between the State and Federal governments and the University of Newcastle will establish a \$75 million medical research unit and medical school in the heart of Gosford. The Government's experience and professionalism in delivering such incredible infrastructure projects as the Gosford and Wyong hospital redevelopments have enabled it to invest in this project, which will provide an extra almost 700 jobs on the Central Coast. That is a fantastic outcome for our region, in which the health industry is the biggest employer and is going from strength to strength.

I congratulate the Central Coast Local Area Health District, which has done an incredible job with planning the scope and scale and delivery of those two record-breaking infrastructure projects. A person would have to be walking around with a bag on their head not to notice the great work at Gosford Hospital, where I recently welcomed the hospital's new interns. A year earlier, when I greeted the previous interns, the hospital site was literally a hole in the ground. One year later, it is an 11-storey tower, of which the first floor is already utilised by oncology day services. The Minister for Health has already visited this amazing building.

At Wyong Hospital, the existing car park will be redeveloped as part of the renovations. We recently held the sod-turning ceremony at the site of the new car park, with the Minister for Health in attendance. These

projects are moving forward at a record pace, which is a fantastic outcome for the people of the Central Coast. Gosford Hospital is a shining example of the fantastic outcomes made possible by good investment and dedicated work between the local area health districts and the New South Wales State Government.

We are delivering projects across New South Wales. Members on this side of the House are particularly proud that every region is receiving some form of investment in hospitals and ambulance station upgrades. This is possible because we are able to get the budget in order. Unfortunately, record investments of this type were lacking under the previous Government—for example, in the electorate of the member for Tweed, who is here in the Chamber. Even on the Central Coast, there was a failure of investment over a long period of time. Under those opposite, the closure of the Woy Woy Rehabilitation Unit was announced with no community consultation, which was incredibly disappointing.

Since 2011, there has been a turnaround: This Government has brought the budget under control, and we now are delivering the infrastructure that our fantastic clinicians, nurses, midwives and other auxiliary staff truly deserve. As I said, there is no better example of that than Gosford Hospital. Prior to this redevelopment, it was embarrassing to walk around Gosford Hospital because the great clinicians there were working in practically Third World conditions due to the failure of investment by the previous State Government. Staff are receiving tours around the new tower already and I know that they are excited to see what is being delivered. But it is not just the tower—it is the site redevelopment, the vision for the site and the investment in buying surrounding property so we can future-proof hospitals for the people of New South Wales and particularly the people of the Central Coast. As member for Terrigal, I am proud that, as part of that \$7.7 billion investment, the Central Coast is receiving more than half a billion dollars for its two fantastic hospitals. That is what needs to happen across New South Wales, and this Government is delivering.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (12:15):** I often refer to Thursday mornings as "Government self-congratulation Thursday mornings", and this is another motion in which those opposite are congratulating themselves for doing what governments are supposed to do. In these debates, the Government sometimes overlooks some very important truths. Our health services have to meet growing populations, and that means that the job of upgrading and modernising hospitals is never done; it is continually renewing. When Government members stand up in this chamber and say things like, "Aren't we great? Nothing was done under the previous Government," it is just not true. Facilities are built to last for a certain time and at the end of that time, renewal occurs and more facilities are added or renovations take place. That is certainly the case in New South Wales. It took five seconds to google the last budget handed down by the previous Labor Government, of which I was a member. Rather than rely on a Government press release, I looked at a media release of 8 June 2010 from the NSW Business Chamber, a group which is independent of the previous Government. The media release read:

More than an election budget—it's actually a good budget!

That media release included information on health expenditure. Members opposite might be surprised to hear that the \$1 billion upgrade of Royal North Shore Hospital carried out by the previous Government—at the time, the largest health infrastructure project in New South Wales—was underway. So the Government that, according to those opposite, was doing nothing, was in fact spending \$1 billion on Royal North Shore Hospital, which was in a Liberal-held electorate. The press release mentioned the expansion of renal services at Concord Hospital and the emergency department at St George Hospital; the new mental health facilities at Hornsby Hospital, the adult acute mental health unit; Sydney Children's Hospital child and adolescent inpatient unit; completion of the Prince of Wales Hospital Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre; and the continuation of the major redevelopment of Liverpool and Nepean hospitals.

Despite what we have heard from Government ministers who live in a permanent state of denial, all of those projects were underway during Labor's previous term in office. The media release mentioned the construction of Auburn Hospital community hub and the investment in Camden Hospital dementia centre. In regional New South Wales, development of the new regional cancer care centre at Gosford had commenced, as well as the expansion of cancer treatment facilities at Wyong, upgrade of hospital facilities at Woy Woy, completion of mental health facilities and expanded renal services in Shellharbour and renal services in Queanbeyan. We commenced the construction of new elective surgery facilities at Wollongong Hospital. We completed the upgrade of facilities at James Fletcher Hospital in Newcastle, the Nelson Bay ambulance station and the Maitland Hospital emergency department. We continued a major redevelopment of Orange Base Hospital, the Bloomfield mental health facility and Narrabri hospital.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Don't forget Bathurst.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** We finished that before 2010. We built new multipurpose services sites at Werris Creek and Lockhart and continued the construction of other sites at Balranald, Coonamble, Eugowra and Manilla. It is good when Government members talk about what they are doing; they should be investing in health services

and hospitals. But when they say that previous governments did nothing it is simply not true. Members know that governments are custodians of facilities and they have a duty to improve them. Yesterday the member for Penrith spoke about the Nepean Hospital upgrade and said that the upgrades Labor undertook were supposed to last 20 years. If we calculate the time from when they were built to when they will be replaced it will be 20 years. The fact is that governments have to renew facilities and increase their capacity as the population grows.

I hope that when Labor members are in government we have the good sense to say that this Government did do things and that we are now doing other things. Members opposite have no sense of what happened before them; they always say that the Labor Government did nothing for 16 years. The member for Terrigal would know that Labor built the back part of Gosford Hospital and the emergency department. He would also know that we built the entire brand-new section of Wyong Hospital.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** You never upgraded it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Terrigal will come to order.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** How can you say that we didn't upgrade it when the facilities exist—they are there?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Wyong will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Members opposite entirely fail to acknowledge what has been done. Yes, the Government is doing more work now—and it should be. That is what governments do. Members opposite should not have the audacity to say that Labor did nothing. I visit Wyong Hospital often and I see the front section that members opposite deny we upgraded. The back block of Gosford Hospital and the emergency department that currently exist must apparently have never been built either. The hospital must have magically gone from nothing to what the Government is now building; nothing must have occurred in between. I encourage members opposite to celebrate what they are doing. However, they should also be honest and say that they are building on the infrastructure put in place by all the governments that have gone before.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! Members will be heard in silence. Members who interject will be called to order.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:22):** I support the motion moved by the member for Terrigal regarding the Government's record health infrastructure expenditure in New South Wales. I remind the member for Wyong that I was elected to this House at roughly the same time as he was. One piece of infrastructure that Labor should take full credit for is the infamous upgrade of Bathurst Base Hospital. As we know, Labor built a hospital with doors that were too small to get beds through and an emergency section that was too small to fit an ambulance. The member for Wyong, who wants to tell us how great Labor was, should talk to the good people of Bathurst.

**Mr David Harris:** We still built it.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** I acknowledge that interjection. Labor still built it. Nothing fit, but who worries about things like that? This Government should be congratulated. Our fiscal management has resulted in massive allocations of funds to regional and rural hospitals. Labor promised to redevelop the hospital at Wagga Wagga but never delivered. At a cost of some \$300 million the new and expanded hospital is now up and running. We have invested another \$300 million in Lismore Base Hospital and the electorate of the member for Clarence is receiving multiple millions for HealthOne services at Coraki and Evans Head. We are spending an enormous amount of money.

For 16 years very little money was spent on the Tweed Hospital. The funding it received was perhaps only in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now the Minister for Health, along with the Treasurer and Deputy Premier, has announced the construction of a brand new hospital on a greenfield site at a cost of \$534 million. The new hospital will be the biggest infrastructure project in the area and be double the size of the existing hospital. The amount of oncology, cardiac and other services offered will be vastly increased. That has happened through good management. The Minister and the department have been responsive and excellent to deal with. They have visited the site, which we will announce shortly. We are also getting a \$5 million brand-new ambulance station. I have been a member of this place for 12 years, and this is the first time the Tweed has received significant health funding. Under Labor we got token gestures; things were promised but never delivered. The Government should be applauded.

The Government is also investing in health infrastructure elsewhere around the State and creating jobs in rural towns. Tamworth and Dubbo will soon have new hospitals. This Government is investing heavily all over the place. I agree with the member for Wyong that it behoves any government to serve the people and provide

facilities. This Government is providing not only facilities but also first-class, twenty-first century medicine with a view to the future. All of the projects that we have delivered are about expansion into the future. I applaud the member for Terrigal for bringing this important motion to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:26):** I support the motion moved by the member for Terrigal. It was interesting to hear the member tell us about the 65 new or upgraded health facilities across New South Wales. The Government has already invested \$7 billion in health and will invest another \$7.7 billion over the next four years. That will mean that people across New South Wales can go with confidence to a twenty-first century, upgraded hospital and that hospital staff can work in environments that are conducive to health. The member Wyong spoke about the 16 shameful years of Labor. During that time Manning Base Hospital had no clinical services plan or master redevelopment plan. Upgrades to the hospital were not even part of the Hunter New England Local Health District 10-year plan.

Now, thanks to the work of the Minister for Health and the Hunter New England Local Health District, stage one of a three-stage process to redevelop the hospital is underway. The works include a new oncology and renal dialysis building and a multi-tiered car park, which has already opened. The new building will also have a basement car park with 60 dedicated spaces for oncology and renal dialysis patients. Our investment is not just about bricks and mortar. We have also increased the number of specialists at the hospital. When we came to government Manning Base Hospital did not have an oncologist; we were told there was no need for one. In 2013 an oncologist joined the staff and became so overworked that a second oncologist was hired. We also have a new anaesthetist, intensive care specialist and obstetrician. In fact, since 2011 when we came to government, the total number of staff at the hospital has increased by 58.

Let us look at the results. The latest Bureau of Health Information statistics show that in the October to December 2017 quarter elective surgery at Manning Base Hospital was performed on time 100 per cent of the time. Compared to when Labor was in office in 2010, the same quarter is 89.3 per cent. This Government has achieved a significant increase in elective surgeries being performed on time at that hospital. The second statistic is patients leaving the emergency department within four hours of presentation. Under Labor, the figure was 59.2 per cent and in the last quarter of 2017, the figure increased to 77.3 per cent. We are not only increasing the bricks and mortar, but we have also increased the number of staff who are performing much better today than under Labor. Stage one of the Manning Base Hospital is underway and it is looking fantastic. It should be ready around October or November this year.

However, I am talking with the Minister for Health, with Hunter New England Health and Health Infrastructure NSW for funding for the planning of stage two and stage three of the redevelopment of the hospital. It would be fantastic to see stage two and stage three progress. I am fighting for that money in those discussions. I am also involved in other discussions about Forster and Tuncurry, which have a combined population of more than 20,000, and the Great Lakes area which has a population of approximately 38,000. None of those towns has a public hospital. They have renal dialysis chairs and chemotherapy chairs but no public hospital. I am in discussion with the Minister for Health, Hunter New England Health and Health Infrastructure NSW. Forster needs a public hospital. I will talk more about that later in my private member's statement.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:30):** I am delighted to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Terrigal. I was particularly interested in the comments of the member for Tweed. He has been in Parliament for 12 years, I have been in Parliament for 10 months so we have two different perspectives. Perhaps I am not institutionalised as are some other members. It is a bit weird at the pub when I say, "Hear, hear!" Government members are not saying that the member for Wyong did not do anything. However, Labor did the bare minimum. Since coming to office this Government has opened more than 65 new or upgraded health facilities. I will speak about three that I know well: the Brookvale Community Health Centre, the Northern Beaches Hospital, and the much-loved and historic Manly Hospital. Those three health facilities across the Northern Beaches indicate a record funding in health infrastructure across New South Wales.

A couple of weeks ago I was privileged to cut the ribbon at the opening of the Brookvale Health Centre. The allocated funding has materialised into a practical and tangible outcome that this Government has delivered. Also at the opening was the Minister for Health the Hon. Brad Hazzard and the Hon. Natalie Ward, MLC. The Brookvale Health Centre is a \$50 million investment which has more than 200 staff and 22 health services, including the first in-house BreastScreen NSW for the Northern Beaches. It provides drug and alcohol support, aged care and early childhood care services and it is cleverly integrated into the B-Line bus stop.

In addition, work is ongoing to provide a footbridge between the health centre and the mall across the road. This is the third community health facility that the Coalition Government delivered to the Northern Beaches since it was first elected in 2011. The new Northern Beaches Hospital represents an investment worth more than \$500 million in health across the Northern Beaches. The 6.5 hectare site will open by the end of the year. I have watched this hospital transform from a building site to a world-class health facility in Frenchs Forest. It will have

more than 480 new hospital beds, 14 operating theatres, two cardiac labs and four procedural rooms, an on-site medical centre, an emergency department with 50 beds, more than 1,400 car spaces and, importantly, room to grow and expand for the future.

This facility is a credit to the Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard; the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, the member for Pittwater; the member for Davidson, Jonathan O'Dea; and of course my friend and predecessor, former Premier and member for Manly, Mike Baird. We also have the Manly Hospital. Its wonderful staff deserve a facility befitting their skills and level of care. This Government will continue to invest in the Manly Hospital until the end of its life. We welcomed 11 graduate nurses and midwives and eight graduate doctors.

The member for Wyong spoke about understanding the facts and the importance of truth. Here is a fact: Opposition members cannot pretend that this Government has done nothing other than clean up the mess left behind from its 16 years of ineptitude, which includes the mismanagement of health in this State. Since coming to office this Government has set one of the most impressive records of delivery in health infrastructure. Members opposite have no vision for the future of health in this State—*[Time expired.]*

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:35):** I have listened to the drivel of members on this discussion. I have a number of budget papers so we can clarify the record. I start with the Budget Papers 2011-12 which was handed down in September of that year by Treasurer Mike Baird. I note the health and hospital reforms that were discussed at the Council of Australian Governments. The Federal Government made a decision that funding health in the States was unsustainable. In 2011, a Federal Labor Government made a decision to massively increase funding. I read from page 6-16, Budget Paper No. 2, which was written by Mike Baird. It states:

- The Australian Government guarantees its contribution for efficient growth will be at least \$16.4 billion more than what would have been provided [under the previous agreement].

An amount of \$16.4 billion was granted to this State by the Federal Labor Government. In 2014 the Federal Government was the Abbott-Hockey Liberals-National Government. What has happened as a result of that government? Let us fast forward to Budget Paper No. 1 from 2017-18. I refer members to page 2-8, Chart 2.4. As a result of that budget, instead of the State's health costs—as funded by the Federal Government—rising in line with future projections, they are declining. Instead of rising to almost 40 per cent, under the Hockey-Abbott Government model it has declined to 12.5 per cent.

The member for Terrigal said this Government has inherited a basket case. If they do not want that \$16.4 billion for health, send it back and tell the Federal Government it is not wanted. I also refer members to the annual budget for health. This year was a record budget. Last year was a record budget. The year before was a record budget. What about in 2010, was that a record budget at the time? What about 2009? What about 2008? What about 2007? Which Government wizard can tell me what will be in this year's budget for health? It goes up by 5.1 per cent every year. The Productivity Commission recommended it increase by 6.3 per cent. The demands of health indicate that it should increase by 7 per cent—

*[Interruption]*

That is rubbish. Has the member for Riverstone read the report of the Productivity Commission? The member for Riverstone is showing his ignorance. He has not read the report of the Productivity Commission, which states that funding should be increased by 6.3 per cent per year. I can tell members, and they can check this, it increases by 5.1 per cent per year.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Point of order: Unfortunately, I have had to listen to this discussion. The reality is that this motion is about recognising the funding the Government is investing in health infrastructure and the continued health infrastructure investment, not what a former Labor Government offered a State Government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The motion before the House is about health infrastructure spending. The member for Cessnock will speak to that motion.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I thought I outlined the investments being made in health infrastructure in this wideranging discussion. The trouble is that Government members are a little bit sensitive when someone enters this Chamber with budgets and facts written by its members, and a Productivity Commission report that no-one on that side of the House has read. Government members are not even aware that the budget will increase by 5.1 per cent this year, which equates to \$21.7 million. They should do the math on what it will be this year because I already know.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:39):** By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Terrigal. In every corner of this State we are currently experiencing unprecedented, massive record investment in health infrastructure. The member for Cessnock wanted to confuse the issue of recurrent and capital investment. He obviously wanted to hide the fact that under the Labor Government there was very little capital investment,

and very little New South Wales-generated expenditure because they were hoping to ride on the coat-tails of the Federal Government. As I said, we are seeing investment in both new and renewed hospital infrastructure across New South Wales which is meeting the needs of our communities. I make particular mention of the enormous investment that this Government has made in the expansion of the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital.

The \$325 million stage one redevelopment of the Blacktown hospital has now been completed and stage two is well underway. The building is almost at the topping-out stage. The people of Western Sydney and everyone in this State deserve world-class facilities. I note that those opposite voted against making money available for any of those projects. They have opposed every option to raise funds so that capital could be steered towards meeting the real needs of the people of New South Wales. They would rather hug poles and wires than invest in hospitals, schools or anything else. The Opposition has an ideological opposition to recycling assets and making sensible savings in public sector expenditure so that funds can be redirected to the needs of the people of New South Wales—for example, the enhancements at the Blacktown and Mount Druitt campus. This revolution in hospital infrastructure is taking place in regional areas such as Wagga Wagga, Tamworth and the Tweed, and at Campbelltown, Nepean, Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Westmead hospitals in Western Sydney. I note that a commitment for a new hospital site to be developed at Rouse Hill in the future is also to be announced.

As I said, these wonderful developments are happening because of the commitment of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government to meet the needs of people in New South Wales regardless of where they live and the political persuasion of the electorates in which hospitals are located. I am particularly proud that the Government has invested \$700 million in the Blacktown and Mount Druitt campus. That had nothing to do with political expediency and everything to do with need. Similarly, at Campbelltown the Government is investing to meet the needs of the community. I am proud to support this motion because it recognises the massive investment of this Government in health infrastructure across New South Wales.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:43):** By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Terrigal. I have seen firsthand this Government's commitment to new and improved infrastructure in health services in my electorate of Upper Hunter. I will give the House a few examples. I recently opened a stage of the Singleton hospital redevelopment which, from memory, cost \$7 million. In the last couple of weeks I visited Muswellbrook Hospital to see how the second stage of the \$21.5 million redevelopment was progressing. All the utilities work has been done. This week the piers will be put in and the construction of the hospital building will commence. In fact, Hunter New England Health is currently working on plans for stage three of the Muswellbrook Hospital redevelopment and I have already told Minister Hazzard that I will be knocking on his door for funding when we have a better idea of the costings for that stage three redevelopment.

In the lead-up to the last election the Government made a \$10 million commitment for the Murrurundi Multipurpose Service. Local community consultation has been undertaken and community members have given their views on how they want that health facility to look—it is yet to be determined whether that will be a new multipurpose service on a greenfield site or the existing hospital structure will be redeveloped. The Government is committed to making sure that we have new and improved infrastructure. Our aim is to get healthcare services as close to home as possible for the people of New South Wales, particularly those who live in rural and regional communities. When people are in need to seek medical treatment it is often at a time of high stress and they do not want to have to travel for hours, often consistently week after week, to receive appropriate care. I am a proud member of The Nationals. My key goal as the member for Upper Hunter is to get the best possible healthcare services as close to home as possible for my constituents and this New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is doing everything it can to deliver that commitment to all our communities. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:47):** By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Terrigal. Over the past seven years there has been significant investment in health services in my electorate, such as the redevelopment and finalisation of the \$211 million upgrade of the Tamworth Hospital. Prior to 2011, under the Labor Government, that upgrade was promised and not delivered. It was promised again and not delivered, then promised again and still not delivered. That demonstrates the contempt of the Labor Government for the people of regional New South Wales. Labor would repeatedly build up expectation and then let people down. I note that this not only happened in health infrastructure but also in a number of other projects, including the Manilla Road upgrade. Every day up to 7,000 cars travel on Manilla Road and the previous Labor Government promised to upgrade that significant road but never delivered.

I have been the member for Tamworth for almost eight years and in that time this Government has invested almost \$10 million to upgrade the Manilla Road—all the way from Yarmouth Parade to Jewry Street. The road has been widened, slip lanes have been put in, and the road surface is a lot smoother. So vehicles can now travel more safely to and from Tamworth towards Manilla Road. Development is also happening around Moore Creek. A number of schools are up that way. Each morning and afternoon there is always a lot of traffic in that very congested part of the city. We want to make sure that the traffic flows freely and congestion is reduced.

The former Labor Government never made an investment in regional New South Wales. It held investment close to the city and spoke of New South Wales as Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The former Government treated regional New South Wales with contempt, so much so that we signed a memorandum of understanding with the former Minister for Health Jillian Skinner for the redevelopment of Tamworth Hospital as an election commitment in 2011. So conditioned was the community to not having outcomes under the former Labor Government that when this Government signed a memorandum of understanding and made a commitment to start construction and to fund the 2011 redevelopment of the Tamworth Hospital, the community did not believe it—it had been let down so many times. It took a number of years to convince the community that the project had started and the money was flowing. Last year we opened the \$211 million redeveloped Tamworth Hospital along with the federally funded Cancer Care Centre.

It goes to show that if you build it they will come. Governments have to honour their promises. Governments have to deliver and they have to ensure that services are delivered closer to home. When it comes to health care, I continue to ensure that our people are best served not only with the very best facilities but also with the very best staff. We are seeing a record number of nurses being appointed across regional New South Wales and the member for Terrigal spoke about welcoming registrars. I commend the member for Terrigal for moving this motion.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:51):** In reply: I thank all members on both sides who took part in this discussion: the member for Wyong, the member for Tweed, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Manly, the member for Cessnock, the member for Riverstone, the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Tamworth. It is exciting to see all the investment in health infrastructure across New South Wales. Since coming to office in 2011, this Liberal-Nationals Government has invested more than \$1 billion each year to deliver vital health infrastructure to the community.

Unfortunately, the member for Wyong did not articulate the sad story about the Woy Woy Rehabilitation Unit. The Opposition was going to close it down without public consultation. That was an example of how the former Labor Government failed the health industry in New South Wales, especially the public sector. There has now been a turnaround and we are seeing a massive investment in health that we are proud of. Because we could get the budget in order, we are now seeing almost \$1.7 billion being invested across the State in key capital works projects. As the member for Tamworth said, a litany of promises were made by the Labor Government that were retracted time and again.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** Point of order: Mr Temporary Speaker, you made a ruling earlier that we could not refer to the former Labor Government, but references are constantly being made to the former Government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! It would have been a ruling by another Temporary Speaker. The member for Terrigal is in order.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Unfortunately, those opposite are embarrassed by their record. I will acknowledge that the member for Wyong was very pleased and thanked us for the ambulance station at Wyong in one of his tweets. We appreciate his thanks, and we will keep on delivering across the Central Coast for everybody. I am particularly proud that we will continue that investment across New South Wales. As I said, we have heard many stories from regional members in the Chamber about promises being made for decades that were never delivered. Now we have seen a turnaround. This Government is funding and delivering infrastructure and, most importantly, health infrastructure to the community in our regions, including the Central Coast. We understand the importance of funding and delivering world-class health facilities across New South Wales. The Central Coast is a perfect example where more than half a billion dollars of infrastructure is being built. We are future-proofing the health industry on the Central Coast to cater for its growth. Opposition members never had that vision. We are looking at delivering for the entire region.

Infrastructure projects across New South Wales include \$50 million for the Bulli Aged Care Centre; \$348 million for Gosford Hospital; \$18 million for stage one of the John Hunter Children's Hospital redevelopment; more than \$450 million for Maitland Hospital—say thank you, member for Maitland; \$73 million for a new hospital at Macksville; \$20 million for stage one of the Manning hospital redevelopment; \$21 million for the Muswellbrook District Hospital redevelopment; \$600 million for the Northern Beaches Hospital, which the member for Manly is particularly pleased about; \$17.5 million for Port Macquarie Base Hospital; \$251 million for Shellharbour Hospital—say thank you, member for Shellharbour—it is \$251 million that she never got under the former Labor Government; and \$585 million for the Tweed Hospital, which the member for Tweed supports 100 per cent. This Government is delivering for our health infrastructure needs in the future.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45  
 Noes .....32  
 Majority.....13

#### AYES

Anderson, Mr K	Ayres, Mr S	Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K	Constance, Mr A
Cooke, Ms S	Crouch, Mr A	Davies, Mrs T
Dominello, Mr V	Donato, Mr P	Elliott, Mr D
Evans, Mr A	Evans, Mr L	George, Mr T
Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T	Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C	Henskens, Mr A	Humphries, Mr K
Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M	Lee, Dr G
Maguire, Mr D	Marshall, Mr A	Notley-Smith, Mr B
O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Mrs M
Perrottet, Mr D	Piper, Mr G	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

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J	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	Doyle, Ms T (teller)	Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D	Harrison, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R
Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S	Leong, Ms J
Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D	Mihailuk, Ms T	Minns, Mr C
Park, Mr R	Scully, Mr P	Smith, Ms T F
Tesch, Ms L	Warren, Mr G	Washington, Ms K
Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G	

#### PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G	Cotsis, Ms S
Coure, Mr M	Foley, Mr L
Hazzard, Mr B	Haylen, Ms J
Rowell, Mr J	Lalich, Mr N

#### Motion agreed to.

#### WALLSEND ELECTORATE POLICING

#### Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that a shortage of police officers has resulted in failures to arrive at 000 emergencies within the 12-minute benchmark times.
- (2) Acknowledges that while NSW Police Force does its best with limited resources, no new officers have been allocated to the Newcastle Local Area Command.
- (3) Urges the Minister for Police to listen to the Wallsend community and allocate more policing resources to Wallsend.

Wallsend is a wonderful place to live. We are lucky to have a strong community, good schools and engaged local businesses and community groups. I acknowledge that police are doing the best they can but the simple fact is that the Wallsend electorate sits on the fringe of three different local police districts and has been neglected in the allocation of policing resources. I have lost count of the number of times I have stood in this place and urged the Government to allocate more resources to Wallsend. I can see that the Government is really paying a lot of



attention to what I am saying right now! It is a pity. A petition that garnered more than 10,000 signatures calling for the reinstatement of a Wallsend police station fell on deaf government ears.

Indeed, then shadow police Minister Mike Gallacher told the ABC in 2011—and I remember this well—that one of the Coalition's Hunter priorities would be Glendale police station, a promise those opposite promptly forgot after the election. Funding for Glendale police station was withdrawn by the Coalition Government. Over the last Christmas period a number of Wallsend businesses suffered break-ins. The level of graffiti in the area skyrocketed and just prior to Christmas there was a major fire at the old squash courts building on Council Street. Is it any wonder that Wallsend residents and business owners are fed up? The *Newcastle Herald* stated that a number of Wallsend business owners have chalked up problems with policing in the area to slow response times. One stated to me:

Even if we call the police, a lot of the offenders realise that it'll take too long for them to arrive so they feel like they can get away with it anyway—

and there's going to be no consequences—

It's very frustrating and we just don't know what to do. We've had to resort to asking the community for help with identifying alleged thieves.

The issue is not confined to Wallsend. In August last year it was reported that "a shortage of NSW police officers has resulted in authorities failing to respond to emergency calls within 12 minutes in almost a quarter of instances". Over the 2015-16 financial year officers in New South Wales met the 12-minute response time in 77.7 per cent of cases, below the 80 per cent target. This benchmark was not met in the three years leading up to the 2015-16 financial year, indicating a continuing problem. Police Association of NSW President Scott Weber told the media:

This is a prime example of police numbers not keeping up with population growth and demands in policing ... we have repeatedly told the government that an extra 247 officers are needed each year just to keep pace with growth in this state.

New South Wales has the lowest ratio of police officers to population of any Australian State, with 215 officers for every 100,000 people in this State, compared to 222 per 100,000 in Victoria and 275 per 100,000 in South Australia. The Government needs to step up its game. Our police officers and the people they protect deserve better. They certainly do in Wallsend. I am pleased to say that local police are responding to the concerns of Wallsend residents and business owners. In the *Newcastle Herald* on 5 February Superintendent Brett Greentree stated:

He acknowledged that crime had increased in the western Newcastle suburb, particularly property crime and steal from vehicle offences ... and said police in recent weeks had made a number of "significant" arrests and were increasing patrols ...

And that is good. Indeed, last month Superintendent Greentree joined me in attending a meeting hosted by the Wallsend Town Business Association, bringing Wallsend business owners together with high-ranking local police officers to discuss these issues. The outcomes were good. The superintendent acknowledged that he would like to see better visibility of police in the Wallsend area. We hope to see that in future. He acknowledged that women who work in small businesses are concerned that when walking back to their cars they are being hassled and intimidated by groups of youths. We acknowledge—and businesses are worried—that these groups of youth are getting away with this behaviour because police are stationed too far away. We need to deal with that matter. I reiterate that on a regular basis I bring policing issues in the Wallsend electorate to the floor of the Parliament because they are of concern to my community. I ask the Minister to pay attention and to look seriously at the allocation of resources in Wallsend. I thank those police who work very hard—and they all do. They have a trying job and I do not envy them. I urge all members to support the motion.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:08):** I speak on the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. First, I place on the record my appreciation for the dedication and hard work of all our police officers across the State. I note that the member for Wallsend has again neglected to do so in her motion. What is more disappointing is that her motion makes it clear that she is not throwing her full support behind our Commissioner of Police, Michael Fuller, APM, who started in the role last year and is doing a tremendous job.

This is not the first time the member for Wallsend has asked questions about police resourcing. The member's lack of comprehension of police resourcing is disappointing, to say the least; it is embarrassing for her and the Labor Party. At the risk of boring everyone else in the House, I will again explain to the member for Wallsend that the commissioner and his team are responsible for the allocation of police officers, based on operational requirements. It is certainly not the Minister for Police's place to dictate to operational experts where, when and how they should be allocating operational resources. The commissioner deserves our full support in making important changes to the NSW Police Force to improve the way the Police Force serves the community.

I put on record that Commissioner Fuller and all of the officers of the NSW Police Force have the full support of members on this side of the House. Yet again, we see that those opposite do not fully support the NSW Police Force. The member for Wallsend should back the commissioner and support what he is aiming to

achieve. The motion notes a shortage of police officers, but I note that there is a record number of police officers in the NSW Police Force. The motion further notes limited police resources, yet this Government has invested record amounts of resources in the NSW Police Force. It is up to the commissioner and his team to decide where to allocate this record number of police officers and resources.

As members are aware, Commissioner Fuller and his executive team have commenced a process to re-engineer the NSW Police Force. The re-engineering process will enable the Police Force to better prepare to protect the community into the future. Re-engineering is designed to provide the NSW Police Force with more flexibility to adapt policing techniques and resources to each community in response to their own policing needs and challenges, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Re-engineering will ensure the Police Force can move readily with shifting demographics and changing crime trends, including new local and global threats. I am surprised, and disappointed, that the member for Wallsend continues not to support such important aims that will benefit the communities of New South Wales.

The re-engineering process has seen the creation of a task force headed by the commissioner and including the Police Association of NSW. The task force has undertaken significant consultation with stakeholders, including the Public Service Association, regarding proposed changes. The work of the task force has included looking at crime trends, population density and expected growth, as well as the unique needs of each community to develop a proposed new structure to take this organisation into the future.

On the issue of crime trends the House will be pleased to know that 16 of the 17 major categories of crime recorded by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research continue to fall or remain stable across the State. In my electorate all but one of these categories are either stable or declining. The exception is steal from vehicle offences, which is often opportunistic crime conducted by a single person. I encourage vehicle owners to keep their vehicles locked and their possessions hidden from view. We have also experienced reductions in major crimes across the State such as break and enter—dwelling, steal from person and fraud. The report also indicates that a number of drug offences have recorded a downward trend including the possession and/or use of amphetamines, which fell over the reporting period.

The community can rest assured the safety of residents will always be the top priority of the NSW Police Force. This Government and the NSW Police Force continue to work hard to meet the State priority to ensure local government areas have stable or falling reported violent crime rates by 2019. As I said earlier the NSW Police Force is going through a process of re-engineering. On 23 November 2017, the commissioner announced an update to re-engineering, including important changes to frontline services across the State. A number of commands have undergone a process of consolidation in order to provide more agile, responsive policing on the front line of the communities they serve.

In regional New South Wales, 26 new police districts will be created, replacing 34 local area commands. In the Sydney metropolitan area, police area commands will be created, replacing the previous "local area command" terminology which has been in place for about 20 years. As members would be aware the Newcastle City Local Area Command has been renamed Newcastle City Police District, and Lake Macquarie Local Area Command has been renamed Lake Macquarie Police District in line with the new naming of commands across the State. The Newcastle and Waratah police stations, within the Newcastle City Police District, are currently open 24 hours a day servicing the local community, and there is no change to that arrangement. Re-engineering is designed to bring additional focus to frontline policing and crime prevention in communities across the State.

This House and the community need to know that the reforms are in no way about cutting officer numbers. The commissioner and this Government have made it very clear there will be no reduction in frontline policing. In fact, this Government added almost 1,000 positions to the NSW Police Force between December 2011 and February 2018. The current strength of the NSW Police Force is almost 17,000 police officers. Re-engineering is about protecting our local communities and providing tailored policing services to our communities, including those in the electorate of the member opposite. I have full confidence in Commissioner Fuller to deliver on these elements. I challenge those who are scaremongering and spreading fear in our communities—and I regret to have to include the member for Wallsend among their number—to get behind our police commissioner and support the important changes that are necessary.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:15):** I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this important motion before the House today. Over the past seven years, we know the Government has continually fallen short when it comes to policing in New South Wales. Communities throughout the State have been crying out for years to bolster the number of police officers in their local area commands. All members in this House can agree that the NSW Police Force does the best it can with the resources it has been provided. Unfortunately, that is where the buck stops. The NSW Police Force has not been adequately supported all the way through by this Government, which has failed to provide enough resources to keep up with the growing demand for policing. This has had a flow-on effect in communities throughout the State, and Wallsend is one of the locations that has been adversely

impacted by this Government's negligence. Police officers from the Newcastle City Local Area Command have been working their guts out to service the needs of their local community; however, they have been met by a Government that claims resourcing is not its responsibility.

The Government simply needs to look at the figures in Table 6A.1 of the Federal Government's Productivity Commission's recent report on government services. This report confirms that the Berejiklian Government spends less on fighting crime than any other State, and we also have fewer police officers per person. New South Wales now has the lowest expenditure on police services, with a cut to the tune of \$483.4 million under the Liberal-Nationals Government. This is the lowest amount spent on police in the past five years. Our hardworking police force is continually being asked to do more with less—that is a fact. Police area commands are experiencing chronic staff shortages and the Minister for Police just continues to pass the buck. Our community and our NSW police officers deserve far better than this, and I commend the member for Wallsend for standing up for her local police officers and her community. I know that the member for Wallsend is passionate about her community. There is no doubt that she will stick up for the police night and day.

I have visited the Wallsend electorate with the member for Wallsend to speak to concerned residents about the fact that police response times had blown out as a result of chronic staff shortages. We listened to the communities when they said that rather than police responses taking 12 minutes or 20 minutes, community members are now waiting up to three or four hours for police to attend. This is as a direct result of this Government's inadequate funding for New South Wales police. It is this Government's neglect of police funding that is impacting on communities. I support the motion of the member for Wallsend and I ask those members opposite to support this motion.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:19):** It is a pleasure to speak on this motion. Once again we are discussing a motion brought by a member of the Opposition talking about police resourcing. As the member for Myall Lakes quite rightly indicated, resourcing and resourcing allocations are in the purview of the Commissioner of Police, who has the greatest respect on this side of the House. The other side of the House has indicated that they also have great respect for the Commissioner of Police. It lies in his hands to appropriately allocate those resources. Driving down the crime rate has been the result. It has been achieved through the appropriate allocation of police resources. We are looking at some of the lowest crime rates in 20 years through the great work of the NSW Police Force.

There is fantastic work being done in my electorate by the police in the local area commands of Blacktown, Parramatta and The Hills. They are all doing a fantastic job. This side of the House will not be heard bagging out the great men and women of the NSW Police Force. We are behind the Commissioner of Police. He allocates the resources appropriately, drives down the crime rate and understands how policing should be done in this fantastic State. This Government has allocated a record capital works budget of \$243.7 million to the NSW Police Force, an increase of 33.5 per cent on the 2016-17 revised expenditure.

I inform the House that \$10.5 million—part of the five-year \$29 million program—was provided to improve safety through the upgrade and replacement of the Marine Area Command vessel fleet. That command has assisted all types of operations in our great city of Sydney. Funding of \$15 million has also been provided to build the capacity of the NSW Police Force aerial surveillance and counterterrorism capability to look after the great people of this State. I oppose the motion put by the member for Wallsend.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:21):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Myall Lakes, Fairfield and Seven Hills for their considered contributions to this debate. It is an important debate and one that we need to have. I thank the member for Myall Lakes, but unfortunately in his generic response he ignored the problems of the people and businesses of Wallsend. A major meeting between Wallsend businesses, the town association and the police occurred because of a huge spike in crime in the main street of Wallsend over Christmas, where people were being intimidated and their offices graffitied.

**Mr David Elliott:** Was Milton on day release?

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** I will ignore the rudeness from the Government members and continue with my speech. The member for Myall Lakes argues that there is a record number of police in the Wallsend area. I ask the Government: Why are the response times so slow in Wallsend? It is a real problem. The first thing that people ask me at street stalls is, "Where were the police when we had a problem?" or "Why did it take them so long?" The reason it took them so long is that they were working very hard responding to a crime in Stockton in the one police car on beat at night, and then they had to get to Minmi, which is quite some distance away. Why are women in our businesses being intimidated by a gang of youths? The reason that occurred in Wallsend in January was that the police were too busy responding to other crimes. We do not deny that the police work hard. We acknowledge the hard work of the police. That has never been in question on this side. Please do not ever argue that is the case; it is not.

The member for Fairfield spoke very well and I appreciate that he has come to Wallsend a number of times to talk to the community about how we can police the area better. Like all of us, he acknowledges the hard work of our local police. I particularly acknowledge the hard work of the police in Wallsend. The member for Fairfield made a very good point when he said that the New South Wales Government spends less on fighting crime than any other Australian State. That is a real concern. The response times have blown out in Wallsend. There is no denying that—just ask the community. There has been a lot of buck-passing from this Government about who is in control of police numbers. I ask the Government to acknowledge that we need more police resources in Wallsend. The fears of our local community and businesses are real. That is important.

Please stop talking about these new and fancy names. I say to the member for Myall Lakes that the new names are important, but I am not quite sure whether somebody in Wallsend would really understand or care what re-engineering is; they are more worried about having police respond to crimes. This is an important motion. All I ask is that the Minister for Police listen to the Wallsend community and allocate the appropriate resources that we need so we do not have the kind of spike in crime that we had in January. It is a worry. Talk to the businesses of Wallsend and say to them, "We are going to employ more police in the area because we acknowledge that you had a spike in crime in Wallsend and it needs to be dealt with." The only way we can deal with that adequately is with more resources. We on this side acknowledge and thank our police for their hard work because they do a very hard job. I support the motion.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35  
Noes .....44  
Majority.....9

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Donato, Mr P  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T (teller)  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

**NOES**

Anderson, Mr K  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr A  
Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L  
Grant, Mr T  
Henskens, Mr A  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Provest, Mr G  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
George, Mr T  
Griffin, Mr J  
Humphries, Mr K  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Roberts, Mr A  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

## PAIRS

Cotsis, Ms S  
Foley, Mr L  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N

Berejiklian, Ms G  
Barilaro, Mr J  
Fraser, Mr A  
Gibbons, Ms M

**Motion negatived.**

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

*Announcements***MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER**

**The SPEAKER:** Before I welcome guests in the gallery I wish the member for Upper Hunter a happy birthday. I will not say how old he is, but he is not very old.

**DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF JUSTIN MULDER**

**The SPEAKER:** I thank Justin Mulder, Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing, and previously from the Premier's office, who will be moving on from tomorrow. We thank him for his service.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to a delegation of members from the Asquith Mixed Probus Club, guests of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and member for Hornsby. I welcome the Kiama branch of the Country Women's Association, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. Welcome ladies from the Country Women's Association. I welcome Mateo Diego Conde Rivera, an intern from the University of Sydney who is currently working with the member for Manly. I welcome Margaret and Graham Shaw from Lennox Head, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy in Northern New South Wales, the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC.

I acknowledge members of the Tamworth Mental Health Carers Support Group: Mrs Narelle Langfield, Mr Donald Wyatt, Mrs Diane Wyatt and Ms Bridget McLean, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport and member for Tamworth. I welcome students from the University of the Third Age campus, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome back to the Chamber the former member for Northern Tablelands and Minister Mr Ray Chappell who is accompanied by his wife, Margaret, and daughter, Louise. I also welcome 55 year 11 legal studies students and their teachers from Fort Street High School, guests of the member for Newtown. We welcome you all to the Chamber.

*Announcements***RETIREMENT OF DON COLAGIURI, SC**

**The SPEAKER:** I am pleased to welcome to the gallery Mr Don Colagiuri, SC, who is well known to many members as the Parliamentary Counsel and head of the NSW Parliamentary Counsel's Office. Today is almost certainly—unless he can be convinced otherwise—the final parliamentary sitting day before Don's retirement. Don's intended retirement was flagged before Christmas and recruitment action is underway for Don's replacement. Don's career as a parliamentary drafter commenced in the Chief Secretary's Department in 1972 and has continued since 1974 in the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. He has been the NSW Parliamentary Counsel since 14 February 2001.

Don is a graduate in Arts/Law from the University of Sydney, was admitted as a barrister in 1975 and appointed as Senior Counsel in 2003. Don Colagiuri is a public servant in the truest sense of the term. He has been described as "a legend of the public sector" and over the years his work has in one way or another probably touched the lives of everyone in the State. Don has had a particular interest in the drafting of constitutional, public sector, planning and criminal legislation, including the Model Australian Criminal Code. He has led enhanced access to New South Wales legislation via the NSW Legislation website and, since 2001, has been the Secretary-Chair of the Australasian Parliamentary Counsel's Committee, which amongst other things is responsible for drafting national uniform legislation.

As Parliamentary Counsel Don undertook the onerous task of getting large numbers of bills drafted to bring forward at the end of the parliamentary sittings. He has been unfailingly cheerful and courteous. Don, I am

sure all members will join with me in wishing you all the best for a well-earned retirement and saying thank you for your service to the Parliament and the people of New South Wales. Well done. As a final note, I am led to believe that you have taken no more than five days leave since 1972. The Minister for Planning asked whether you would have a look at a couple of pieces of legislation before you go.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

*Question Time*

**SYDNEY STADIUMS**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:22):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the new stadium policy spokesman Peter Beattie, when Premier of Queensland, appealed to businesses to help fund a new stadium and said, "I do not see why the taxpayers should pick up all the bill", why will Mr Beattie have any more success than the Premier in convincing New South Wales taxpayers to pick up the bill for the stadium splurge?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira will cease interjecting. All members will cease interjecting. The House will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:22):** Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition did not enjoy it when I called him out and he demonstrated his glass jaw on this issue. He went on 2GB. He does not like to admit this but when he was asked, "Do you support Parramatta Stadium?", he said, "Yep". When he was asked, "Do you support ANZ Stadium?", he said, "Yep". When he was asked, "What about Allianz?", he said, "I am considering all my options." Yesterday was a defining point because this Government—

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members are making all the noise at the moment, not Government members.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** When a bit of heat is put on the Leader of the Opposition because he has been defrauding the people of New South Wales, he does not like it. He says one thing on radio and he says another thing to the people of New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Again it is Opposition members who are interjecting.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In anyone's book that is dishonest, misleading and fraudulent. The Leader of the Opposition cannot handle the fact that he has been called out. We will continue to call him out.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira will come to order. Let us not have a repeat of his early exit yesterday.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** He has misled me and the people of New South Wales. Yesterday National Rugby League issued a press release thanking the Leader of the Opposition for his bipartisan support. The Leader of the Opposition cannot handle the truth. The truth is that he is dishonest and he is misleading the people of New South Wales. Since we have been in office we have spent—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Madam Speaker—

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am getting to Mr Beattie.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about whether businesses should be approached about paying this not just the taxpayers.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand what the question was about. I remind the Premier of the context of the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is the height of hypocrisy. Every time we announce a policy involving the private sector the Opposition opposes it. It opposed asset recycling, poles and wires, Land and Property Information and port transactions. The Opposition has not supported one project or any of the funds derived from those projects. The people of New South Wales know that since we have been in government we have spent—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. I remind the member for Keira that he left the Chamber early yesterday. It will happen again today if he continues his disorderly behaviour. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Yesterday, appropriately, I highlighted to the House that we have already spent \$110 billion on infrastructure with another \$80 billion in the four years ahead—more than \$200 billion. Our proposal for stadiums is less than 1 per cent of that total amount. Yesterday was a defining moment because it confirmed that Government members believe in the future of New South Wales. We believe

in the people of New South Wales and we believe in moving forward. All that Opposition members want to do is rip up projects, cancel contracts and turn New South Wales into a backwater. While we are building schools, hospitals and roads across the State they are deciding—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier has not yet answered the question. Are businesses going to be expected to pay for this?

**The SPEAKER:** The question was: How can the Premier convince the rest of the State about the stadiums policy? Even though that was quoted, the question was about how the Premier can convince the State. Perhaps the member for Lakemba did not hear the question clearly, but I certainly did.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** I did, Madam Speaker. I was just hoping that the Premier would answer it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am happy to entertain an extension if the member for Lakemba wants me to answer the question. Do I get an extension?

**The SPEAKER:** No extension of time will be given.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I rest my case.

### COST OF LIVING

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:28):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government helping households across the State to tackle cost-of-living pressures?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. Those who ignore directions will be on calls to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:29):** The member for Oatley asked an important question. Cost-of-living pressures for his constituents and for the constituents of all members in this place are real. It takes a government with a good record to acknowledge and deliver on that. I am incredibly proud of what this Government has done to ease cost-of-living pressures on households. The list is long. I know that Opposition members do not like to hear this but I will go through some of the things that this Government has done to ease cost-of-living pressures. Every person who now applies for a green slip can expect a \$120 to \$180 reduction each year, which means a lot to households, especially families with a number of cars.

I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Finance, Services and Property and his predecessors because this was a difficult reform that the Labor Government shirked when it was in office. We took it on, we were successful and as a result people will see a reduction in green slips across the board. We also gave incentives for people to be safe drivers. We know how important it is for people to drive safely. This has meant that some 1.7 million people have been rewarded with half-price licence renewals for safe driving. So 1.7 million people are driving safely and have had their licence renewals halved. From 1 July regular toll users will get free registration which makes a difference to people. That represents anything between \$300—

[Interruption]

Opposition members have not told what their policy is on tolls. They do not have a policy.

**The SPEAKER:** We do not need the noise or interjections to continue.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** From 1 July regular users of tolls will be able to get free registration, which is a welcome relief to many.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind Opposition members that they should not interject.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** That represents anything between \$300 and \$715, depending on their vehicle. We are pleased to have introduced FuelCheck, an app steering drivers towards cheaper fuel prices. In recent days the Minister for Health and the Minister for Western Sydney spoke about the Active Kids rebate. Literally hundreds of thousands of children or families will benefit from that rebate. The Minister for Health and I felt so strongly about reducing the burden on people who travel regularly to public hospitals that we massively reduced car parking fees. I am pleased that many regular users of our public hospitals are now seeing a reduction of as much as \$200 per week. That matters to people when they are stressed.

Our first home owners initiative has been an overwhelming success. Under existing concessions the number of first home owners last year was about 5,400. For the corresponding period this year more than 19,000 people have got into the market for the first time because of our stamp duty concessions. Our energy bill relief package has helped many households cope with the increase in electricity bills. Because of the good work

of this Government, electricity price increases for pensioners and people who are vulnerable have been absorbed. In the last few budgets—I thank the Treasurer—this Government abolished a number of taxes and charges imposed on small businesses. We know how businesses struggle, especially when they have to pay overheads which we believe are unnecessary.

None of that would have happened without our strong economic management and compassion. It needs not only competence and good economic management but also compassion. New South Wales is doing exceedingly well. Every month when the State of the States report is released it shows that New South Wales is leading Australia by a long mile. Our economy is growing faster than about 30 OECD nations. Notwithstanding that, we appreciate that households are doing it tough. That is why we are making sure we give them relief wherever we can. The list that I have gone through today demonstrates our compassion as well as our competence. Opposition members do not like it when I talk about compassion; they think they own compassion. We are not only the party of compassion but also the party of the workers. [*Extension of time*]

We appreciate that world-class sporting venues bring jobs and investment to New South Wales. They also offer families who are struggling with the cost of living the opportunity to have a good day out. Whilst the Leader of the Opposition swans around in corporate boxes, people want a positive experience. It is true.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We see the hypocrisy of members opposite when it comes to managing the budget well and spending on things that matter. We also see their hypocrisy in not wanting to take New South Wales forward even though it is what our constituents want.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Ask the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. He's taking you backwards.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Port Stephens mentions transport. When members opposite were in government they cut thousands of transport services.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We are providing the community not only with relief from the cost of living but also with the services they need in transport, health and across the board.

#### SYDNEY STADIUMS

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:36):** My question is directed to the Premier. In the last week we have seen her Deputy Premier defy her on stadiums, we have seen her subcontract her marketing strategy to Peter Beattie, and today in the upper House not one Government member but the entire Government crossed the floor on itself to avoid embarrassment. When will the Premier admit that she has mismanaged the stadium issue so badly that her Government is in complete disarray and she should ditch it?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has the call and will be heard in silence.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:37):** The mighty member for Maroubra has highlighted to the House—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock. Members will come to order. The member for Keira and the member for Bankstown will cease interjecting. I will continue to stop the clock when there is excessive noise. The Premier has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The mighty member for Maroubra has been walking around with an extra spring in his step.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Maroubra has been looking very happy for the past few days. The other day when the member for Kogarah was on his feet we noticed that everybody on the Opposition side of the Chamber was cheering.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Rockdale, the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Wollongong will cease interjecting. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I think the noise on the other side of the House is support for the member for Kogarah by acclamation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The clock will restart when members come to order.



**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I say to the House that the Leader of the Opposition is overcorrecting himself, because he knows he stuffed up. When he went on 2GB—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Ha, ha!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Members opposite might laugh but we know what they have all been telling us in the corridors.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Keira will not test my patience. Stop the clock. Government members and Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** How is it that the Leader of the Opposition tells the community for months that he does not support spending any money on stadiums and then the first time he gets asked a question on 2GB and comes under pressure to say whether he supports Parramatta Stadium he says, "Yep"? When he is asked if he wants to support ANZ Stadium he says, "Yep." When he is asked about Alliance Stadium he says, "We are considering all of our options."

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. The member for Londonderry will come to order or be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** If that is not a monumental strategic stuff-up I do not know what is. We know what Opposition backbenchers have been telling the National Rugby League [NRL]. The member for Campbelltown cannot deny it. He supports stadiums and the NRL. He cannot deny it. Look at him.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will resume her seat. Members will come to order. The member for Maitland will be heard in silence.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Premier can yip and yap all she likes about what our backbenchers are saying but she should listen to her own.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is important to know that we have a list of all of the Opposition members who support stadiums. We have the list. A lot of them are being very quiet.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock. The Leader of the Opposition is waiting to take a point of order. Members will come to order. I will not have a repeat of yesterday's fiasco.

**Mr Luke Foley:** The Premier's list of members supporting her stadium policy does not get longer than two. That is the problem. It is her and Stuart. That is it.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In addition to the members opposite whose support I welcome— [*Time expired.*]

## STATE ECONOMY

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (14:44):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How has the Government maintained fiscal discipline to deliver more for the people of New South Wales? Is the Minister aware of any alternative strategies?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:44):** I thank the member for his question. We on this side of the House are very proud of our economic and financial record and, unlike those opposite, that has allowed us to deliver great rewards for this State. What do we have today? The budget is in surplus and we have a triple-A credit rating. We have negative net debt and the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. We also have the biggest infrastructure investment in the history of this State. Those economic illiterates opposite claim that things are being sold off, but over the past four years the net worth of this State has risen more than 40 per cent. We have our finances in order so that we can deliver social dividends across New South Wales. Under Labor there were no social dividends because they could never get their books in order. The only policy we see from the Labor Party is to stop building things.

Last weekend when the Leader of the Opposition was out and about on a bit of a media tour, trying to defend the miserable, economic record of the hopeless former Labor Government, he was quoted in that great newspaper the *Australian* as saying, "The last Labor Government delivered budget surpluses ... and I bring exactly the same approach." The Leader of the Opposition is an economic denier. He is trying to put lipstick on a pig. It is

the winners who get to write history, not the losers. What does history tell us? It tells us that when Labor left office its parting gift to everyone in the gallery and to the people of New South Wales was a projected \$4 billion in deficits and \$19 billion in debt. They are the facts.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will cease interjecting.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** There were three separate independent reports that debunked that number and a number of them were commissioned by those opposite.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cessnock will resume his seat. If the member for Cessnock does that again he will be called to order. The member for Cessnock is out of order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The one man on that side of the House who reads the Budget Papers. In Labor's last year in office, revenue increased by 13.5 per cent. In today's terms, that is about \$10.5 billion. Even then Labor delivered deficits without having any investment in infrastructure.

**Mr Michael Daley:** What year?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will cease interjecting.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** He is speaking up now because he knows it. Who was the finance Minister at the time? It was Michael John Daley. The Leader of the Opposition and I are on a unity ticket when it comes to the competence of that man. That is why he was dumped as shadow Treasurer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind Opposition members that their behaviour is on display.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** In the same article the Leader of the Opposition had the audacity to call himself an "economic conservative". This is like the second coming of Kevin Rudd, without the popularity. We all know that Labor's plan—if it has a plan—is to tax and spend other people's money because that is all it ever does. In the same article in which he claimed to be an economic conservative the Leader of the Opposition said that he will get rid of the wages cap—a policy proposed by Michael Costa, implemented by the Liberals and Nationals, now being trashed by the Leader of the Opposition. I can guarantee that under Labor the New South Wales budget would be deep in deficit.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129, relevance. I ask the Treasurer to name the years we were in deficit in the 16 years Labor was in government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I cannot get past the last one—the projection of \$4 billion in deficits and \$19 billion in debt. Importantly, we do not run surpluses on this side of the House for the sake of it. We do it so that we can make the right investments in the things that matter to the people in the gallery. [*Extension of time*]

Labor never learnt that you cannot build schools, hospitals, roads, rail lines and stadiums, you cannot build anything at all if the budget is not in surplus. So whatever Labor's policy is on anything, it will never be able to deliver it.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** So what is the secret plan? I wanted to know about Luke Foley's plan to scrap the wages policy, and I found it. According to the New South Wales Labor Party platform, it wants to replace it with a "framework to deal with claims by the unions". With those opposite it always comes back to unions. They do not represent the people of this State, they represent the union movement. Labor opposed poles and wires because of the unions. Labor opposed Land and Property Information because of the union movement. Labor opposed the wages policy because of the unions. Labor opposed asset recycling, which has delivered billions of dollars to schools and hospitals across this State. Why? It is because of the union movement.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We on this side of the House say schools and hospitals before unions. I will plaster this on every one of the 120 new schools and the 50 new hospitals.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: I draw the Speaker's attention to the Minister's use of a prop.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It is our new policy. It is not a prop.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order. I remind the Treasurer not to use props.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** While those opposite put the unions first, we will always put the people of New South Wales first.

#### **NORTH COAST FLOODS**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:51):** My question is directed to the Premier. What is the Government's response to research from the University Centre for Rural Health that 4 per cent of residents affected by the North Coast floods are still displaced from their homes, with the first anniversary of the North Coast floods approaching in just two weeks?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:52):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I thank all members in Northern Rivers electorates for being such strong local community representatives and for their continued advocacy on behalf of their constituents. The Government always makes sure that whenever floods or other natural disasters occur that we are on the ground. When the member for Lismore and I were given permission to visit the area, given that the flood waters were still receding, we witnessed people throwing everything they owned onto the street. I am glad I witnessed that because every time someone raises it with me I have a better sense of what it must feel like.

The Government was able to cut red tape so that resources and services, including cash proceeds, could be provided to those most in need more quickly than ever before in the history of this State. I thank the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services for facilitating that and for getting me the paperwork ahead of time. We actually did a comparison of how long that would normally take and we found that it took less than half the time it took those opposite when they were in office. I accompanied the member for Tweed on that occasion and we thanked all the State Emergency Service workers. The Southern Cross University set up a place where people could make emergency contacts and access equipment. We went to observe that as well, with the member for Tweed and the member for Lismore. I also visited the Ballina electorate to make sure that all communities in need of support and assistance received it as soon as possible.

If there was anything further we needed to do, I know those members would bring it to my attention. I know their ears are always to the ground. I visited the region subsequently to see the recovery effort, because it is not enough to go there when tragedy strikes; it is also necessary to visit after people are starting to recover. As we walked down the main streets of major townships, we saw small businesses that had reopened. To see resilience and to see people who get on with the job without complaining, go and visit northern New South Wales. I am incredibly proud to do that every time. I know those members would be in touch with me if there was anything further that I needed to do as Premier. They have my assurance that I would make sure that assistance is received where it is needed. I thank those members for being such strong advocates. To the citizens of northern New South Wales, I say that we are always mindful of their circumstances. A few days ago I was mindful of a potential cyclone off the coast of Queensland.

**Mr Geoff Provost:** Linda.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Cyclone Linda—I could not remember the name of the cyclone. They should be male names. I want people to know that when Ministers had a briefing on a related matter, I asked for information on that cyclone because we know, unfortunately, when Queensland is hit, normally three or four days later it will affect northern New South Wales. We made sure we did everything we could to be on standby. In fact, we already had contingency arrangements in place to make sure that if that eventuated, we would be ready. I thank the members who represent that part of New South Wales, and I reiterate my commitment to northern and coastal New South Wales: Whenever people in those areas need assistance and support, we will be there and we will make sure we do it in record time.

#### **ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:56):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering roads for the people of New South Wales, as well as any other related matters?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:56):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. If there is a fighter for roads in an electorate, it is the member for Port Macquarie. From the moment she was preselected, she fought for the \$16.4 million Stingray Creek Bridge project, which was opened last year. Since 2011, there has been \$700 million worth of projects in her electorate. Apart from Stingray Creek Bridge, the motorway crossing of the Hastings River up to Telegraph Point would have to be one of the highlights for the Mid North Coast and that electorate. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her advocacy, passion and support for roads across the Mid North Coast and New South Wales.

Whether it is Tweed Heads to Tibooburra or Wentworth to Merimbula, we are transforming the road network in New South Wales. We have doubled the Roads budget to \$39 billion allocated on an annual basis to roads across New South Wales. We are doing twice the job that members opposite could ever imagine doing. Compare and contrast our job, our work, our work ethic, and our respect of the taxpayer dollar. Compare and contrast. Those opposite are wrecking agents and we are the delivery agents.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We have a record of delivery that you should be proud of, rather than laugh at us. We are doing the work that you should have done. Where is your policy member for Auburn? Leader of the Opposition, what is your position on WestConnex?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The question is not to you, Strathfield.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Will you ask the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair, not across the table?

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I remind the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The whole of New South Wales is interested in the view of the Leader of the Opposition on WestConnex. What is his position? What is his position on Western Harbour Tunnel?

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: Our position is that the Government's M4 tax is a slug on Western Sydney motorists.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order; it was a rhetorical question. The member will resume his seat.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** You are not worthy of that job!

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

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will not take a point of order until the House has come to order. Stop the clock again. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Kate Washington:** I ask that you ask the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** I reminded the Minister to do that.

**Ms Kate Washington:** You know you didn't.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no need for the member for Port Stephens to make an aside as she walks past the microphone. The Minister has the call.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The point is that the Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to reveal his position on Western Harbour Tunnel and his support for WestConnex. He has denied the people of New South Wales the right to have his position and his party's policy detailed and laid out so they can understand what those policies are. He has dogged that opportunity over and over again. He is not worthy to be the Leader of the Opposition. It reminds me of a dysfunctional family.

**The SPEAKER:** Members who wish to make unnecessary noise can leave the Chamber.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It is a little like the Addams Family.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea and the member for Londonderry are making unnecessary noise. I have asked the member for Londonderry to cease making noise, but she has started again.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** The member for Auburn is Gomez Addams. He is the head of the family, the patriarch, the bloke who they all want to stab in the back. [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. This is not relevant to the question that was asked of the Minister. I ask that you direct her to answer the question that was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** The question asked about "related matters", so I have to allow the conversation.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The Addams Family? How can the Addams Family be relevant?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is making comparisons. If the member for Strathfield listened she would understand.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** So we have Gomez, the husband. Who is Morticia? Who is the wife? It would have to be the member for Bankstown, and there is a marriage made in hell. Who is Uncle Fester? It would have to be the member for Prospect, with medals.

**The SPEAKER:** I warn the Minister that this line of argument will not take her anywhere; it will just result in continued interjections. Order! Members will come to order. Members are not making things easier. Stop the clock.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Can I be Thing?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Someone else has that.

**The SPEAKER:** Since the member for Cessnock wants this conversation to continue, the Minister has the call.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I acknowledge that interjection from the member for Cessnock. Thing would have to be—it is two words—regional New South Wales.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Madam Speaker, the clock has not been turned back on.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Swansea. Nobody noticed that.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We are the delivery agent for roads, schools, hospitals and public transport.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members' behaviour is on show.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Who's Pugsley?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Everybody's favourite to be Pugsley: It would have to be the member for Campbelltown. The point is that this is a contrast between delivering and wrecking. When those opposite were in government they cancelled projects, they recklessly spent and they built internal empires. They supported union mates over the taxpayer. We are doing the best things for New South Wales by doubling the Roads budget, transforming lives, building infrastructure and getting on with the job of keeping New South Wales number one.

#### RETIREMENT VILLAGES

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:05):** My question is directed to the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. Given that the Greiner report into retirement villages was finalised and delivered to the Government in December, and given the high level of community interest, when can we expect to see the report's recommendations and the Government's response to the report?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn Opposition members to reduce the level of noise in the Chamber.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (15:06):** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his interest in this important question on retirement villages, a subject that will affect every member of our community at some stage. Making sure that the senior members of our society—our parents and our grandparents—live out their days in peace and security is a concern of every member of this place. We have all heard the horror stories of older people moving into a retirement village only to have their hopes of a happy next chapter shattered. Often, the cause of their anguish is confusing and complex legal documents, exorbitant maintenance fees, hidden fees and charges, poor dispute resolution and extreme difficulty in onselling properties.

I am sure everyone in this place will have heard such stories firsthand, and I share the Government's concern. On the flipside, there are lots of positives to a well-run retirement village, which is an increasingly popular choice in people's later years. When it all goes right, retirement villages provides the best of both worlds—a degree of independence, with background support, and ease of living. We are determined to do all we can to ensure our senior citizens, who choose retirement village life, have the happy, stress-free existence promised in the marketing material. As part of our commitment to this important and growing sector, the Government asked Kathryn Greiner to conduct an inquiry into retirement villages.

The Government has received Ms Greiner's report and is considering all its recommendations. Suffice to say, it is a comprehensive report that makes practical and sensible suggestions to address the concerns raised by residents and their relatives. The report and the Government response will be released as soon as possible. Among other things, Ms Greiner was asked to investigate concerns about the following issues: marketing to see if it was transparent and fair; costs, fees and charges to see if they were clear and understandable for prospective residents and their families; dispute resolution to see if there were systems in place to ensure just, quick and cost-effective

outcomes for residents and operators; and onselling retirement village properties once they were no longer required.

As the population of New South Wales ages, the retirement village industry will play an increasingly important role in meeting the housing needs of seniors seeking a safe, secure and low-maintenance lifestyle. When things go well, moving into a retirement village enables seniors to access some cash by selling their home; to enjoy accommodation that is the right size; to access additional support services as they age; and to be part of a special community. The sector is facing an increase in the volume of potential residents with the first of the baby boomers now reaching retirement age. Changes have been made over the years in a bid to make this very important sector function as well as possible.

Minister Roberts did some great work in introducing a standard contract in 2013, and the standard fees and charges table was introduced into the disclosure statement in 2017, coinciding with the launch of an online retirement village calculator. These changes were designed to increase transparency because no-one likes complex documents at any stage of life, let alone in their senior years. There is more to do and, with the guidance of the Greiner report, it will be done. I know that Ms Greiner had extensive discussions with residents, their advocates, families and friends, and operators in the retirement village sector.

More than 500 people attended community forums held across the State, from Ballina to Wagga Wagga, and throughout metropolitan Sydney. The inquiry received more than 300 online submissions and more than 150 written submissions, and Ms Greiner led three roundtables with peak residents and operator organisations to discuss the issues set out in the terms of reference. The inquiry also consulted with other jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand to understand different approaches to the regulatory framework for retirement villages. I thank Ms Greiner for her work, and I look forward to sharing the results with the member for Lake Macquarie, and others, before too long. I take this opportunity to remind the member for Lake Macquarie that our focus is on making life better and fairer for every single resident in a retirement village and for those looking to move into a retirement village. That was the focus of the inquiry and it is exactly what I hope the outcome will be.

#### **NSW POLICE FORCE RESOURCES**

**Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (15:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. What is the New South Wales Government doing to ensure the NSW Police Force has the resources and the powers it needs to keep the community safe?

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (15:11):** I thank the member for Murray for his question. I know how proud he is to be part of a government that is doing everything, whether funding for resources, legislative support or policy support, to ensure that our men and women in blue are able to protect our community. Yesterday we received some excellent evidence and validation from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in relation to the recent quarterly results. With record numbers in policing year in and year out, and with the recently engaged commissioner's re-engineering process, which in the first locations has just hit the three-month mark and parallels these results, I know that every member in this place will join me in recognising and commending the outstanding results achieved right across the State.

Once again, the police have excelled themselves, working closely with the New South Wales community and driving down crime. I am extremely pleased to report to the House that of the 17 major crime categories that were examined by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 12 remain stable while four of those were trending down. Break and enters of dwellings are down 6.5 per cent across the State; break and enters of non-dwellings are down 9.8 per cent; stealing from a person offences are down 8.3 per cent; and the crime of fraud has reduced by 4.8 per cent over the last quarter of the past 24-month period.

The electorate of the member for Murray—he is a fantastic supporter of his local police and is excited to be opening the brand-new Deniliquin police station very soon—has embraced the re-engineering process. Break and enters of non-dwellings are down by a staggering 58 per cent—that is an amazing effort from the police in that area; assault, domestic violence offences are down by 38 per cent. That is an incredible result. I cannot say enough about how proud I am of the police in that area, and of all the police across the State. Everyone in this House and in the community will remember that for a number of decades a couple of crime categories plagued this State: horrible murders and robberies, particularly in Sydney, which was absolutely ravaged by those two types of crime.

In fact, we had to establish specific units—the Metropolitan Robbery Unit was one example—to combat that crime. That unit no longer exists because metropolitan robbery is at such low levels that a specialised unit is not required. It is now being dealt with through the State Crime Command and the local detective efforts through the police area commands. For murder and robbery, they have achieved the lowest numbers in 25 years across

New South Wales, and that is an outstanding result. I heard somebody interject in relation to sexual assault. Unfortunately, the member for Maitland's interjection is incorrect. Sexual assault in the last quarter—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** That's rubbish.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** Do not disrespect the subject matter by interjecting; just listen for a change. We all know—I am sure it is a shared view—that sexual assault is a horrendous crime. As the Premier indicated earlier this week, we are the first Government and the only Government to appoint a dedicated Minister for the prevention of sexual assault in this State, and she is doing a wonderful job. That assault category of sexual assault, for this period, is stable across New South Wales; however, in a number of areas it has risen and that is unacceptable. So the point—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland should not interject and argue.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** I appreciate the rudeness of the member for Maitland, again, on such an important matter. I am trying to inform the House.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** She's giving you facts.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Cessnock as well. In relation to sexual assault, in a number of areas it has spiked and it is problematic. Because of the re-engineering, the police area commands or the district commands where this is occurring now have the capacity to go and target what is driving those spikes rather than being left to try to do it on a whole one-size-fits-all model—a more dedicated and specific response to that issue. [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Understrength?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland will stop interjecting. Members will listen in silence, without interjecting.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Misleading the House.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** Did you just accuse me of misleading this House? I ask you to withdraw that comment—that is offensive and inaccurate.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has asked the member for Maitland to withdraw the comment. It is up to the member, and she has not done so.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** She is a disgrace. In relation to sexual assault, as we have drilled down to why there are spikes and why the numbers have risen in a couple of areas, we have found that—as occurs in the equally heinous crime of domestic violence—victims have more confidence in reporting the crime, which contributes to the increase. It does not take away the fact that one sexual assault is one too many, and we need to continue to work hard, but it is encouraging that, like victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual assault have a growing confidence in agencies—whether in health, family community services or the police—are getting better support and have the confidence to report the crime so those mongrel offenders can be held to account in the courts. We will not resile from our investment in supporting the police to drive down sexual assault in every corner of this State.

While I am talking about spikes in certain areas, I am also very pleased on the local front. My own town of Dubbo has had tremendous troubles with crime and a reputation and stigma regarding crime for a long time. Yesterday Don Weatherburn reported an improvement in crime offences. Dubbo usually has a higher rate, by 6 per cent per capita, than other areas of the State, but it has had dramatic falls and the biggest improvement in its history. I congratulate the commanders in the Orana-Mid Western area for achieving that result, and I tell them we have always got their back although others may not.

#### SYDNEY STADIUMS

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:18):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Minister, was the Premier's support for funding stadiums before schools discussed when the Minister went for his job interview at the Committee for Sydney?

**The SPEAKER:** Did you hear the question, Minister?

**Mr ROB STOKES:** Will the member please ask me the question again?

**The SPEAKER:** I did not quite hear it either. Members will come to order so that the question can be heard.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Minister, was the Premier's support for funding stadiums before schools discussed when the Minister went for his job interview at the Committee for Sydney?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (15:19):** I thank the member for his question but his question is based on a false premise. I have never been for an interview for any job in the period that I have served as a member of Parliament—in fact, if the member read the ministerial code of conduct he would realise that it would be an offence for me to go for a job interview for any position while a Minister of the Crown. He is sadly misinformed in relation to whatever he is referring to. I invite him to repeat the accusation contained in that question outside, because I have always done my utmost to treat this House with respect and to treat every member of this House with respect.

I am absolutely prepared to come in here and answer questions on matters of policy. I am absolutely committed to come in and provide whatever information you want on the state of our schools, on the exciting plans we have for our schools, on initial teacher education, on the great plans we have to build new schools and fix maintenance in our schools. I am absolutely committed to that. I am reminded of a statement by Eleanor Roosevelt: "Great minds talk about ideas, average minds talk about events, and small minds talk about people." I invite the House to reflect on that, because I—and, I suspect, most people on the other side and definitely everyone on this side—came in to talk about visions for our communities, for our State, for the things that we want to achieve.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** I can't say nice things about you anymore, Rob.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale has just demonstrated the truth of the words quoted by the Minister.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I am happy to talk about policy. I am happy to talk about this Government's positive vision for the future of this State. We have some enormous challenges facing our State; we have some incredible opportunities and incredible resources. We are one of the leading economies anywhere in the world and we have the resources to do great things, and the member comes in here and accuses me of going for a job interview. Seriously, is that best he has got? I believe the people of Wollongong deserve better than that. There are so many questions that I could be asked about things that actually matter. There was no job interview: I have a job. I have an important job and, frankly, we all do—and we should get on with it.

#### TRANSPORT ACCESS PROGRAM

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:23):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of the Transport Access Program, and is the Minister aware of any potential threats to the successful completion of this successful program?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:23):** I thank the member for Drummoyne for this great question. That is how one asks a sensible question, and I will try to give a sensible answer. The Transport Access Program is an incredible program, a big program for the State. The Government has got on with the job of delivering this important program, and we have a lot more to do. With \$1 billion going into the program we are able to assist people with disabilities, our seniors community and mums and dads with prams to get around the transport network. With inaccessibility across a lot of stations, wharfs, bus stops and the like, we are conscious of the need to invest in this program.

Since coming to office we now have 450 Transport Access Program projects that are either completed or underway. We have also provided wheelchair access to some 46 stations since coming to office and we have another 20 wheelchair accessible upgrades currently underway. That is very important but we will continue to invest in that because only 55 per cent of stations across the network are now wheelchair accessible. Not only that, the Government has upgraded 15 commuter wharfs across the harbour, with another six upgrades on the way to completion. I know the member for Drummoyne is very passionate about that.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** And Balmain.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** And Balmain. Yes, it is a good wharf at Balmain; I am happy to open that. Abbotsford and Cabarita commuter wharfs are well underway. The good member for Sydney, who is not here today—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** You can look after Rockdale if you like.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** —and the member for Vacluse are also very happy about the work that is starting at Edgecliff. I was very pleased to see the member for Blue Mountains pretend to be a member of



the Government when we saw Leura station opened last month by Shayne Mallard from the other place. That is an historic station in the Blue Mountains.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Pretend?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Well, you were there for the photo. Come down and join us.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Blue Mountains that this is not a debate.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** If you are going to be nice, be nice to me as well. Tell me what's happening at the stations.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I now have an interjection from the member for Strathfield. We are going to put a lift at Homebush station so she can punch on, loosen up in the lift and away she goes.

**Mr Michael Daley:** That is the first time you have ever been funny, Andrew. It's only taken you 11 years.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Well, you're laughing. I do need to turn to my dear friend from Fairfield. We have upgraded commuter car parks, done interchange upgrades and the like. I congratulate the member for Fairfield on his recent preselection victory. I understand it was 41 to 22—a great result and a 10-vote swing. He has been out there fighting for his commuter car parks and fighting for his preselection. It is interesting that we now have statutory declarations coming into head office, backed by the Leader of the Opposition, trying to get rid of him. Now there is something about Fairfield—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister had been giving some good information about transport issues and he strayed momentarily. I urge you to call him back to the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I urge the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The problem with the member for Cessnock is that he does not belong to a faction so he does not know what is going on in his own party. What we do know is that they are tearing each other apart on that side of the Chamber. It is not only what we saw during the week during question time—*[Extension of time]*

What is telling on that side of the House is that factionalism is tearing Opposition members apart. I only have to look at the member for Bankstown, who seems to spend a lot of time on her telephone telling everyone what is going on on that side of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I upheld the last point of order. I urge the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The Leader of the Opposition, who is a snake or a salesman on stadia, has more factional fights happening on that side of the House than he knows what to do with. I cannot say how embarrassing it must have been for the member for Bankstown during the week to have the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asking a Minister to not wake her up. That is what went on in question time this week.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: Surely there must be a standing order about making a fool of yourself on the floor of the Parliament; there has to be.

**The SPEAKER:** If there is not, there should be. The member for Maroubra and I will write one.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Mate, you made a fool of yourself outside the court when you went there.

**Mr Michael Daley:** You're kidding.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Well, you didn't know the legislation you had introduced about speeding in a tunnel.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The transport Minister is making Mel look like a genius.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I did not hear what the member for Swansea said. The time for questions has expired.

*Ministerial Statement***NSW OMBUDSMAN OPERATION PROSPECT**

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (15:31):** On 1 December 2017 the then Acting NSW Ombudsman, Professor John McMillan, tabled a report titled "Operation Prospect—Second report on developments" under sections 27 and 31 of the Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW). The report under section 27 of the Act indicated that the then Acting NSW Ombudsman was not satisfied that the NSW Crime Commission had taken sufficient steps in response to his recommendations in earlier reports concerning Operation Prospect. The relevant recommendations concerned the issuing of apologies to individuals impacted by the actions of the NSW Crime Commission.

Section 27 of the Act requires the Minister responsible for the NSW Crime Commission, in this case the Minister for Police, to respond in a statement to the Parliament. In his report on the Operation Prospect investigation, the Acting NSW Ombudsman recommended that the NSW Crime Commission provide written apologies to 16 individuals. On 1 December 2017, the Acting Commissioner of the NSW Crime Commission, Mr Peter Bodor, QC, wrote to me to advise that he would shortly be sending letters of apology to those individuals who were yet to receive one. I made a media statement confirming this on 1 December 2017. I can advise the House that the NSW Crime Commission has issued apologies to all those who the then Acting Ombudsman recommended to receive an apology from the NSW Crime Commission.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**M5 Toll**

Petition calling on the Government to rule out the imposition of a new toll on the M5, received from **Mr Greg Warren**.

**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**.

**Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Companion Animals on Public Transport**

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

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

**Wallacia Golf Club Cemetery Development**

Petition opposing development of a cemetery on the Wallacia Golf Club site, received from **Mrs Tanya Davies**.

**RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

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

The Hon. Paul Toole—Brisbane Water Channel—lodged 7 February 2018 (Ms Liesl Tesch)

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION****Report: Review of the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Annual Reports of the ICAC**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:35):** As Chair: I speak on the fifth report of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] in the 56th Parliament, tabled on 13 March 2018. The committee's role includes examining each annual report and other reports of the ICAC. The committee's report is the result of its review of the ICAC's 2014-15 and 2015-16 annual reports. The review came at a time of significant change for the ICAC. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (Amendment) Act 2016 came into force in August 2017. The amendment Act replaced the ICAC's sole commissioner model with a three-member panel of commissioners. Three new commissioners have since been appointed to head ICAC. The Chief Commissioner is the Hon. Peter Hall, QC. Ms Patricia McDonald, SC, and Mr Stephen Rushton, SC, have been appointed commissioners.

The amendment Act has also made changes to the ICAC's management and procedures. As part of its review the committee held public hearings where the new commissioners spoke of the implementation of these changes. For example, the amendment Act requires the ICAC to issue procedural guidelines for the conduct of its public inquiries. The commissioners provided an update on the development of these guidelines. The report notes that the guidelines have since been finalised and tabled in Parliament. It is important that such guidelines exist in order to address concerns about the fair treatment of people involved in ICAC inquiries. The committee will continue to monitor this area with interest.

The amendment Act provides that the chief commissioner may appoint a chief executive officer [CEO]. However, at its hearings, the chief commissioner told the committee that he has deferred making that decision and the matter is under active consideration. The committee supports the appointment of a CEO. A CEO could manage day-to-day functioning of the ICAC's various divisions, freeing the commissioners to focus on important statutory functions and higher level decision-making. The report recommends the appointment of a CEO. It is another matter the committee will continue to monitor with interest.

The chief commissioner informed the committee that the ICAC has recently launched two new major capacity-building projects. The first is a project to increase the ICAC's proactive investigation capacity. To date the ICAC has pursued investigations reactively, in response to complaints and notifications of alleged corrupt conduct. The project will have the ICAC pursue a more intelligence-based proactive model of investigation. The second project is a review by KPMG of the ICAC's processes to ensure that it is operating effectively, properly, and meeting modern standards.

The committee will watch the progress of these projects with interest. To foster appropriate oversight of the ICAC's efforts to increase proactive investigation capacity the committee recommended that the ICAC report annually on the number of inquiries it initiated versus the number responding to complaints and reports of alleged corruption. The committee has reported on the significant change that the ICAC is undergoing. The report also covers the stock standard issues for an annual report review, which are no less important. These issues include an examination of processes regarding confidentiality during investigations, a review of complaint statistics, and an examination of ICAC decisions to investigate.

In closing, I acknowledge the vital role that the ICAC plays as the State's anti-corruption watchdog. It is a time of change for the organisation and the review provides a timely opportunity to take stock of functions and future plans. I thank the new commissioners and their executive team for contributing at public hearings for the committee's review. In addition, I thank my fellow committee members for their valuable input during the inquiry process. Finally, I thank the committee staff for their assistance in conducting hearings and preparing the report. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:40):** As Deputy Chair of the Committee on the ICAC, I contribute to the take-note debate of the report reviewing the ICAC's annual reports. As the chair of the committee has noted, the ICAC is undergoing a period of significant change including the recent appointment of three commissioners to replace the previous sole commissioner model. It was valuable to hear from the commissioners and their executive team at hearings for the review. I thank them for sharing their insights with us. As the chair has outlined, the report examines the significant changes within the ICAC as a result of the recent amendment Act and its major capacity-building projects. Importantly, the report examines the bread-and-butter matters of an annual report review that are vital for the ICAC to function smoothly from year to year. These matters include: a review of complaint statistics, an examination of time targets to investigate complaints, and an examination of the processes that maintain confidentiality during investigations.

I will comment today on the processes to maintain confidentiality. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality during the ICAC's investigations is essential to protect the privacy and reputation of those involved and maintain the integrity of the investigation. This is reflected in the serious penalties that exist for anyone who makes an unauthorised disclosure during an ICAC investigation. The committee has ongoing concerns about this issue. In its report the committee notes a complaint was made to the ICAC Inspectorate during the 2014-15 reporting year about a disclosure to the media of information relating to an investigation. The committee believes there needs to be further oversight in this area. For this reason, it recommends that the ICAC report annually on the number of unauthorised disclosures made during each reporting year of which it has become aware, and the details of any action taken in response.

The review presented a valuable opportunity to examine the functions of the State's anti-corruption watchdog. The recommendations will ensure that it continues to perform at an optimal level. I close by thanking all those who were involved in the review. I thank the chair, my fellow committee members and the parliamentary committee staff. We are fortunate to have efficient, professional high-level staff at our disposal. It ensures the reports maintain a high level of integrity and professionalism. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I welcome to the public gallery on International Mother Language Day Mr Rocky Talukder, Mr Arif Rana, Mr Jamil Hossain, Mr Hasan Kureshi, Mr Lutful Kabir, Mr Azad Abul Kaam and Mr Avadul Alum. I also welcome Councillor Masood Chowdhury from Campbelltown City Council and Selima Begum and Tariq Abud from Sydney Bangalee Inc.

#### *Committees*

#### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 51/56**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:45):** As Chair: I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Digest No. 51/56. The committee examined nine bills, three of which were cognate with the Liquor and Gaming Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I will briefly discuss the comments made in respect of six of the bills examined. First, the Animal Protection and Crimes Legislation Amendment (Reporting Animal Cruelty and Protection of Animal Enterprises) Bill 2018 aims to minimise the delay in reporting animal cruelty to authorities by requiring individuals who record acts of animal cruelty to provide the recording of that act to relevant authorities within five days. Any person who fails to report and provide the recording to relevant officers will be guilty of an offence. The bill also introduces a number of offences aimed at strengthening protections of people engaged in animal enterprises. The maximum penalties for these offences range from one year to life imprisonment. The committee noted that the maximum penalties were excessive compared to the offending conduct and referred this issue to Parliament.

The second bill I will speak to is the Modern Slavery Bill 2018 which was drafted by a cross-parliamentary working group and addresses the findings and recommendations of the Legislative Council Select Committee on human trafficking in New South Wales. The committee highlighted that several provisions in the bill override privacy protections found in New South Wales legislation. The committee noted that while these provisions may trespass on rights to privacy and confidentiality, the committee considered the trespass justified as the aim of the provisions is to inform appropriate agencies of suspected or actual slavery. The committee also noted the safeguards contained in the bill that limit the scope of information that can be disclosed.

I will now turn to the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Road Safety) Bill 2018 which introduces a number of measures aimed at decreasing the road toll. One measure is to provide police with additional powers to prevent a person suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or another drug from using a vehicle. The bill also increases the maximum penalties for the offence of using or attempting to use a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or any other drug. The committee noted that the current maximum penalties have been doubled and are considered to be a sharp increase without detailed supporting evidence that it may unduly trespass on personal rights and liberties. The committee referred this issue to Parliament for further consideration.

The final bills I will speak to are: the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2018, the Casino Control Amendment Bill 2018 and the Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2018. The committee highlighted a

provision in the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill with retrospective operation. The bill permits the cancellation of planning approvals granted prior to the commencement of the proposed bill. The committee routinely comments on provisions of this nature occurring in bills. The committee highlighted two provisions in the Casino Control Amendment Bill which may unduly trespass on the right to privacy. One such provision permits the Liquor and Gaming Authority to provide the Commissioner of Police with copies of any photographs, fingerprints and palm prints of special employee applicants. The committee noted the wide matters in which this information can be used and referred this issue to Parliament for its consideration.

Finally, the committee noted that the Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill permits an inspector, when conducting an interview under the Work Health and Safety Act, the power to conduct a sound or audio visual recording without requiring the consent of the person. The committee noted this provision may trespass on a person's right to privacy but referred to the statutory review of the Act which outlined the policy reasons behind the amendment. That concludes my remarks on Digest No. 51/56. As always, I encourage everyone to read the digest in full, which is available on the committee's website. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:49):** On behalf of the Opposition I will comment on the Digest No. 51/56 of the Legislation Review Committee. The committee considered nine bills and commented on eight of them. I will address briefly some comments that were made on the Modern Slavery Bill 2018. This bill was drafted by a cross-party working group and addresses the findings and recommendations of the October 2017 report of the Legislative Council Select Committee on human trafficking in New South Wales. The bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by the Hon. Paul Green, MLC. The objects of the bill are to combat modern slavery, and to make forced marriage of a child, certain slavery and slavery-like conduct offences in New South Wales. In considering the bill the committee noted that sections 13, 14 and 16 of the bill override privacy protections in this State. The committee noted:

While these provisions may trespass on rights to privacy and confidentiality, the Committee is of the view that the trespass is justified in the circumstances. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the aim of the provisions is to inform appropriate agencies or the Commissioner of instances of suspected or actual slavery. Second, the relevant provisions contain safeguards that limit the scope of information provided. The Committee makes no further comment.

The committee also noted the reverse onus of proof concern at section 26 and the committee commented as follows:

The bill enables a court to impose a modern slavery risk order in relation to certain offences. Such an order prohibits a person from engaging in specified conduct. It is an offence to contravene the order without reasonable excuse. The Bill makes clear that the person charged with the offence bears the onus of proving that they had a reasonable excuse. While the Committee generally discourages the imposition of a reverse onus of proof, the Committee is of the view that this is justified in the circumstances. This is because, given the likely practical application of the offence, the evidentiary burden on the prosecution may otherwise be too high. The Committee makes no further comment.

The committee also questioned the specificity of the definition of "digital platform" noting that there was no definition of "digital platform" within the Act. I draw those comments to the attention of members in both Chambers when they are deliberating on the bill. I thank my fellow committee members and I thank the staff that support the committee. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

*Matter of Public Importance*

### INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:52):** I am delighted to bring to the attention of the House International Mother Language Day and recognise it as a matter of public importance. It is correctly described because it an important day, particularly for our friends and community members in the Bangladeshi group. What started as a university protest to protect their language turned into a nationalist movement for independence. While language is functionally a form of communication and conversation, it is also a connection to culture, identity, history and heritage. The great Nelson Mandela once said:

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart. There is no denying the importance of languages in shaping our identity as a multicultural community. Mother languages allow people from all backgrounds and all walks of life to keep a close, personal connection to their culture and ancestry. In a successfully diverse and inclusive community as ours, the promotion and preservation of mother languages is in our nation's socio-economic interests. That is why I today recognise International Mother Language Day, which was celebrated on 21 February. International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by UNESCO in November 1999 and has been observed every year since 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity as well as multilingualism.

Celebrating our mother languages celebrates us as a people. New South Wales is a diverse State, with people from different backgrounds coming together to form a melting pot of cultures and inclusiveness.

In fact, the latest census reveals that a quarter of our State's population speaks a language other than English at home. Nearly 40 per cent of my constituents in the electorate of Macquarie Fields speak a language other than English at home. Mother languages include Arabic, Bengali, Samoan, Spanish as well as Chinese and Indo-Aryan languages. It is through conversations in their mother language that young people learn about their heritage, traditions and culture and older generations maintain a vital link to their family history.

Every weekend across the Sydney metropolitan area and south-west Sydney, in particular, local volunteers run a number of Saturday language schools to help the next generation of young Australians to learn their mother language or give others a chance to learn a second language. In my electorate and in other parts of south-west Sydney there are a number of language schools. Mal Fruean and the Pacific community run a Maori language school at Minto, Hindi language classes are taught at Sarah Redfern School, and the Campbelltown Bangla School at the Grange Public School has been in operation since 2001. Just a little further north at Liverpool, more than 600 students are enrolled in either Arabic, Bengali, Croatian, Khmer, Polish, Serbian, Spanish or Vietnamese classes. Across other parts of Sydney, thousands of students are enrolled in secondary school classes either as part of their chosen educational curriculum or their desire to learn a second language.

In addition to language classes, the Campbelltown Bangla school also encourages students to participate in cultural programs and performances to showcase what they have learnt to the community. I have attended many of those cultural performances and can attest to the high standard of talent among the students. I thank Masood Chowdury, Abdul Jalil, Nazmul Khan, Selima Begum, Tariq Abu and the Bangla School management committee in addition to the parents and volunteers for their efforts to promote multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Another organisation in my electorate that promotes the awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity is the Sydney Bengali Community Incorporated. I am delighted that, after many years of hard work, it has received funding for the erection of a monument to celebrate International Mother Language Day. I know the committee is hard at work trying to secure a suitable site in the area for such an important tribute to multiculturalism. I recognise the efforts of Selima Begum and her management committee, which has been working hard for many years to bring the project to fruition.

Recently, I gave notice of a motion in this Parliament to formally recognise and commemorate International Mother Language Day in New South Wales. The United Nations noted that it is communication that makes change and development possible in human society. The United Nations rightly points out that using—or not using—certain languages today can open a door, or close it, for large segments of society in many parts of the world. I once again reflect on the words of Nelson Mandela, who aptly captured the importance of mother languages to a person's identity and existence within this world. I know from experience that speaking in your mother language reinforces your connection to your culture and history. After all, the mark of a truly inclusive and diverse community is surely the ability for people to converse in their mother tongue as they contribute to the rich tapestry of our society.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:57):** It is a pleasure to discuss International Mother Language Day as the matter of public importance. I commend the member for Macquarie Fields for bringing this to the attention of the House. The member for Macquarie Fields spoke about attending various cultural functions throughout his electorate and noted that on such occasions young people engage in dance, drama, music or song from their cultural backgrounds. As the member indicated, those skills have often been taught by grandparents, aunties or uncles who are passing down the traditions of their culture. That is absolutely vital to giving our State its multicultural feel and vibrant atmosphere. The passing down of knowledge, history and experience ties in with the need for mother languages to be maintained and promoted.

In New South Wales we are fortunate to have a diversity of residents who speak a total of 215 languages, coming from 307 ancestries. International Mother Language Day is observed every 21 February and was this year marked in New South Wales with an exhibition at the State Library held in conjunction with the Mother Languages Conservation Movement International. Community language groups such as Bangla Academy Australia and the Ekushey Academy have worked hard to raise the profile of the celebrations in this State. The Government acknowledges the importance of preserving languages, and greatly values the important contribution of the Mother Languages Conservation Movement International in creating awareness of the significance of mother languages in Australia. The United Nations has observed the date every year since 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity, and encourage multilingualism in the community. The Government is working hard to raise professional standards of teaching and curriculum materials in the community languages sector.

More than 2,700 voluntary teachers and nearly 35,000 students attend our community language schools in New South Wales. The Government appreciates the many efforts of teachers, parents and students in community language schools across our State. Our students are studying in 54 community languages, which provides fantastic benefits for our economic and cultural connections across the world. By investing in our communities we want people to be proud of their cultural and linguistic heritage. The Premier has announced an

extra \$10.9 million in funding to help improve teacher training and resources in community languages. In November last year the Premier also announced a partnership with the Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education at the University of Sydney. That aims to boost the capacity of the university in languages education, especially as demand grows for language skills.

Our investment in education is designed to provide superior resources, curricula and professional development for community language teachers. We aim to support our linguistic diversity through research, teaching and professional learning programs in schools and community organisations. The new partnership will help to build our capacity in community languages as regional and global demand grows. The Government appreciates the many efforts of teachers, volunteers and students across our State. We support linguistic diversity and appreciate the skills people bring to help foster our cultural and trade links across the globe. I acknowledge the visitors present in the public gallery on this important occasion. I commend the member for Macquarie Fields for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:02):** I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for bringing International Mother Language Day to the House as a matter of public importance. Since 2000 International Mother Language Day and has been celebrated internationally each year on 21 February. The theme for 2018 is "Linguistic diversity and multilingualism count for sustainable development". UNESCO has noted that around the world one language disappears every two weeks. In Australia hundreds of languages have been lost over the 230 years since white settlement. In fact, it is likely that more languages were spoken in Australia prior to white settlement than are spoken now. Given that we are one of the most multicultural countries on earth, that is an incredible loss.

Mother Language Day was originally celebrated in Bangladesh. It is a public holiday in that country and an incredibly important day. The world now celebrates International Mother Language Day in recognition of the fight for language rights that took place when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan. At the time Governor-General Jinnah said that Urdu and only Urdu would be the official language in an attempt to repress the language and culture of the eastern half of the country. The situation came to a head in 1952. On 21 February widespread protests were held and a number of protesters were killed. Their death is now commemorated around the world on International Mother Language Day.

In Bangladesh they award the Ekushey Padak in celebration of this important day. This is one of the highest civilian awards introduced in memory of the martyrs of the Bengali Language Movement. Journalist Ranesh Maitra was this year's award winner. I have known Ranesh for a number of years. His son lives at Westmead. For more than 60 years he has been an advocate for secularism, democracy, the rule of law and a just society. Ranesh was an active organiser in the language movement in 1952 and throughout the liberation war. He is also a well-recognised author. It is a great tribute to him that he was recognised on such a special day. Congratulations Ranesh.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:05):** By leave: I commence my contribution to this matter of public importance by acknowledging the visitors in the gallery. Many of them come from the great electorate of Lakemba. It is great to see them all in the people's House. I do not intend to repeat the comments of others who have contributed to this debate but if people are willing to lay down their lives in defence of their heritage, culture and history it is easy to understand the importance of International Mother Language Day. In New South Wales there are more than 200 different cultural groups and more than one-quarter of those people speak a different language. In the electorate of Lakemba there are more than 150 different cultural groups and people speak a number of different languages. Multiculturalism brings everyone together. I urge those watching the parliamentary website to take a trip to Ashfield to see the International Mother Language Day monument in Ashfield Park. I was there on 21 February with representatives of the Ekushe Academy, many of whom are visitors to this Chamber today.

It is important to understand that International Mother Language Day is not about the words; it is about the history. Not all words translate with the exact meaning. There is not one word for every corresponding word in a different language. Language is about history and heritage. Language is about the blood that runs through the veins of our grandparents and their parents. Indeed, that is what makes us who we are. Australia is a great multicultural country and it is incredibly important to make sure that those who are fortunate enough to have a second language, a mother tongue language, pass it on. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the community schools, including the Bengali community schools, that not only teach the language but also the history, heritage and culture. Some think of multiculturalism as clothes and food. It is not only clothes and food but also the things that translate into the person that we become. It is not about saying that one does not belong in one place or another. The greatest gift we have in Australia is that different cultural groups share their history. I would like to see International Language Day acknowledged on a greater level—whether in schools or through the public service—because it is a great contributor to our nation.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:08):** In reply: We are a proud and inclusive multicultural nation. Our record in welcoming people from around the world, their culture and their language, is world's best. I thank the members for the electorates of Seven Hills, Granville and Lakemba for their contribution and support of this matter of public importance. Our cultural diversity gives us a comparative advantage in a continually globalised world. Research clearly shows the benefits of being bilingual or multilingual. Apart from the joys of being able to converse with people from all around the world and being able to travel without having to refer to Google translate for every interaction, having a second, third, fourth or fifth language—if one is that skilful—improves one's cognitive ability to multitask, problem solve and to have a better attention span. It also has a positive effect on one's learning ability and this can impact on educational, employment, income and quality of life outcomes.

The success of promoting and learning mother languages is supported at all levels of government and within our communities. Volunteer groups across the State give up their valuable time to help the next generation of young Australians to keep in touch with their mother tongue or to learn a new one. I take this opportunity to thank all the community members in my electorate and across New South Wales who are committed to encouraging and teaching languages, especially to our young people. The member for Campbelltown, my parliamentary colleagues the Federal members for Macarthur and Werriwa and I are proud of the many language schools across our electorates. The member for Wollongong is also a strong supporter of language and culture initiatives in his electorate.

We have all visited the language schools and know how much effort is being expended to teach mother languages and all the wonderful community events that promote International Mother Language Day. Our level of cross-cultural understanding and respect is all the better for it, and so is the strength of our social cohesion. To celebrate International Mother Language Day in the New South Wales Parliament is a reflection of our strong social cohesion, the depth of our mutual respect for each other, and the strength of our cultural diversity. I thank those in my local community and those in the gallery today for their support of International Mother Language Day. I commend this matter of public importance to the House.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **BALMAIN ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:11):** I acknowledge the talented and passionate members of my constituency who were recognised in the Australia Day Honours List 2018. Helen Somerville from Birchgrove was recognised with an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to medicine in the field of developmental paediatrics. Helen is a talented clinician and a passionate advocate for the care and treatment of people with intellectual disabilities. Since 1983 she has been a paediatrician at Westmead Children's Hospital. Helen founded the Dysphagia Nutrition Clinic, which aims to restore healthy nutritional status to children whose feeding has been impacted by chronic and complex medical conditions.

Neville Carter of Birchgrove has enjoyed a distinguished career as a legal practitioner and made a remarkable contribution to legal education in New South Wales. He is the former Chair of the Australasian Professional Legal Education Council and has also been the Chief Executive Officer of the College of Law since 1991. He was recognised with a Member of the Order of Australia for his service. Roxanne McMurray of Balmain is the Chief Executive Officer of the Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre, an organisation that provides low-cost health care and education to women. She has worked tirelessly to serve the interests of women and their families locally for many years. From domestic violence services, to counselling and supporting women in crisis, Roxanne has worked to provide frontline services to the most vulnerable people in our community. She was rewarded with a Member of the Order of Australia.

#### **ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY CATTLE BREEDERS AWARD**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:12):** I pay tribute to Nabitac local Selwyn Weller who is to be awarded an esteemed champion of the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show. Selwyn trains and shows cattle on behalf of cattle breeders across the district. He has led cattle from Chianinas to dairy and beef cattle. He and his family have a long and rich history of involvement with the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Only a few years ago his family was presented with awards by the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales. I can remember watching Selwyn show those huge Chianinas on behalf of Jimmy and Jane Coulduck of Moorall Creek. He has also helped local police commander Christine George with her cattle.

#### **MAURITIAN INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:13):** I recognise the Mauritian community in New South Wales, especially in Sydney. In particular I recognise the celebrations that occurred on Sunday 11 March to commemorate



the fiftieth anniversary of Mauritian independence. Those celebrations occurred in Blamfield Park in my electorate. In 1968 Mauritius ceased to be a colony of the British Empire and became the Republic of Mauritius. I am always happy to celebrate a reduction of the British Empire and the fine example of a country becoming a republic. Mauritius had previously been a French colony from 1715 to 1810, and a Dutch colony from 1638 to 1710. The fiftieth anniversary independence event was organised by an executive committee. I congratulate the committee and the sponsors of the event. The organising committee and participants were drawn primarily from three clubs: Prestons Sports and Recreation Club, the Australian Mauritian Association and the Mauritian Chinese Circle of Sydney. I acknowledge speakers on the day Sam Carter of the Prestons Sports and Recreation Club and Jean Morvan of the Australian Mauritian Association. I also acknowledge the invitation extended to me by Brunella De Francesco, Secretary of the Prestons Sports and Recreation Club. It was a pleasure to attend.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE FUTSAL TEAMS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:14):** I recognise the selection of young Port Macquarie athletes to Australian Representative Futsal teams. Futsal, sometimes known as five-a-side indoor soccer, has seen enormous growth nationwide in recent years, including in Port Macquarie. In 2017 Chris Khoury, Will Bentley and Josh Blue were selected for the under-15 Australian School Boys team and Harrison King was selected for the under-15 Boys Australian team, and both teams travelled to Brazil last August. Will Khoury was selected for the under-14 Australian School Boys team, which travelled to the United Kingdom in 2017. This year there have been many selections across the region. Hayden King, Bailey Kane, Mitchell McGuinness, Cruz Lewis and a young lady by the name of Zora Boskovski were selected for the under-10 Australian Boys team, which will travel to New Zealand in October 2018.

Hayden, Zora and Mitchell have also been selected for the under-10 boys team, along with Lachlan Parke, to travel to the United States Nationals in July. Harrison King, Aubrey DeSilva and Daniel Peel were chosen for the under-15 Australian School Boys team, which will travel to the United States Nationals in July 2018. Selections for the under-16 Boys Australian team that will travel to Greece in October 2018 were Harrison King, Will Bentley and Josh Gardner.

#### **ANGLICAN CARE CHAIRMAN JOHN KILPATRICK**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:15):** I congratulate John Kilpatrick, former Mayor of Lake Macquarie Council, colleague, mentor and friend, who recently retired as the Chairman of Anglican Care after a whopping 47 years. John was appointed to the Anglican Care board of directors in 1971 and became chairman in 1980. During his time with Anglican Care, the organisation has seen significant growth, from having just one residential aged care home servicing 150 residents, to providing a suite of services including 12 residential aged care homes across the Hunter, Central Coast and MidCoast regions servicing more than 1,400 people. John has been a stalwart leader of Anglican Care and has left the organisation in a strong position for continued growth, particularly in the areas of home care and retirement living services. John dedicated much of his life to public service in the Hunter region, and as a community we are very much richer for his unwavering commitment to see our community thrive. I wish him and his wonderful wife, Ellen, all the best for a long and enjoyable retirement.

#### **EPILEPSY ACTION AUSTRALIA**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:16):** Today I recognise the important work of Epilepsy Action Australia and the dedication of a very special volunteer for the upcoming Purple Day on 26 March, Catherine Webber of Manly. Purple Day is a global initiative that was commenced by a young Cassidy Megan from Canada to recognise and raise awareness for epilepsy. Making its way to Australia, we are incredibly fortunate to have volunteers like Catherine Webber of Manly, who for many years have volunteered their time and energy to supporting this important day. Catherine approached me to assist her on Purple Day at Manly Wharf and I look forward to joining her alongside many other volunteers. For many years Catherine has volunteered her time in support of Purple Day. I am delighted to support Catherine, Purple Day and the important work of Epilepsy Action Australia, and I commend Catherine's work to the House.

#### **PORT STEPHENS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:17):** I thank everyone who came to Port Stephens inaugural International Women's Day breakfast hosted by the Federal member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson, and me. With more than 130 people attending, it was a sellout success. I thank the stars of the show—the young women school leaders from Irrawang High School Georgia Sulis, Dakota Gordon and Rebecca Collins, and from Hunter River High School Renae Andrews and Hannah Breed. They did themselves, their families and their schools proud. I thank our guest speaker, Principal of Hunter River High School, Deb Dibley, for sharing her inspiring, personal story. I thank Kevin Stokes, Chairman of Hunter Region Botanic Gardens, Jenny Mason and all the volunteers for looking after us so well. I also thank Kieran Morley for his acknowledgement of country,

local artist Jenny Crozier, who donated artworks, and Colleen Whittle, co-manager of the Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Service, for speaking about her important service. Finally, I thank our sponsors Newcastle Airport, Raymond Terrace Marketplace and Tomago Aluminium. Their steadfast support of our community is greatly appreciated.

#### **TIDDA QUEENS DINNER**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:18):** I was pleased to attend the inaugural Tidda Queens Dinner held recently in Grafton. This dinner was held to recognise and celebrate the inspirational Indigenous women from across the Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr lands that are part of the Clarence Valley. Twelve Tidda Queen nominees were honoured for their leadership within the community. The nominees were Melissa Livermore, Gwen Appo, Michelle Cutmore, Reverend Lenore Parker, Lisa Laurie, Janelle Brown, Franceen Vesper, Rosei Vesper, Keira Hampshire, Bernadette Basset, Aggie Pholi, Carmel Monaghan, Gloria Strachan and Cheryl Hookey. I congratulate not only the nominees but also the organisers, Rachel Cavanagh and Bianca Monaghan, who had the courage to start something new, and I wish them continued success with all future Tidda Queens dinners.

#### **AUSTRALIAN PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION ILLAWARRA THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:19):** Last Sunday I joined the Australian Philippine Association Illawarra at the celebration of its thirty-ninth anniversary—a fantastic achievement for a lovely and fun group who work hard to support the aged, young and everyone who is in Wollongong with a Filipino background. This year the association's membership is up to nearly 150 people, and the one thing that one can always be assured of when one attends one of its events is that one is bound to have a great time. I particularly thank and acknowledge the efforts of the President, Sevilla Swadling; Secretary, Rebecca Hansen; Treasurer, Corazon Ibasco; and the other committee members. Without their work and the work of others over the past 38 years the association would not have achieved the significant milestone it celebrated on Sunday. In recognising 39 years of work on behalf of the Illawarra's Filipino community, I acknowledge Lilia McKinnon, who was a founding member of the association and continues to serve as senior vice-president. I look forward to celebrating future milestones with this vibrant and energetic group.

#### **ACTIVE KIDS PROGRAM**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:20):** I congratulate all families across the Central Coast who have claimed their Active Kids vouchers so far. This is a great new initiative from the State Liberal Government, which has been available since 31 January and provides all families with \$100 towards sport and recreation fees per school-aged child, per year. This is part of our Government's commitment to help reduce cost-of-living pressures on families across New South Wales. I have spoken to many people in my electorate of Terrigal about this new initiative. Recently, I doorknocked the suburb of Springfield to make sure everyone in the community takes advantage of these \$100 vouchers. Everywhere I go, people are talking about how fantastic the Active Kids program is. More than 6,400 vouchers have been claimed in my electorate of Terrigal, and across the Central Coast 21,000 vouchers have been claimed so far. I encourage all families to claim their Active Kids voucher today at [www.sport.nsw.gov.au/activekids](http://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/activekids).

#### **LAKE AINSWORTH INTEREST GROUP**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:21):** Today I acknowledge the incredible work of Lennox Head residents who are members of the Lake Ainsworth Interest Group. The group includes representatives of Lennox Head Residents Association, Lennox Head Landcare and Ballina Environment Society. This group has been active in getting positive messages out to the community about the future of the beautiful Lake Ainsworth. The group has spearheaded a campaign for positive submissions to turn the area surrounding the eastern side of the lake into a recreational parkland. It believes the best outcome for the future of the lake, its wildlife and surrounding environment and the safety of people is to close the eastern road to car traffic and ensure the stormwater system is upgraded. I thank the group for its efforts to make the lake's eastern side a space for people, not cars, and a safe area for children to play in. It also wants better access for people with disabilities and the elderly and believe an upgrade to the Lake Ainsworth surrounds will provide this. I support the work the Lake Ainsworth Interest Group is doing and I commend it to the House.

#### **YOUNG REGIONAL ARTIST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT MOLLY PARNELL**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:22):** I congratulate Molly Parnell, one of Albury's brightest artistic talents, who has been successful in receiving a \$10,000 Young Regional Artist Scholarship to assist in a dance internship. Molly will complete her internship with M&T In Motion in both Melbourne and London, where she will be learning choreography and rehearsing for performances in Australia and the United Kingdom. Molly, who has just turned 18, started in classical ballet but has now moved into contemporary dance with local dance

company Projection Dance School, under the direction of international choreographer and director, Tim Podesta, who is a graduate of the Australian Ballet School. We wish Molly every success for the future.

#### **BANGLA ART EXHIBITION**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:22):** On Saturday 10 March 2018, I was honoured to attend the 2018 Bangla Art Exhibition at the State Library of NSW, which showcased Bangladeshi culture in Australia through various Bengali art forms. It was an enriching exhibition with a diverse range of Bengali art, film, literature, dance and other exhibits on display. Bangla Hub has been organising this event since 2015 in partnership with the State Library of NSW and with the Bangladeshi High Commission in Canberra. I congratulate the President of the Bangla Hub, Dr Tanveer Ahmed, and executive members on putting on this unique event in celebration of Multicultural March 2018. I also give special thanks to the exhibition convenor, Ms Sabrin Farooqui, organiser, Mr Munir Biswas, the event curator, Mr Hasib Zakaria and to all the artists who participated in this wonderful event. I congratulate each of them and thank them for the opportunity to go along and open the exhibition.

#### **JOLOOLA ENTERTAINMENT CREATOR JOSIE LAMB**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:23):** I make special mention of Josie Lamb, a young Mosman woman, who has created a thriving entertainment business for children—Joloola Entertainment. An actor, presenter, singer, dancer, and creator, Josie has entertained thousands of children at many events, including Carols in the Domain, and has been performing for more than 20 years. She was inspired to start the business after working for *Bananas in Pyjamas* and *The Wiggles*, occasionally taking on the role of Dorothy the Dinosaur. Alongside her stage work she also has a growing online fan base of her channel on YouTube, which just passed 1.5 million views. Josie has around 25 characters and various live shows, many of which have audience participation and help children with mindfulness and body activation. I know of many locals in the North Shore community who speak incredibly highly of Josie and I commend her for her entrepreneurial spirit and creativity. The New South Wales economy is number one in the nation and it is in no small part due to small businesses just like Josie's enjoying these benefits and achieving their goals.

#### **WYONG ELECTORATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:24):** On Sunday 11 March I attended an International Women's Day breakfast hosted by Soroptimist International Brisbane Water. This group is active across the Central Coast in advocating for and assisting in the growth of women and girls. Soroptimist International aims to inspire action, create opportunities and transform lives. It has its roots in the Soroptimist movement, started in the United States of America in 1921, aimed at creating a space for professional women in society to perform service to their communities. More than 90,000 women worldwide belong to Soroptimist International because they want to make a difference in today's world. It was a pleasure to attend their eleventh International Women's Day breakfast and to hear from guest speaker Joanne McCarthy, a *Newcastle Herald* journalist who has worked for years to bring child sex abuse to light, resulting in the royal commission. I commend this wonderful organisation for having me at this important event and for all the work it continues to do to advance the status of women and girls.

#### **MONOPOLY KU-RING-GAI**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:25):** Very few people in this country over the age of 10 have not played, or at least are not aware of, the board game Monopoly. It is a game where players move around the board buying and trading properties, developing them with houses and hotels and collecting rent from their opponents with the ultimate goal of them being driven into bankruptcy. First published in the United States in 1935, today hundreds of different editions exist, having been licensed in more than 100 countries and printed in more than 35 languages. Therefore, I am excited to report that, on the initiative of Bendigo Community Bank Turramurra, Ku-ring-gai later this year will have its own edition.

I understand that the streets on the board will be places of interest within Ku-ring-gai—surely my electorate office will not be overlooked—and customised tokens of the game's sponsors will be used. Monopoly Ku-ring-gai will not only be a tribute to the area; all of the proceeds of sale will be donated to local charities, including St Lucy's School at Wahroonga, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, Lifeline Harbour to Hornsby and KYDS Youth Development Service. It is estimated that each will receive \$15,000. The bank is also running a competition for photographers 18 years and under to choose the image or images to be in the centre of the board and on the box, so there is a great opportunity for schools and community groups to get involved before the launch of the game in September.

### KANAHOOKA MEN'S SHED

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:26):** Today I speak on the wonderful work currently being done by Kanahooka Men's Shed and pay tribute to the late Mr Neil Preston. Mr Preston was a pillar of our community. He was universally well liked and dedicated himself to improving the lives of others in his local community. Mr Preston was Chief Executive Officer of Greenacres Disability Services for 16 years before leaving in 2011. After his retirement he became a driving force behind the establishment of Kanahooka Men's Shed. The shed became a space for retired men to meet, work together and share joys, knowledge, experiences, issues and problems. I was fortunate enough to be able to provide the men's shed with nearly \$4,000 in last year's Community Building Partnership grant program, which meant they are now able to purchase a metal working lathe for their workshop. I offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to Mr Neil Preston and every member of the Kanahooka Men's Shed for their lasting contribution to our community.

### TOM HARVEY AWARD FOR CITIZENSHIP RECIPIENT PAUL ELL

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:27):** I congratulate Mr Paul Ell of my electorate on being the recipient of the Australian Youth Trust Tom Harvey Award for Citizenship. The Tom Harvey Award for Citizenship is named after the late inaugural Chairman of the Australian Youth Trust and recognises the outstanding contribution of a young Australian citizen between the age of 15 and 30 years—and Paul certainly fits into this category. On Monday 12 March Mr Ell's many years of dedication and hard work in the local community was recognised at a Commonwealth Day luncheon held at Parliament House when he received this award from the Governor of New South Wales.

Paul's hard work and commitment to his community has been evidenced in many ways, especially through his role as an ambassador for the Smith Family, supporting the Learning for Life program and many other charitable efforts. Furthermore, Paul has worked to promote the power of education to overcome disadvantage and chronic intergenerational poverty. He was raised in public housing in East Nowra by his grandparents, yet in spite of it all has succeeded. Mr Ell is an extraordinary member in our community who is doing wonderful things. Paul is not just a deserving recipient of this award, he is a tremendous example of someone who is passionate about helping others. He is universally respected and regarded. I extend congratulations to him.

### SWANSEA CONFERENCE OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:29):** St Vincent de Paul is a fantastic community organisation doing great work in communities all around Australia and indeed the world. I am proud to say that in Swansea we recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Swansea Conference of St Vincent de Paul. About 100 people turned out to celebrate this incredible milestone and to recognise the hard work of Vinnies volunteers. The occasion was marked with a formal mass presided over by Bishop Bill Wright, followed by a supper afterwards. Throughout the mass, attendees heard readings from members of St Patrick's parish and also from children from St Patrick's Catholic Primary School who are members of St Patrick's Mini Vinnies. It is important to recognise these auspicious occasions because it reminds us of the important work that St Vincent de Paul volunteers do in our local communities. They are advocates for some of our most vulnerable, they provide assistance to those most in need and they dedicate themselves to combating social injustice in society. I thank the organisers of the celebration, especially Mary Ryan, the Swansea Conference President. I congratulate them on 50 years of compassion, advocacy and activism.

### SOUTH COAST DAIRY COOPERATIVE

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:30):** I congratulate South Coast Dairy on its phenomenal award wins at this year's Sydney Royal Cheese and Dairy Produce Competition. The South Coast company took home four gold medals for homogenised milk, non-homogenised milk and two of its low fat milk. The dairy also took home five silver medals for its homogenised milk, non-homogenised milk, two of its skim milk and its cream. Its cream again won a further bronze medal. That is an amazing total of 10 medals, which is fantastic when one considers that South Coast Dairy was up against the best dairy producers and products from across Australia. I congratulate South Coast Dairy staff, Chairman John Miller, Vice-Chairman Steve King and all the suppliers on these outstanding achievements. South Coast Dairy is an iconic, local dairy cooperative and regional employer and I commend the company for its wins that will raise the profile of not only the products on offer on the South Coast but also the whole of the region.

**Business interrupted.**

*Petitions***BANKSIA ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH UNIT****Discussion**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I extend a warm welcome to members of Tamworth Mental Health Support Group, Ms Narelle Langfield, Mr Donald Wyatt, Ms Diane Wyatt and Ms Bridget Maclean. I hope they behave themselves for the discussion.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:31):** Today I stand in the New South Wales Parliament representing the 13,080 people who signed a petition calling on the Government to build a better Banksia. Banksia is a mental health unit located on the grounds of Tamworth hospital in Tamworth. Joining me in the Parliament today are a number of people who have been instrumental in getting the 13,080 signatures. They are part of the Tamworth Mental Health Carers Support Group, headed by facilitator Diane Wyatt, her husband, Don, grand-daughter, Bridget Maclean, and tireless health advocate in many areas, Narelle Langfield. I welcome them to the Parliament. I sincerely thank them and their group for their advocacy, passion and dedication to their loved ones, the Tamworth community and the entire New England north-west area in fighting for better services and to build a better Banksia. I place on the *Hansard* record an excerpt from a letter given to me by facilitator Diane Wyatt. In part it states:

Banksia is a poor environment for healing, and not therapeutic for patients or staff. The building is old, dysfunctional, drab, dingy and depressing. Communal bathrooms and toilets are unpleasant, old with tiles falling off. The bedrooms are old and drab—no soft furnishings. There are shared bathrooms which is unacceptable when it comes to privacy and recovery. The patients' lounge areas are dingy, the staff areas and treatment room are small and impractical. I will read a letter I received from Roseanne Chick, who, along with a myriad of others, contacted my office and shared her story:

Recently I signed the petition calling for the redevelopment of Banksia Mental Health Unit in Tamworth. It's prompted me to reflect on the unit and the general state of mental health services to our city and the north-west. These are widely deemed to be unsatisfactory, as the petition clearly indicates, with the abovementioned facility needing to be upgraded as a priority to keep pace with the very real community need and expectation. Mental illness is no rarity. Indeed, each year in Australia one in five people are afflicted in some way, with 45 per cent of the population experiencing some form of mental health at some time in their life. In rural areas self-harm and suicide tend to be more prevalent than in the cities. It is well known too that Tamworth has a particular problem with ice addiction and its consequences. However, there are fewer resources here than in the cities to address these issues. In light of this, the 25-bed Banksia unit in Tamworth to serve the New England north-west, a region of almost 200,000 people, is currently an example of gross under-resourcing and neglect. Built in 1993 the facility, though not ancient, is not adequate but also outdated. Those admitting themselves or loved ones to psychiatric facilities such as Banksia need to do so with the confidence that care is of the highest quality and that patients will be safe from themselves and others.

Today the Tamworth Mental Health Carers Support Group met with the Minister for Mental Health, Tanya Davies. Unfortunately, due to a prior commitment the Minister is not with us in the Chamber, but she gave us a commitment to continue to work with us to build a better Banksia. We have the very best staff. We need to care for our loved ones. We need a facility that matches the love, care and attention that staff give. It is my commitment to work with you and our community to ensure that we follow through. Banksia has been listed for an upgrade. We must continue to fight and work hard. I thank the Minister for Mental Health, Tanya Davies, for her support. The 13,080 signatures clearly show that the community is right behind this project. I am determined to see this mental health facility upgraded. I am proud of the very best staff and I want to see a facility to match. I thank you for your care, dedication and support in building a better Banksia.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:36):** I make a brief contribution to discussion on the petition presented to the House by the member for Tamworth. I acknowledge the advocates and network present in the gallery today and welcome you to the New South Wales Parliament. You have come a long way and done the hard work to gather 13,000 signatures on a petition in a regional community. That is an enormous effort on your part, which goes to show how deeply you feel about mental health issues and the lack of services, particularly in rural and regional communities, for families and people suffering from mental health issues.

I represent the beautiful area of Port Stephens. This is a common and frequent discussion in my community. I come to this place having had experience as a health lawyer, and representing many families who suffered tragedy while in an acute setting in a mental health facility. Many of our acute settings—I assume that is what the Banksia Mental Health Unit is that you have gathered so many signatures on a petition to have it improved and upgraded—are far from where they need to be. Despite the best efforts of amazing staff, these services frequently do not have the resources, facilities or necessarily an understanding of the needs of people suffering from mental illness and their families.

I have seen and experienced that the families also need support. Unless families get that support, it is difficult for anyone who goes into an acute setting, particularly a substandard acute setting. People who are suffering from mental illness who require admission to an acute setting can experience an adverse outcome in that setting, which is the last thing that anyone with a mental illness should be experiencing. This sector requires an

enormous amount of change in terms of prevention to avoid people having to go into an acute facility in the first place. In my view, that is what is missing in all of our communities in rural and regional New South Wales. We need services that people can walk into to seek support, whether they are people who have mental health issues or their families. I acknowledge your significant efforts, and I thank you for your passion and commitment to not only obvious issues but also to expand that effort to try to get improved services for your entire community. That is a beautiful thing to have done and I thank you so much for your efforts.

On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, we will do what we can to assist you in your efforts to ensure the Banksia Mental Health Unit has the upgrade it needs so that your community has the support it needs in the acute setting. We will work hard to establish more preventative services, because they are critical in this equation. I understand that today the Minister made some commitments to you, which is heartening to hear. Those of us on this side of the House would like to help you in any way we can to ensure that the Minister keeps her commitment to you and your community. I am sure the member for Tamworth will also do all he can to assist you in your quest. Good luck!

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (16:41):** I commend the member for Tamworth for his work with the fantastic advocates of Tamworth. I grew up in Tamworth and have recently moved back to the area after 35 years. I could not agree more with the stance of the community. Between 2011 and 2014, I was the first mental health Minister in this country. I have maintained a commitment to de-institutionalising mental health and working on supporting people to live well in their community. I commend you for the work you are undertaking and I commit to helping you get to where you need to be. Banksia Mental Health Unit has probably had its day, to say the least. I have been there on a number of occasions, once years ago as the Minister, but also to visit people whom I have known and grown up with who have had to use the facility. To say that it is a therapeutic centre is far off the mark. It is a harsh place, as are some of our more acute facilities around the State.

There are reasons that the development of Banksia Mental Health Unit is important. First, the unit is a regional facility. During the time I lived in Moree—where I spent most of my life—we relied heavily on Tamworth services. The services in Armidale were lacking, but that has improved so that people can be admitted involuntarily for at least a 72-hour period. During my time as Minister, we also upped the number of ambulance services across the North West and the North Coast. Patients were transferred in police cars or in some cases there was no transport at all. That situation has improved markedly. It is important that Tamworth maintain its strength as a regional centre. The push at the time, which started in 2011 or 2012, was to look at a new type of care facility, which is what I want the Tamworth community to think about.

Acute centres are important, but people experiencing a mental health breakdown generally do not like to report or self-present to emergency departments because there is stigma attached to that. The 72-hour step up/step down facilities that were started in Broken Hill and Dubbo are co-located on the hospital site but are away from the hospital. People can self-admit, and families have more say in the admission of loved ones, family and friends. There is also the ability to incorporate an acute involuntary facility, but I urge the community—and I will work with the member for Tamworth on this—to seek a broad range of views and advice. We need a lot of these facilities based in our community, but they do not necessarily have to be on the hospital site. However, we also need acute facilities that are based near emergency departments. It is a clinical mix. I thank the petitioners for the work they are doing; I am happy to keep working with them. As the member for Tamworth said, "From Tamworth, to build a better Banksia."

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I acknowledge the people in the public gallery who have come so far to hear this debate. I congratulate them on their great work to achieve 13,080 signatures. I wish them the best of luck.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **GREAT LAKES RELAY FOR LIFE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:45):** I advise the Parliament and my community that the Great Lakes Relay for Life, which raises funds for the Cancer Council NSW, will be held on Saturday 24 March and Sunday 25 March. A tremendous amount of work has been done and I encourage people to get involved to help raise money for this much-needed cause. I congratulate the hardworking committee, led by chair Terry McDermott. I congratulate also Club Forster, which is the main sponsor, in particular president Claire Fletcher and chief executive Officer Peter Clarke. I look forward to attending at 10.00 a.m. for the start of the relay, which will run for two days.

### **GROW URBAN SHADE TREES CONSERVATION GROUP**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:45):** Tonight I recognise Grow Urban Shade Trees [GUST], an environmentally conscious subgroup of the Umina Community Group, for its amazing contributions to the Woy Woy peninsula. We are all too aware of the continuing loss of tree life in and around our suburbs. GUST is fighting back by initiating street planting projects on the Woy Woy peninsula, which will provide an array of positive effects for our local communities. GUST steered a National Tree Day project in conjunction with Umina Beach Public School students in order to plant native trees along Brisbane Avenue in Umina Beach. This project was a huge success and a great way to bring the community together to beautify a suburban landscape while also teaching our next generations the importance of the environment. In 2018, GUST is aiming to beautify another street, and I have no doubt this project will be just as successful. I congratulate the group founders, Melissa Chandler, Debbie Sunartha, Jen Wilder, and all the other members of this great local group. I hope they continue to effect positive change in our community.

### **NOEL JACKLING KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF ORANGE-NASSAU**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:46):** Noel Jackling, a former resident of Albury, returned to Albury to be honoured for his work on promoting the Uiver story. In 1934 the Uiver, a Dutch DC2 passenger airliner, was entered into the London to Melbourne air race by its owners, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. The aircraft left England on 20 October and arrived in Charleville, Queensland, before making its final flight to Melbourne. Contact with the aircraft was lost due to an electrical storm and it ended up making an emergency landing at the Albury racecourse. Noel has long dedicated his time to promoting the story of the Uiver. On 6 March he received the Order of Orange-Nassau from the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Her Excellency Erica Schouten, who visited Albury for the decoration ceremony.

### **FAIRFIELD CITY AUSTRALIA DAY COMMUNITY AWARDS AND CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:47):** On Thursday 25 January 2018 I had the great pleasure of attending the Fairfield City Australia Day Community Awards and Citizenship Ceremony at the council chambers in Wakeley. This annual ceremony is always fantastic, as we have the opportunity as a community to come together and acknowledge individuals who have made our city a better place for us all. I acknowledge all the 2018 nominees for their tremendous contributions to our local and wider community, and thank them for their ongoing efforts towards making Fairfield city a tremendous place to live.

I congratulate the 2018 Sports Achiever of the year, Simaima Taufa, a gifted young rugby league player who has been a part of the winning Australia Jillaroos side. Fairfield City's Volunteer of the Year Krystyna Whittaker has been volunteering for more than 30 years in Fairfield and is a dedicated member of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Our Young Citizen of the Year, Rowena Tran, is a passionate advocate for our local multicultural community and young people in our area. Rowena's involvement spans far and wide and includes local committees, youth mentoring, and youth advocacy. Last but not least, our Citizen of the Year, Mr Desmond Ettinghausen, has dedicated the past 46 years to Cabra Vale Diggers and the Fairfield Athletics Centre, promoting and nurturing the growth of athletics in our region. I congratulate all the award recipients.

### **POET CELIA KERSHAW**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:48):** I recognise North Shore resident Celia Kershaw for winning first prize in the 2018 Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Competition. Celia competed against 33 other poets from across New South Wales and interstate at the festival at the Orange Civic Theatre. Celia's five-minute poem was inspired by her experiences last year with her neighbour when they found a turtle and its eggs one morning on a beach on the North Shore. Celia and her neighbour watched over the nest at the request of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, before eventually releasing the hatchlings out to sea directly into the East Australian Current, an event that Celia describes as "one of the most beautiful experiences of my life." Celia successfully conveyed the emotion of her experiences in her poem, which took nearly a year to perfect. Congratulations, Celia, on your literary efforts, and best wishes for your future writing endeavours.

### **SEWA AUSTRALIA SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:49):** I recognise SEWA Australia, an organisation that has been very active in south-western Sydney. It is based on ancient Indian principles of selfless service, perceiving the whole world as a family, and its membership is largely drawn from Sydney's Indian community. It was founded about 20 years ago and has spread to many parts of Australia and continues to expand. Among many of its activities, it conducts family support services and new migrant services. I was able to see two of these services in action on Saturday 24 February at Liverpool Library. On that day, the SEWA Senior Group was holding its regular gathering. Also, a group of newly arrived Indians were listening to explanations of applying for jobs and other useful information. I should acknowledge the role of Rajesh Venkataramaiah and Vijay Srinivasa and all the other

volunteers who keep delivering SEWA's family support services. SEWA activities also extend to regular clean-ups, with four sites cleaned on Sunday 4 March. In particular, I note the site I attended at Ardennes Avenue, Edmondson Park. This is a fine example of multicultural Sydney in action.

#### **NEUTRAL BAY CLUB COMMUNITY HUB**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:50):** Neutral Bay Club is a North Shore institution that has been operating since 1882 and is soon to hold its annual general meeting. The Neutral Bay Club features sporting facilities for tennis and bowls enthusiasts and, most importantly, serves as a community hub for people in Neutral Bay and surrounding suburbs. In addition to serving its sporting members, the club embraces its ability to provide a unique and appealing environment for young families and children of all ages. I particularly thank club president Mr Greg Scott for the leadership he provides to the club, and I congratulate him on his uncontested re-election. I also thank directors Jessica Keen, Brian Towle, Adam Young, James Sobol, Ian Rae and Chris Pedersen. The club plays an incredibly important role in our lives, serving the community and becoming an intrinsic part of the local social fabric. Many of its events and roles are reliant on the generous support of members, and I along with the entire community am grateful for the time they give.

#### **TEA GARDENS HAWKS NEST MOTORFEST**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:51):** Last weekend, as I walked over the rise at Hawks Nest oval, I saw a shimmering expanse of veteran, vintage, classic and unique cars. It was the sixteenth Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Motorfest, and it was spectacular. From humble beginnings with 85 competitors 16 years ago, the event is now a shining success, this year seeing 400 vehicles from 55 motoring clubs competing and more than 2,200 visitors. This event highlights that Tea Gardens is not only a beautiful area but also a beautiful community. All funds raised at Motorfest are donated to other local community groups: the local Rural Fire Service, Hawks Nest Surf Life Saving Club and the local health clinic bus. Over the 16 years that the event has been running, the motor club has returned more than \$110,000 to the community. I congratulate the Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Motor Club, its 48 members, and particularly president Juergen Seil, on yet another enormously successful Motorfest and thank them for raising a further \$9,000 this year, which will go towards supporting other local groups that also support the community. I am privileged to represent this strong, generous and caring community.

#### **CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANT**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:52):** Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School in my electorate is an excellent co-educational environment where children can learn and grow. I will officially open the school's new outdoor play space on Wednesday 21 March in the presence of the wonderful school community and Ku-ring-gai Mayor Jennifer Anderson. A competition is being held amongst students to name the space, and the name will be revealed at the opening event. The outdoor play space was granted \$150,000 to partially fund the project through the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership scheme. Congratulations to all involved in the construction of this new outdoor play space. I especially acknowledge the outstanding contribution and longstanding leadership of principal Barbara Yee, as the school continues to provide a dynamic learning environment based on sound values. I am sure that Corpus Christi students will continue to benefit from the outdoor space and otherwise thrive for many years to come.

#### **HUNTER MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:53):** This week the Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI] is celebrating 20 years of life-saving research. The HMRI continually pioneers cutting-edge medical research to the lasting benefit of the people of the Hunter and beyond. The HMRI combines the research prowess of the University of Newcastle with the treatment capabilities of Hunter New England Health, enhancing the integration of research and clinical services. The institute is particularly close to my heart, as I attended the official opening of the New Lambton Heights premises as one of my first formal events as the Mayor of Lake Macquarie in 2012. I recognise the hard work of the current member for Strathfield, Jodie McKay, who was Minister for the Hunter at the time. The HMRI can be rightly proud of the processes it has put in place to establish a world-class medical research institute in a regional area, advancing the Hunter's emerging identity as an intellectual centre of excellence on the international stage.

#### **WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR NARELLE POTTS**

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (16:54):** I congratulate 2018 Wagga Wagga Local Woman of the Year Narelle Potts. For the past 11 years Narelle has been at the forefront of Wagga Takes2, raising more than \$3 million for reinvestment in the community. She is a committee member of the Cancer Council Relay For Life and the only female life member of the Riverina Football Umpires Association. Narelle has made an



enormous contribution to our community through her fundraising. She is an inspiration and has spent more than a decade doing vital community work, supported by her husband, Duncan, and her children. It was a delight to present Narelle with her award in Wagga Wagga. I thank her for the work she has done, and will continue to do, to support people with cancer and raise funds through Wagga Takes2.

#### **ASSOCIATION OF IRAQI ACADEMICS HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVERS**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:55):** On Sunday 4 February I had the great honour of attending a celebration with the Association of Iraqi Academics in Australia and New Zealand to honour the achievers among Higher School Certificate students and university graduates from 2017. The celebratory evening is an annual event that aims to honour students and graduates from all Iraqi sects and backgrounds who have excelled academically each and every year. This year the evening was held at Mounties Club and was very well attended, with special guests ranging from Australian and Iraqi officials and academics to our local community leaders. I commend each award recipient for a fantastic academic year. I also commend the Association of Iraqi Academics and its organising committee for yet another incredibly successful awards evening.

#### **OXLEY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENT MAURICE FULLER**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (16:56):** This year as part of Australia Day celebrations Maurice Fuller was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his work within the Macleay community. His commitments make for a long list. He is a member of Kempsey-Crescent Head Surf Life Saving Club, President of the Rotary Club of Kempsey West and President of the Kempsey Triathlon Club, and he has been chairman on the New South Wales panel for Off Road Racing for 10 years. In 1965 Maurice co-founded the Macleay District Motor Cycle Club, served in the roles of president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary and is now a life member. He is also the current assistant secretary, public officer and race director of the Kempsey Macleay Off Road Club. In 2007 Maurice was inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame and was the recipient of the Australia Day Award in 2014. Maurice takes great pride in the valley where he was born. I congratulate him on his outstanding achievements and magnificent work.

#### **COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION ADVOCATE MARGARET ROBERTS, OAM**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:57):** I recognise Margaret Roberts, OAM, who is a local leader and advocate for women's issues in the Port Macquarie community. Margaret has been involved with the Country Women's Association [CWA] for 50 years and was recently recognised for that outstanding achievement when she was awarded a 50-year medallion at the Mid North Coast Group Council on 6 March. Margaret is a former State president and has been an office bearer at branch and State level within the CWA over the years. Margaret credits the CWA with giving her many opportunities for personal growth in fields as varied as public speaking, knowledge of agricultural and environmental issues, cooking, arts and handicrafts. Margaret has also been vocal in encouraging women of all ages to get involved in and contribute to their local communities through the CWA. I congratulate Margaret on her 50 years of involvement with the CWA and thank her for her dedication and service to the local community.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **DISABILITY SOUTH WEST LIMITED SUPPORT GROUP**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:58):** I address the House today about a serious issue confronting Disability South West Ltd. Disability South West is a disability services and support organisation that has its main office located within my electorate at Green Valley. It is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation and its vision is connecting and empowering people with a disability and their carers in the community. I have known the organisation for a considerable period and have attended its annual general meetings for about a decade. It has largely been successful in the transition that has occurred consequent upon the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. Unlike some other organisations around Liverpool in south-west Sydney, it has not discontinued its services or been forced to merge with other organisations. In fact, it has increased its services since the NDIS was introduced.

However, it faces challenges concerning accommodation. Having briefly raised the issue with me at the organisation's most recent annual general meeting, chief executive officer Sean Langshaw wrote to me on 15 February. I subsequently met with Sean and operations manager Brett Watson. For more than a quarter of a century—in fact, for 27 years—Disability South West has leased two properties from the New South Wales Government through what was Housing NSW and is now the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, part of the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services. The two properties—Nos 3 and 5 Laycock Place—are in the Bonnyrigg redevelopment area. In his letter to me on behalf of Disability South West, Sean Langshaw said:

On 21 September, 2017, I had a meeting with representatives from the NSW Land and Housing Corporation and Newleaf Communities, where I was formally told of the dates when the two buildings would be bulldozed and subsequently Disability South West Ltd would be evicted from the two buildings. The date for the eviction will be early or February 2019.

The fact that Disability South West is raising this issue almost 12 months before the eviction is very much to its credit. It is not coming to elected representatives at the last minute and I am not forced to raise the issue in an atmosphere of crisis. Certainly, though, the preparations for relocation will take some time. At present, Disability South West provides centre-based support, short-term accommodation and respite, and social activities to more than 100 people with a disability. Since the introduction of the NDIS in July 2016, there has been an increase in clients' needs at Disability South West, and thus the use of its centre has increased on every day of the week. The problem is that the estate in which the two houses are located is being redeveloped and the organisation is not being offered any alternative premises. In his letter, Sean Langshaw continued:

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation representatives confirmed that New South Wales Government policy limits and restricts community organisations from having access to any of the newly built houses in the Bonnyrigg redevelopment estate as a social tenant, effectively removing Disability South West Ltd from the community it has worked so hard and so long to support. In the meeting with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, Disability South West Ltd asked if any support could be given by the Department of Family and Community Services to support Disability South West to relocate to another community housing building that would replicate our current usage. Naturally, the response was far from helpful or supportive and no solid support was given to us at that time.

Obviously, this is a serious situation. The letter continues:

This is where Disability South West Ltd is seeking your assistance and guidance. As we stand at the moment, in February 2019 both number 5 and number 3 Laycock Place in Bonnyrigg New South Wales will be demolished and we will be evicted. Our clients and families will be affected in a negative way. Naturally, we wish to avoid this negative impact on our clients and ask for your help to lobby for two replacement buildings in south-west Sydney through NSW Land and Housing Corporation. Another alternative would be to secure from the New South Wales Government a building or space that is not currently being used or that will soon become vacant, like the Liverpool or Miller ambulance stations, which have been vacant after moving those two stations to the new mega ambulance centre on Hoxton Park Road. As you know, Disability South West Ltd has a high level of connection with the local community and we are facing some real challenges with the decision of the New South Wales Government to demolish Laycock Place, Bonnyrigg.

I ask the relevant Ministers to turn their minds to this issue. Given that a number of other organisations have ceased offering disability services in south-west Sydney since the introduction of the NDIS, it is especially important to support Disability South West. The organisation delivers highly important services to people with a disability in this area. I would be delighted if we could find a satisfactory resolution to this problem.

#### MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE HOSPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:02):** Due to the growing and ageing population in Myall Lakes and in Great Lakes in particular, I call on the Government to fund a public hospital in the Forster-Tuncurry area. The Great Lakes region has a permanent population of 38,000—with 20,000 in Forster-Tuncurry alone—which increases to 100,000 during peak holiday periods. With more than 600,000 visitors per year and an annual population growth of 3 per cent, the local community is demanding such a facility. In Taree, stage one of the Manning Hospital Redevelopment is underway, with a \$20 million commitment.

I am fighting for funding for the planning and build of stages two and three of that redevelopment, but the Forster-Tuncurry area is equally important. Some parts of that area are up to an hour's drive from Taree. A local hospital is needed for people like Karen Ridley of Smiths Lake, who, over the Christmas holidays, had her niece Renee and four children visiting from Sydney. During the stay Renee's six-month-old son fell ill. Renee tried to find an after-hours doctor but there was none. She had no other choice but to travel to the Manning Base Hospital, which is a 62-kilometre road trip taking more than an hour.

As a government, we are building and refurbishing hospitals all over New South Wales. We spent \$7 billion in the last term and will spend \$7.7 billion over the next four years. Byron Bay has a population of 5,521—a quarter of that of Forster-Tuncurry—and it is receiving a new hospital at a cost of \$88 million on a greenfield site only a 40-minute drive from Lismore Base Hospital. The hospital at Kempsey—a region with a population of 28,885—has received an \$82 million upgrade and it is a 46-minute drive from Port Macquarie. Macksville and Nambucca, with populations of 2,500 and 6,100, are to receive a new, \$73 million hospital—a greenfield development—and the region is 76 minutes from Port Macquarie, 37 minutes from Kempsey and 44 minutes from Coffs Harbour. I could give other examples.

I call on the Government—I know the Minister for Health and Hunter New England Health will be right behind this, as will Infrastructure NSW—to fund this project because it is needed desperately. Local populations are growing and ageing and their needs are changing. What was not needed 10 years ago is needed in 2018. We need funding to undertake project planning and to look at building the necessary infrastructure during the next term of government. I encourage the Minister for Health, Hunter New England Health and Infrastructure NSW to

get behind this project. I also encourage the people of the Great Lakes area to get behind it. There is an online petition for people to sign. Not only do my constituents have to travel 35 or 40 minutes from Forster—up to an hour from some of the outer areas—to get to the Manning Base Hospital, but also The Lakes Way from the Failford turn-off to the Pacific Highway is a goat track. Ambulances have had accidents on that road. There have been many major accidents and fatalities. I had an accident on that road.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** You need to fix the road.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** It is not just about the hospital; the roads that link those two important areas are not up to scratch. I encourage everyone to get behind this important project. It is fantastic that stage one of the Manning Base Hospital redevelopment is under construction and should open in October or November this year. I am fighting to get planning money now for stages two and three of the hospital, which serves 90,000 people. In 2015 Parkes, which has a population of 11,258, received a \$73 million new hospital. It is a smaller community. Forbes, which is 25 minutes away and has a population of 7,500, received a \$41 million refurbishment to its hospital. It is not a case of these hospitals being too close to the Manning Base Hospital; one hour's drive is not too close. Just because we have one local major hospital—the Manning Base Hospital—it does not mean we cannot have another in this rapidly growing area.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:07):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his contribution. He is a champion of his local community, with his petition to fund stage two of the Manning Base Hospital. He already has runs on the board with the stage one redevelopment of that hospital. Health infrastructure across the State has seen a massive boost, not just in rural and regional New South Wales but also in metropolitan Sydney. Hospitals at Mount Druitt and Blacktown have benefited. St George Hospital—my local hospital—has received a major redevelopment, with a new emergency department delivered in the first term and more than \$300 million spent on stage two in the second term. There is also money in the budget from last year to commence planning for stage three and beyond. When it comes to health and health infrastructure, this is a government that gets it right.

#### **TRIBUTE TO SENIOR CONSTABLE DOUG NYHOLM AND SERGEANT SEAN PHILLIPS PRINCES HIGHWAY UPGRADE**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:08):** As a former Ulladulla High School teacher for 27 years and resident of the South Coast for more than four decades, I am immensely proud of my community and most of the people in it. I say "most of the people" because I have taught so many of them. Before my election to this place, I had the privilege of teaching many students who over the years I have witnessed grow into incredible men and women who are achieving wonderful things. Many of my former students still call the South Coast home, have chosen to raise their families in our community, and have gone on to achieve so much in their careers.

I draw the attention of the House to the achievements of two of my former students: Senior Constable Doug Nyholm and Sergeant Sean Phillips of the Ulladulla Police, South Coast District. In 2014, Senior Constable Doug Nyholm received a certificate of commendation for the role he played in attempting to prevent a murder-suicide in the Riverina. This was just one of a long line of commendations for Doug, who has been recognised on numerous occasions for acts of bravery, including the role he played in the Thredbo landslide incident, bushfire management and his brave acts that prevented two young boys from taking their own lives. For more than 25 years, Senior Constable Nyholm has served his community with distinction, and he is a role model for so many in the southern Shoalhaven.

Following 22 years of general duty service across the State, including at Lake Illawarra, Cootamundra, Stockinbingal and Batlow, Sergeant Sean Phillips returned to the Goulburn Police Academy in 2009 to train police cadets. This leadership and mentoring continues today in his current role within the South Coast District based in Ulladulla. Doug and Sean are only two examples of outstanding individuals who give so much back to the South Coast. They are admired and highly respected by every member of the community. I was particularly proud of both Doug and Sean for their efforts in arranging an unprecedented meeting of emergency services personnel last Sunday. While the group gathers together regularly—generally at Christmas time—Doug and Sean recognised the need to hold this special event following recent carnage on the Princes Highway.

Members of the NSW Police Force, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue, NSW Fire and Rescue, Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, and the Milton Ulladulla Drivers Education Group came together in solidarity and support of each other after many of them bore witness to almost unprecedented tragedy and trauma on the Princes Highway. I have spoken many times in this place about the deaths on the Princes Highway that have rocked my community to its core in recent months. I again thank most sincerely the member for Wollongong and the member for Kiama for joining me yesterday in a bipartisan effort to stress to all levels of government the need for further upgrades of the Princes Highway. It is time for all levels of government

to stop the funding wars and bickering, and to come together to save lives. For the sake of the families of those who have lost loved ones and the emergency services personnel who live with tragic images of death, it is time to get this done.

This Government has worked hard to make the Princes Highway safer for all motorists. I pay tribute to former roads Minister the Hon. Duncan Gay. Duncan was a strong advocate for the Princes Highway, and without him we would not have been able to achieve many of the upgrades the South Coast community has seen, including major upgrades such as the \$58 million Burrill Lake Bridge replacement, the \$21 million Termeil Creek upgrade, and the \$3 million Little Forest Road intersection upgrade. This Government has also delivered safety improvements, including at Corks Lane, Milton, and at Kendall's Cutting, and \$350,000 of works that will see wire road barriers installed at Bendalong before Easter. However, there is still much more to be done.

I thank Premier Gladys Berejiklian and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Melinda Pavey, for their recent commitment to improve safety on the Princes Highway. Both the Premier and the Minister are as committed as I am to delivering a safer road for the South Coast community. I will continue to work with the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, local government and the community to deliver on my ultimate goal of a duplicated Princes Highway south of Nowra to the Victorian border. I again commend Senior Constable Doug Nyholm and Sergeant Sean Phillips for their outstanding leadership. I also acknowledge stalwarts of the Ulladulla community Rod Austen, Ivan Johnson, and Bill McInnes, who attended the meeting last Sunday, and the late John Patterson. I have always stood, and will always stand, with them to get this done.

### **RANDWICK GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (17:13):** On Thursday 15 February Randwick Girls' High School celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a special school assembly. The assembly was attended by current students and their parents and past students and teachers, including the former principal—and friend of mine—Heather Emerson. School captain Ella Scott and vice-captain Alannah Bates ably chaired the assembly. Principal Ms Lucy Andre spoke about the school's history of achievement, and in particular its strong 2017 Higher School Certificate results. Former school captain Eva Tarry and former vice-captain Helen Loutovsky reflected on their experience at Randwick Girls' High School in the 1960s.

Highlights included stories of the strict requirement to wear their full school uniform, including hats, to and from school—and the fear of being spotted in an incomplete uniform and being reported to the school principal. Past and present uniforms were also compared, with a fashion parade conducted by members of the Student Representative Council. I commend the students for the respect they have for the current standard of the school's uniform. I have noticed this each time I visit the school. The school band also kept the mood light with musical interludes throughout the assembly and the parade. The Randwick Girls' High School class of 1967 was the first group of young ladies in New South Wales to complete a full high school education. These graduates went on to pursue successful careers in dentistry, psychology and banking at a time when the expectation was that a woman would generally become either a nurse or a typist until they had children, when they were expected to cease working altogether.

Given that International Women's Day was celebrated on Thursday 8 March, this assembly was particularly significant. So I was very pleased to join the Minister for Women, the Hon. Tanya Davies, MP, at Randwick Girls' High School on Monday 5 March to commemorate International Women's Day. I note that Minister Davies is in the Chamber. The Minister addressed girls from year 11 and year 12, and she convened a panel discussion focusing on women's experiences in leadership. The Minister also launched a report entitled "Then and Now: A Celebration of Women's Achievements in New South Wales". It is pertinent to consider the figures contained in this report when considering the uphill battle that the Randwick Girls' High School graduates faced in 1967.

In 1967 there were no female members in this House, although three had served previously. There were only six female members of the Legislative Council. Contrast that with today: We have 27 female members of the Legislative Assembly and 10 female members of the Legislative Council. We have a fantastic female as our Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, and a fantastic female Speaker—the first female Speaker in the history of New South Wales—and member for South Coast, Ms Shelley Hancock. The achievements of women through hard work and determination cannot be understated. There is still much further to go.

I encourage all members to reflect on what they can do to support women in their communities, not only on International Women's Day. It is my hope that current students at Randwick Girls' High School will be able to look up to female leaders like Premier Berejiklian, Minister Davies, Speaker Shelley Hancock and their many notable alumni and know that the sky is the limit. Indeed, there is nothing they cannot achieve if they put their minds to it. I commend the work of the dedicated staff, both present and past, the parent community who have

supported the school, and the wonderful young ladies who are its reason for being. Congratulations to them all on 50 fabulous years.

### STATE ECONOMY

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:17):** I bring to the attention of the House a matter of great concern to my constituents in Rockdale—namely, the economic management of our State and country. Those opposite, including the Treasurer, try to mock or degrade the legacy of Wayne Swan. He was one of only two Australian treasurers to have been awarded Finance Minister of the Year by Euromoney—the other was Paul Keating. Unfortunately, for all the big talk from those on the Government benches on their money management skills, they do not hold a candle to the likes of Wayne Swan. He steered this country away from economic disaster during the global financial crisis, making us perhaps the only major developed nation in the world not to suffer through that period.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! The member for Oatley will cease interjecting.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I am happy to inform the House that there is hope yet for this Government, because behind all the neoliberal bluff and bluster of our Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet, beats the bleeding heart of a Keynesian ideologue. This is the only thing underpinning this Government's attempts to match Labor's unemployment figures from 2011.

**Mr Greg Aplin:** What has this got to do with your community and your constituency?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** My constituents are extremely concerned about these matters—of course it has a lot to do with my constituents.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order: I have not heard the word "Rockdale" more than once, and that was when the Temporary Speaker gave the call to the member for Rockdale.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I have heard the member mention Rockdale, but I remind the member that a private member's statement should focus on issues pertinent to a member's electorate.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** As I said earlier, the people of Rockdale are extremely concerned about the way this Government is squandering funds. In Keynes' general theory he wrote about the Government employing people to perform pointless activities rather than allow unemployment, which begins to explain a lot about the justification for many of this State Government's major projects. What better way to stimulate the economy than to build roads to nowhere? Perhaps the Government will not allow public scrutiny of the WestConnex because it is underpinned by socialist employment policy. Treasurer Perrottet might not want to admit this, but he is in the midst of a classic Keynesian spending frenzy. But I have to give credit where credit is due. The rebranding exercise of "asset recycling" is an absolute winner. It is a great way to describe selling off the productive assets of the State and blowing the cash on wasteful projects.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** On infrastructure.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes—on stadiums. While he may like to describe himself as a free market champion when he is in the House, out there on the streets he is spending money like a drunken sailor. He is so infatuated with stimulation that he is running out of ideas on how to spend taxpayers' money. Picture the light bulb moment when Treasurer Perrottet rang the Premier late one night with the brilliant idea of knocking down the ANZ and Allianz stadiums to "recycle" \$2.5 billion into their reconstruction. Forget about Keynes—Karl Marx would be thrilled to see the Government knocking down 20-year-old stadiums just to rebuild them. This is a government that has stimulus coming out of its ears. Those opposite have stadium stimulus. They have roads stimulus. They even recently spent \$600,000 on self-help books—stimulus for the printing industry. This Government obviously needs all the help it can get.

The Premier and Treasurer love to stand up and take credit for employment results and job numbers that are on par with 2011 numbers that the Labor Government was achieving after the global financial crisis. Members of my Rockdale community have expressed this to me on many occasions and I need to get it across to the House—not to mention the huge problem of underemployment which lurks within the current unemployment figures. The people of Rockdale know the Government has inflated surpluses over the forward estimates by some \$5 billion—members opposite need to know this—through dodgy accounting with the Transport Asset Holding Entity and a tricky ledger entry masquerading as Government policy—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** You wouldn't know how to read the things.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Of course I do, because that is what I did for 30 years. When they got caught out they doubled down—*[Time expired.]*

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:23):** The real risk for New South Wales is the member for Cessnock as finance Minister. The real risk for New South Wales is the member for Keira as Treasurer. That is the real risk for New South Wales. We on this side of the House are spending up to \$70 billion over five years on infrastructure—new hospitals and upgrades to roads, hospitals and schools. Members on that side of the House oppose every new school, new road and new hospital. We on this side of the House are getting on with the job of upgrading and fixing the mess that Labor left us.

**Mr Daryl Maguire:** Point of order: First, there is a convention in this place that members deliver private members' statements relating to issues raised by their constituents. Secondly, there is a convention that decorum and order is upheld when private members' statements are presented to this House. When a Parliamentary Secretary or a Minister replies to a private member's statement, it is disorderly for that member to leave the Chamber during the reply. It is also disorderly to walk around the Chamber while another member is addressing the House. I ask you to draw the attention of members to the rules and conventions of this House that have existed ever since this Parliament was formed. The presentation we just witnessed was out of order and I ask you to direct members to abide by the standing orders and conventions of this place and to treat this place with the dignity it deserves.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** To the point of order: I concur with the good member for Wagga Wagga in relation to the presentation just given by the Parliamentary Secretary. He unnecessarily attacked people who had not made any comment during the giving of the private member's statement or been referred to at any stage during that statement. He took the opportunity to make an unfair attack on people who were not involved in the process at all. The manner in which a Parliamentary Secretary responds to a private member's statement is part of the decorum, the tradition and the standing orders of this House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I concur with the member for Wagga Wagga. What I saw a few minutes ago in this place was nothing short of disgraceful. There is a decorum that needs to be upheld in this Chamber. We have seen an appalling lack of that this week and I will have no hesitation in sitting members down should it continue. Under Standing Order 52, members will be heard in silence and any breach of that will result in members being sat down or removed from this Chamber for the rest of the afternoon. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing that to my attention.

#### ALBURY WODONGA YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARDS

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (17:26):** Australian Olympian Britteny Cox, who was most recently seen competing in the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea, headed into competition as reigning world champion in the moguls. In a tense contest she performed magnificently, coming away with a fifth placing in the final. This was her third Winter Olympics. It is fair to say that Britt Cox has become an inspiration and a role model. She is also an example of a world champion who lived and attended school in regional Australia. Albury has a strong connection and we certainly think of her as a local.

There can be many steps on the way to this kind of international success and recognition. Perhaps there are a couple of extra steps for people who come from regional Australia. Doors open and doors close; a piece of encouragement can instil confidence as a sporting career takes shape. In 2010, Britteny Cox was the recipient of the Albury Wodonga Young Achiever Award, and it is that awards program I draw attention to today. The Young Achiever Awards is the premier sports award program operating in Albury Wodonga and along the border. It is run by Sport Albury Wodonga, a community-based volunteer organisation, which is also custodian of the border's sports hall of fame, where important sports memorabilia is retained.

Open to local sportspeople aged 16 to 21, past winners include other Olympians from the border. All were recognised for their exceptional talent and attitude from an early age. Up to 12 nominations are presented for consideration in the awards process. The judging panel reviews the previous 12 months of sports activity and achievements for each of the nominated individuals, and the winner receives a \$1,000 cheque and a trophy. All finalists receive a \$200 cheque and a gift from local business Norske Skog, along with a term's membership of the North East and Border Academy of Sport. A gala presentation ceremony is held at the Commercial Club Albury, which is another sponsor.

An important part of the process is that the nominated sportspeople have their stories covered by sponsor the *Border Mail* in its pages. This helps promote the young achievers and takes them to a wider audience. Eventually this can assist in establishing a professional career, attracting the attention of potential agents, sponsors, teams and trainers. But for all nominees there is an opportunity for their home community to provide recognition of their hard work and success, and encouragement to continue on their journey in the tough world of competitive sport. The original concept for the awards came about through the successful Albury Wodonga Festival of Sport, with the first award given out in 1995. The following year the awards were renamed to the current title. Over the years I can see the diverse range of sports and backgrounds represented in the nominations. Past winners of the

award include many who went on to international success: Joshua Briant and Michale Briant, brother and sister, both became international water ski champions in 2014 and 2004 respectively.

Twenty years ago the legendary Lauren Jackson won this award. Three times, Lauren was awarded Most Valuable Player status in the United States Women's National Basketball Association. She is a four-time Olympian, and simply the greatest women's basketball player in history. Corowa shooter James Willett competed in the Rio Olympics. Scott Martin contested the shot-put at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. In 2009, the award winner was tennis star Sam Groth, who was most recently seen in play in the Australian Open with doubles partner, the legendary Lleyton Hewitt. Emma George was one of the first recipients, making an important and impressive mark when she became world record holder in the women's pole vault. The most recent award winner is Brooke Dickie, who has excelled in water polo.

This rollcall reminds us that world championship talent does not reside solely in the capital cities of our nation. It is true that regional New South Wales does not have the same international-class infrastructure that can be accessed in the major cities but, as they say, something is certainly in the water that we drink in country areas. We keep producing champions. I thank Sport Albury Wodonga for maintaining the young achiever awards for sport. This is valuable work that the organisation is doing, year after year, and it is appreciated. It is important that talent is recognised at a young age, opportunities are made available and a career made affordable. Financial scholarships take over when the trophy hits the bookshelf. The status that follows winning such a prestigious award continues to help open doorways to future success.

I acknowledge Graham Hicks, sometime president and ongoing board member of Sport Albury Wodonga, for his special role in the influential Festival of Sport. I thank the board, its president Rob McDonald and vice president Greg Featonby. I thank sponsors such as Norske Skog and Commercial Club Albury for lending a hand. This year will be the twelfth year of the awards under the auspices of Sport Albury Wodonga. Nominees have been presented from the sports of Australian Football League—the men's and women's competitions—hockey, rugby league, squash and racquetball, soccer, sailing, cricket, swimming and downhill mountain biking. I look forward to the awards gala, which will be held on Friday 16 March in Albury.

#### **EAST HILLS ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR JANE MOLLICA**

**Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) (17:31):** Last week, as part of the International Women's Day celebrations, we had the opportunity to recognise women in our communities who have made a significant contribution to our local areas. International Women's Day is a day to celebrate and recognise the social, cultural, political and economic achievements and contributions of women, but it is also an opportunity to continue the fight for equality. I recognise one such contributor to my community. Jane Mollica has dedicated her life to educating others. Jane was the principal of Padstow Park Public School from 2004 until her retirement earlier this month.

As a teacher and principal, Jane has tirelessly guided thousands of children through the most vital years of their education. Through her passion for educating, she has inspired dreams, and fostered growth and a love of learning, encouraged creativity and instilled confidence in our children. The values she has passed on to those students will remain with them all their lives. I thank Jane for her many years of service and tireless dedication to the children in our communities and to Padstow Park Public School. I congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition. It was a pleasure to work with her across the years. She will surely be missed. I wish her all the best in her retirement.

#### **TRIBUTE TO DAVID CLARK**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:33):** For communities to grow and flourish we rely on the commitment and dedication of community-minded people. The Cessnock community was rocked two-and-a-half weeks ago with the sudden and unexpected passing of one of these inspirational people—a gentleman by the name of David Clark. He was, indeed, a gentleman. A lifetime local, David was born in Cessnock and after finishing his formal education at Cessnock High School he took on a fitter and turner apprenticeship at Richmond Main Colliery. David excelled throughout his career in the mining industry, and progressed to the roles of service mine manager and later mine engineering consultant.

However, it was in later life that David's service and commitment to the community became more prominent. Upon his retirement, David joined the Kurri Kurri Retired Mineworkers Association, where he served as president for almost a decade. It was here that David immersed himself in the local community, raising much-needed funds for local charities and community causes. David saw his membership of the association as an opportunity to provide a helping hand to those in his community who experienced disadvantage or were low on their luck.

Inspired to make a greater contribution to his town and its residents, David also joined the Rotary Club of Cessnock, where he became an integral part of the club's activities and programs to support the region's youth, offer different cultural experiences and expand Rotary's humanitarian work across the Lower Hunter. David served two terms as president and was involved in other facets of the club's leadership and direction. David was passionate about Rotary projects that supported and enhanced the Cessnock community, and his guidance and determination in that area saw him awarded a Paul Harris Fellow—One Sapphire—one of the highest recognitions that Rotary International can bestow upon an individual.

David was also instrumental in organising the Cessnock Christian Christmas Lunch, which provides a meal and company for the homeless and those in need on Christmas Day. David saw the festive period as a time of giving and dedicated his Christmas and Christmas Day to spending it with disadvantaged locals to ensure they did not feel alone. Instead, he offered them a happy and harmonious time with others in the church. This just illustrates David's caring nature—a gentle soul, who offered so much to the Cessnock community.

In 2016 David's service to the community was publicly recognised when he was named the Cessnock Citizen of the Year. Despite the recognition David received, he remained humble. For him, his service was based purely on helping those in need. In essence, he saw no need for awards and presentations. For David, his volunteer work was a necessary part of being a member of the Cessnock community. David's funeral was always going to be so big that it needed to be held at the Cessnock Performing Arts Centre. It was attended by a broad spectrum of the local community, which is symbolic of the influence David had on the lives of so many people through his service.

David could have—and maybe some would say should have—served anywhere in the world as a major chief executive officer or leader of a company or organisation. Indeed, as a consultant he travelled all over the world. People engaged him for his knowledge, understanding and brilliance around engineering matters to do with the coalmining industry. In fact, David was seconded to New Zealand when the Pike River coalmining tragedy occurred and claimed a number of lives, and the expertise of someone like David was sought. He could have truly done anything. But the most important thing in his life, the thing he kept returning to and serving was community—not just any community but the Cessnock community. David is survived by his wife, Judy. On behalf of community of Cessnock I extend my deepest sympathies to Judy and her family. Vale, David Clark, you will certainly be missed.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:36):** Today I acknowledge 24 outstanding young individuals from the Port Macquarie electorate who are currently serving as the elected leaders of their respective school communities. Each year students put themselves forward to become captains and vice-captains of their schools. In doing so, the students become formal leaders representing their peers and their schools at various events and in a range of capacities. Although the process of becoming a leader is often overshadowed by the anticipation of campaign speeches and the excitement of the election itself, the most important aspect of becoming a leader is often overlooked. Before these students are democratically elected by their peers, they first have to make that important decision to put up their hand for election, which can often be a daunting task.

What do I mean by this? At some point before nominating themselves, each one of the students makes a conscious decision to become a leader. That is to say, they made a conscious decision to impose higher standards upon themselves and ask to be judged by higher standards than their fellow students. This is the unseen aspect of leadership and is one of the most important qualities a leader can have. Once people raise the standard by which they judge themselves, they automatically inspire others to follow them and become a role model in the community. I recognise this quality in each and every one of the student leaders in my electorate and encourage them to continue displaying this quality in their adult lives.

To this end, every year I host a school leaders lunch where I get the opportunity to meet and congratulate the young captains and vice-captains from all the high schools in my electorate and talk about issues that are important to them. It is also an opportunity for these young leaders to interact with each other as well as guests I invite to take part in the lunch. In previous years we have been joined by the Hon. Sarah Mitchell from the other place, Minister Anthony Roberts and last year former first grade football player George Rose. Last Friday I was joined by the Hon. Adam Marshall in his role as Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge each of the students who attended the lunch: From the Hastings Secondary College—Port Macquarie Campus, Dorothee Steinbach, Samet Portakaldali, Tiegian Munro and Blake Elliott; from the Hastings Secondary College—Westport Campus, Rani Parsons, Nathan Barnett, Saskia Smith and Theodore Howard; from the Heritage Christian School, Isabella Hickson, Mitchell Morrison, Amity Burley and Caleb Campion; from the Mackillop Senior College, Esther Ting, Thomas Berryman,



Isobel Berryman and Harry Hiatt; from the St Columba Anglican School, Alexandra Hawes, Harley Coleman, Emily Brown and Jacob Killick; and from St Joseph's Regional College, Elizabeth Pike, Davy Roe, Tahlia Bell-Baker and Cooper Lewis-Bain. I again congratulate all 24 young students from the Port Macquarie electorate who made the decision to become leaders in their communities, who have since been elected as leaders for the 2018 school year, and who, I am confident, will continue to be leaders in their future careers.

#### **LISMORE ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR JILL HEPBURN**

**Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (17:39):** Last week, as part of the community's acknowledgement of International Women's Day, I proudly announced that the Lismore electorate's nominee for Woman of the Year is Jill Hepburn. A morning tea was arranged at the Richmond Rovers Football Club but, sadly, due to chaos at Sydney Airport my flight was late arriving in Lismore, and I arrived at the afternoon tea just before Jill left. Fortunately, I arrived in time to have a photograph taken with Jill. I thank Bronwyn Mitchell from my electorate office and Austin Curtin, who were able to make the presentation for me and did not keep everyone waiting.

It was certainly an honour to recognise and express sincere appreciation for the work of Jill Hepburn, who has been involved in the Lismore community and in community organisations for more than 50 years. Jill is passionate and committed to driving grassroots football, which most notably is reflected in the countless hours that she has dedicated to Lismore's Richmond Rovers Football Club. Members of that club also recognise the importance of her contribution. Jill was made a life member in 1992. Jill has also been named as the Northern NSW Football Volunteer of the Year. I place on the record of this House the words of Steve Mackney, who sent an email to Jill:

Dear Jill,

I was delighted to read that you are recognised as the Local Woman of the Year in an announcement made last week by Thomas George.

You are truly a VERY worthy recipient and I wish to extend my sincere congratulations on behalf of the entire football community. Your contribution to Rovers was rightfully acknowledged through Life Membership many years ago and your dedication continues to exemplify efforts that reflect a selfless commitment to the club and football generally. Beyond club football, your involvement in a broad range of activities within the community defy most people's capacity to show such abundance of energy and wonderful generosity to support so many causes. I know that your humility will deflect any self-admiration, so please let others indulge you at this time on receiving this terrific award.

On behalf of your football colleagues, friends and even those who may not realise how your influence may enhance their lives, I wish to say to you Jill ... "THANKS for ALL that you do and WELL DESERVED."

Kind regards,

Steve Mackney

General Manager, Football Far North Coast

Jill also has been a volunteer for the Lismore Neighbourhood Centre for more than 20 years. Currently, she assists in raising funds for a local charity, Our Kids, of which I am very proud to be patron. Our Kids is an organisation that not only raises funds for the children's ward at the Lismore Base Hospital but also assists families who struggle to meet children's needs. To commemorate Jill's continued contribution, it was a great honour to declare Jill Hepburn the 2018 Lismore Electorate Woman of the Year. I have had a long association with Jill. This award certainly is well-deserved recognition of her hard work and dedication to our local community. Everyone acknowledges that Jill's contribution has not stopped yet. She continues to be a great supporter not only of football but also of other community organisations throughout the Lismore community. Well done, Jill.

#### **BEGA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (17:43):** It has been an honour and a privilege to have served the electorate of Bega for 15 years. I will keep going.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** That is beautiful.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Thank you. I acknowledge my community, which has been supportive of the work that I have done, but also the work that they continue to do. The community is fighting very hard at the moment for the delivery of local infrastructure. I do not have the words to describe the turnaround in the Bega electorate since I have been the local member. I remember the Coalition being in Opposition for eight years, which was not so joyous.

**Mr Thomas George:** Good training.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** But it was good training for government. I honestly believe one of the great things we are doing as a Government is not just investing dollars in infrastructure in Sydney, but also supporting the bush in ways it has never seen in its history. It would not matter whether it was the delivery of

local infrastructure—such as the amenities block that I saw last weekend at the Bemboka Show through to the community efforts in Batemans Bay that now has an indoor aquatic centre with five water bodies that will service everyone in the community from our seniors who need a warm water pool through to our kiddies who need to learn how to swim—the community is mobilised and working hard in its volunteer capacity to see local infrastructure plans come to fruition. It is very pleasing.

The Government has put \$1 billion into the Princes Highway, where in years gone by crash rates were higher than the Pacific Highway. In one six-month period in 2004 we lost 24 lives on the highway. I am mindful that the Government continues to focus outside Sydney in a way we have never seen. For the electorate of Bega, it has meant more than \$40 million of State money coming into the Port of Eden, resulting in the commercial wharf extension for cruise ships through a wave attenuator as a safe harbour to protect marine assets; upgrading the airports at Moruya and Merimbula; deregulation of the air routes to enable more competition and lower airfares by reducing red tape; and investing in the Bega regional hospital, with more to come for our other hospitals. All of this has come about because of the strength of our communities.

On a personal level, one of the great joys of being a Minister and a local member is the support for my portfolio responsibilities that I receive from the community. I acknowledge the departure of one of my team, Alicia Wood, who is not unfamiliar to anybody in this Parliament, having served as President of the Press Gallery for a time. For many years she worked extensively as a journalist in this place and has enormous regard and respect from both sides of the Parliament. Her professionalism as a journalist places her in an incredible position to go on to bigger and better things. It was great to have her on my team over the past 12 months. Pleasingly for her, she is moving on to greener pastures in the corporate sector. I wish her all the best. Over the past few days quite a number of journos have said to me that she will be a sad loss to this place. Her former boss, Andrew Clennell, sings her praises.

I was fortunate to have Alicia as a member of my team. We are all very lucky with our staff, whether it is electorate office staff through to staff who work in the Parliament, not necessarily directly for us, but as ministerial staff. I was blessed to have Alicia on the team over the past 12 months. I will get on and keep delivering for Bega, and make sure that we deliver great outcomes for transport to ensure that New South Wales remains number one. But more specifically, in terms of the country electorate of Bega, it has been great to serve for 15 years. I hope to keep serving in that capacity for many years into the future.

#### **MARTHA LYNCH NINETIETH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:49):** I wish Martha Lynch, a resident of Doonside in the electorate of Blacktown, a very happy ninetieth birthday. Martha has witnessed many changes to Australian society over her 90 years, but, make no mistake, Martha was not a bystander but an active participant in making Australia a better place. Martha was born in Coolac in 1928 and grew up in Leadville in regional New South Wales. Life was tough in those days compared with the luxuries that we take for granted today. When she joined the Australian Women's Land Army, Martha fibbed about her age, saying she was 16 when she was only 15. The Women's Land Army was called upon to replace the rural workers who went to fight in World War II. Martha recalls that she was one of the youngest and fittest, and that she had to do more of the manual work, such as putting together bales of hay and lucerne, as well the heavy lifting whenever it was required. Martha had calluses on her hands from the wire that was used to wrap the bales of hay.

Martha has met many famous people over the years, but fondly recalls the time she was selected to take the horse and buggy to Blayney railway station to pick up Ben Chifley and take him to a local event. Martha moved to Doonside, and has been a remarkable volunteer and advocate for the City of Blacktown. She has been involved with the Doonside Senior Citizens Club for more than three decades and is currently its president. Martha has organised many events, such as day trips, indoor bowls, cards and other activities. Martha is also a fabulous bingo caller. Even today, Martha is the first one there in the morning to open up the centre and ensure everything is ready for the day, and is still there to lock up the centre when the activities are finished. Martha's volunteering work includes selling raffle tickets and running stalls. For the past three years she has had a stall at the Doonside Festival, which is held in the middle of winter, to raise money for Doonside seniors and many other worthy causes.

Martha's volunteering also includes her activities with the local St Vincent de Paul Society and supporting the church activities at St John Vianney's Catholic Church in Doonside. Her strong Christian faith is obviously the bedrock of her community volunteering. Martha is also a staunch local activist. She was one of the first to advocate for Doonside railway station lifts some 20 years ago. Even though it was her birthday, the first issue she raised with me when she saw me recently was the Doonside lifts. It is a shame that the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is not in the Chamber to hear this. Martha knows the challenges that many elderly people face when they struggle to make it up the steep ramp or traverse the megastaircase to get onto the platform. The Minister must come to the party and provide the lifts for Doonside station.

In 2009 Martha was recognised as the Blacktown City Senior Citizen of the Year for all her efforts in supporting senior citizens in the City of Blacktown and her vast array of community activities. By anyone's account, Martha is an extremely busy person. But there is more. Martha has been a great and proud member of the Australian Labor Party. For more than three decades, Martha has worked on every election at the Doonside Technology High School polling booth. She is always there by 6.30 a.m. and never leaves until after the close of the polling booths. Martha always brings sandwiches and refreshments, and is happy to give them to any of the booth workers, regardless of their political stance.

Martha has been awarded the Labor Party's prestigious McKell Award for her services to the Labor movement and has also attained life membership of the Labor Party. Martha has served as a vice president and senior vice president or a representative delegate of the Doonside branch. Even at 90 years young, while struggling with her own health issues, Martha continues to put everyone ahead of herself and continues to serve the community. She is truly an icon of our local area. I thank Martha for her friendship, love and support to me and my family. Martha has always been like a second mother to me, watching out for me, and sharing her guidance and wisdom. I do not know of anyone else who has given so much but never asked for anything in return. Happy ninetieth birthday, Martha. I hope there are many more.

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:53):** International Women's Day, which was celebrated last week, gave us the opportunity to reflect on the progress of gender equality within our country. While a large part of the week focused on female leadership and representation, we had some wonderful recognition of community members across New South Wales. I will speak about people within my electorate of North Shore who have been recognised for their contributions. I had the great privilege of attending a number of events last week on International Women's Day, including some local and statewide events. At the statewide event of the United Nations International Women's Day breakfast, I was privileged, alongside the Minister for Women, the member for Mulgoa, to award Virginia Howard with the North Shore Woman of the Year award.

Ms Howard has had a long and illustrious career of community contribution and administration of charities, education and local government, in particular, within the Mosman area in the community of North Shore. Currently Ms Howard is the Chair of Talmamundy Youth Services. Talmamundy Youth Services is an organisation that supports the neediest young people within our community, providing them with emergency housing, care and respite. It supports parents to re-engage with their children. Its work is often overlooked because of assumptions about socio-economic outcomes and the need for support within the northern suburbs of Sydney. At the same time, it is an under-represented area as far as services are concerned. The work done by Talmamundy is exceptional. I look forward to again joining Talamundy Youth Services at its gala event in May this year and supporting the service, as I have in the past.

Virginia also served on Mosman Council for 16 years, including three years as mayor and one year as deputy mayor. Her contribution has extended to being the Executive Director of the Wenona Foundation and the administrator of Mosman Meals on Wheels. Virginia has worked in the school projects office for Australian Red Cross, she has taught English at Loreto Kirribilli and she undertook community relations in Queenwood school. She is also Chair of Dougherty Retirement Village and Care Home and a director of Bendigo Bank, Mosman, and Mosman Community Services. Ms Howard is the very essence of a North Shore woman and her contribution has been significantly substantial over a very long period. I was proud to present her with her award, which she bashfully but graciously accepted. I thank her for contribution, which I know she will continue to make.

I acknowledge another nominee for the Woman of the Year award—that is, Julie Anne Mitchell from the Heart Foundation. Julie is the cardiovascular health director at the Heart Foundation. She has worked in the health sector since the age of 25, and she contributes so significantly to the work that we need to do around looking at heart health and wellbeing. I also congratulate her on her nomination. I had the great fortune of attending the United Nations International Women's Day breakfast, which was also attended by the Minister for Women. We heard some significant and compelling statistics about the rates of assault, particularly sexual violence against women who are escaping natural disasters overseas and women in war-torn countries. It reminded me how fortunate we are in Australia, how very lucky we are as a people and as women, and how far we have come in having our own rights recognised as individuals.

We have made great strides but there is always an opportunity for us to reflect on how much further we need to go. At the Kirribilli Club in my electorate of North Shore on International Women's Day I spoke to an amazing group of women in pharmacy from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia. We spoke about women's leadership, both in politics and within their own pharmacy industry. I appreciated speaking with and listening to them. We had a long conversation, particularly about the way that women are scrutinised and judged. A woman's appearance is judged, her relationships scrutinised, whom she may be sleeping with, her weight, and what she wears. I wondered whether that would disincentivise women from seeking leadership positions, particularly in

politics which can be seen to be very aggressive and demeaning to certain people. The profound outcome for me was that these are women of the next generation who I know will be leaders and will challenge all those barriers and break down those glass ceilings. I was very proud to meet with the women of pharmacy.

### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:58):** I refer to the provision of infrastructure in the electorate of Riverstone—particularly, in this instance, roads infrastructure. I have spoken previously on this subject but it is worth updating the House on some very big projects that are occurring and some milestones that have been reached. Last year we saw the opening of Richmond Road, a major arterial road leading from Blacktown towards Richmond in the north-west. Last month we saw a milestone in the opening of the underpass below Richmond railway line, as part of the Schofields road project that connects Richmond Road and Windsor Road. This eight-kilometre arterial road will be a major route across the whole of the North West Growth Area and will provide for much of the increased traffic movement that will occur in that region.

The opening of the underpass was a particularly important moment because the limited number of crossing options over the Richmond railway line has been a barrier to traffic in the region for a long time. When Riverstone was a rural district it was not so important that there were relatively few crossings of the line, and the level crossing at Garfield Road in the past coped with traffic movements in this relatively remote rural area. The area is nothing like that now, and has not been for some years. The limited number of crossings has now been supplemented by the underpass at Schofields station. This underpass has come into play, and the first connection between Richmond Road and Windsor Road has been completed. At this point it remains one carriageway on the western side of the line, with work zone speed limits in place while the project is completed.

Nonetheless, the opening of the underpass has already shaved several minutes off the journey from east to west, or west to east, and has made the journey much safer. People no longer have to traverse relatively old roads with narrow turns and bridges thanks to the opening of this direct route connecting major thoroughfares. This project will cost \$340 billion all up. It is a significant investment in Sydney's north-west and at the moment it falls within my electorate of Riverstone. No doubt with the redistribution of electoral boundaries due to population growth, this entire project will not fall within my electorate in the future. The project was a huge commitment for a single electorate, although it benefits people in surrounding areas.

The upgrade of Richmond Road and the new schools and new police station in the area were also welcome commitments. This Government is also making huge investments at Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital, in the same region. None of the infrastructure investment in this State would be possible were this State dependent on the financial policies of the Labor Party, which has opposed every initiative that this Government has put forward in order to raise the necessary funds to make these investments. The key element of infrastructure investment is having the money to build the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of the community, and that means being prepared to take the tough decisions to raise the required funds. This Government has been consistent, focused and determined to meet the needs of the community, as is evident in the case of the Schofields Road project. As a result, this Government now has the funds to make these projects happen.

We can turn to future stages of the North West Priority Growth Area's road network once Schofields Road is completed and the rest of the underpass has opened to traffic. The improvement to roads has meant that much of the traffic on Grange Avenue and the small bridge at Westminster Street—the only other crossing in the vicinity of the Richmond railway line—has decreased. The Denmark Road link will connect that small bridge to Garfield Road, on the western side of Riverstone, and will provide another light traffic thoroughfare to ease the congestion at the key point of the Garfield Road level crossing. Geotechnical work has already been completed, and now that the Schofields Road project is nearing completion Roads and Maritime Services will be in a position in the not-too-distant future to complete the Denmark Road link.

Further in the future is the Bandon Road link, also between Windsor Road and Richmond Road. This link is further to the north of Riverstone and is another arterial road that is planned to meet the industrial traffic needs of the Riverstone industrial area and Marsden Park. This will relieve congestion on roads carrying heavy traffic in this growing area as traffic demand increases over the coming years. I am delighted that these infrastructure commitments have been made. This Government has made provision in its funding strategy to make these projects possible. I look forward to the completion of these roads in the future.

### **MULGOA ELECTORATE SCHOOLS FUNDING**

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (18:03):** Today I update the House on the growth of school infrastructure and the development of learning programs at Mulgoa schools as a result of a significant funding boost by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. In the past year multiple funding opportunities have been of great benefit to

Mulgoa schools, students, teachers and the wider community, ensuring that each and every student receives a top-quality education in state-of-the-art facilities. In particular, the summer holiday maintenance blitz, the Building Grants Assistance Scheme [BGAS] and the Resource Allocation Model have each delivered for schools not only in Mulgoa but also across the State. The funding programs have provided Mulgoa schools with a combined total of more than \$13.9 million, which is a huge win for schools and students across my electorate.

Over the summer holiday period more than \$246,000 was spent on school maintenance projects in Mulgoa, highlighting the Government's commitment to public education and delivering local infrastructure to support schools to develop and grow. The summer holiday blitz was part of the Government's record \$747 million school maintenance investment over the next four years. Projects took place at St Clair High School, Regentville Public School, Erskine Park High School, Kemps Creek Public School, Horsley Park Public School and Cecil Hills High School. Maintaining school facilities is essential to ensuring that our students have the high-quality environments they deserve. I am delighted by the funding the Government has delivered for Mulgoa. Improving school facilities also provides teachers and support staff with advanced environments in which to give students the high-quality education that I know they are so passionate about.

The Building Grants Assistance Scheme has provided independent schools in Mulgoa with a share of \$2.5 million in government grants to support upgrading and improvement works. The grants will help schools to improve learning environments for their students, giving them contemporary facilities that reflect modern learning needs. Al-Faisal College in Liverpool has received \$1.1 million to build a two-storey secondary school building with 13 classrooms, two science laboratories, storerooms and amenities. Since it was established in 2015 the school has grown rapidly, receiving a \$750,000 grant in the 2016 BGAS funding round. In 2016 it was a pleasure to see the development of 10 new general learning areas. I look forward to viewing the new facilities that are being built with the assistance of the \$1.1 million in funding.

Mamre Anglican College has been given \$50,000 to go towards building four classrooms, a collaborative learning area and arts and performance spaces. Those spaces will develop, foster and nurture students' abilities and talents by ensuring that the school has educational environments of the highest quality. St Narsai Assyrian Christian College has been granted \$850,000 to go towards a new two-storey building with four classrooms, a performing arts workshop, music practise rooms, hospitality and textile workshops, and a covered outdoor working area. The extra funding boost will certainly be vital to the development of this new school, which opened only this year. The funding will ensure that the students of St Narsai have access to practical, hands-on experience that can only be offered in advanced learning spaces.

The allocation of BGAS funding to Thomas Hassall Anglican College will go towards the extension of the rapidly growing junior school. The school has received a \$500,000 grant to extend the existing junior school building with five new classrooms, a resource space, a breakout area and a covered verandah. I am certain that the new learning and recreational spaces will be highly beneficial. Funding provided under the Resource Allocation Model will address the specific needs of Mulgoa schools, giving them the discretion to fund projects that suit students' needs. Mulgoa schools may choose to implement initiatives such as targeted literacy and numeracy support, teacher training or speech pathology. I am so pleased that the Government has continuously supported Mulgoa students. This year the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government announced funding of \$4.2 billion over four years to deliver more than 120 new and upgraded schools across the State. That represents the biggest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales.

### **DROUGHT RELIEF**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (18:08):** I bring to the attention of the House the severe drought that is afflicting my electorate of Upper Hunter, particularly the northern part. Businesses, families and primary producers in the north of the seat of Upper Hunter are reeling from the huge damage that this drought is causing, with no relief—natural or otherwise—currently in sight. As I have been conveying to colleagues and Ministers over many months, the natural disaster that is unfolding in the seat of Upper Hunter must be addressed and the terrible damage to our local farming communities must be redressed.

Drought is, sadly, an inevitable part of life in rural and regional Australia, and the New South Wales Government has undertaken to mitigate the effects of drought into the future. As the House knows, the Farm Innovation Fund is an incentive-based initiative to assist farmers within New South Wales to identify and address risks to their farming enterprises, improve their permanent farm infrastructure and ensure long-term productivity and sustainable land use, all to aid in meeting the changes and challenges in seasonal conditions. Funding by way of low-interest loans is available to meet the cost of carrying out permanent capital works that will have a significant beneficial impact on the land and the long-term profitability of the enterprise, and address adverse seasonal conditions in the future.

The interest rate is fixed for the term of the loan, which is up to 20 years, dependent upon the amount borrowed and the applicant's ability to repay. Such works would fall into four main categories. They include, but are not limited to, the following examples: drought preparedness, such as ensuring water supplies or refurbishing ground tanks and de-silting dams; environment conditions, such as avoiding soil erosion or the removal and control of noxious weeds; farm infrastructure, such as the upgrading of irrigation systems or building fodder storage facilities; and natural resources, such as planting trees for shade, creating wildlife corridors or fencing off river banks.

As of the beginning of this week, \$48,038,537 in loans have been approved, with \$54,978,292 worth of loans requested out of the total of \$65 million allocated to the fund. This is a great long-term initiative that is a credit to the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. But right now my electorate of Upper Hunter is suffering because of drought. This drought is oppressive, and too many communities are suffering and doing it tough as they try to cope with this natural disaster. This has to be addressed. Nature has a funny way of treating rural and regional farming communities and producers, as sometimes we are subjected to devastating—almost biblical—floods, and at other times, such as now, we are subject to ravaging droughts.

Right now we are in need of practical, short-term assistance to help the farmers and producers in our area who are dealing with one of the worst droughts in the seat of Upper Hunter in recent memory. The Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Niall Blair, MLC, is keen to provide long-term drought mitigation solutions. A few weeks ago he joined me in the seat of Upper Hunter, visiting Stroud and Clarence Town to see firsthand the impact of the drought in those areas. Unfortunately, nature simply rolls on, and the ongoing financial toll of the drought is unyielding. I feel the terrible devastation, both financial and emotional, that this drought is inflicting on my community.

I would like the Government to consider the following short-term assistance for farmers in my area. The first measure is freight subsidies for all fodder, purchased or donated—and not just sourced from New South Wales, because we are running short of fodder in New South Wales—transportation of stock to agistment in other areas where feed may be available, and water cartage for stock and domestic use where practical. The second measure is subsidising agistment costs where stock are still located in New South Wales. I understand that this is not current policy and that, in the past, the cost of freight has risen in relation to the subsidies on offer, which is obviously not to the benefit of the farmers. However, these are desperate times and the Government needs to respond and help alleviate the despair and suffering that our farmers are experiencing. I also congratulate all the farmers on their resilience, and I recognise the emotional strain and trauma that the drought is causing them all.

#### **SWANSEA BELMONT SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:13):** I bring happy and great news to the House this evening. Over the weekend Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club wrapped up this year's NSW Surf Life Saving Championships at Blacksmiths Beach. This is the second year in a row that Swansea Belmont has hosted the State championships, and the event was another resounding success. As host, Swansea Belmont had the opportunity to welcome almost 20,000 visitors to our local community and to showcase our area to people from across this great State. The event is an enormous economic opportunity for local businesses through the visitor economy, and it ensures that our community is well and truly on the map. Of course, hosting this event locally means that our local athletes have the opportunity to participate in a statewide event at home.

As a member of Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club, I acknowledge our open mixed march past team, who won a gold medal. I congratulate Henry Burnley, John Carrol, Donald Ellercamp, Declan Hamilton, Raymond Johnson, Peter McConville, Bruce Motley, Ian Richardson, Gordon Richardson, Andrew Rigg, Kris Sazdanoff, Edward Vine, and Allan Wallace. In addition, the junior march past team also won a gold medal for the first time. It was a great success. Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club members who competed at the championships certainly gave everyone a run for their money. For so many, their hard work and training throughout the season paid off when they won a medal.

I acknowledge from Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club Ashby Allen, Saxon Coates, and Nicholas Stoddart, who won a gold medal in the under-15s male board relay. They were later joined by Daniel Chisolm, who won a silver medal in the under-15s male surf team event. Saxon and Nicholas also won a gold medal in the under-15s male board rescue event, and together with Ashby and Kalen Gocher they won another gold medal in the under-15s male Cameron relay. Nicholas won another gold medal in the under-15s male board race. Daniel Chisolm was another local star at the championships. In addition to making up the under-15s male surf team, he also placed second in the under-14s male ironperson event. Daniel joined Beau McGregor and Kurt Murphy in winning the silver medal in the under-14s male board relay. These three boys and Eli Worrell also won a silver medal in the under-14s male surf team event, and Eli and Daniel went on to win a silver medal in the under-14s male board rescue event.

I have spoken before in the House about Samuel Govender, a Valentine local whose sporting talents seemingly know no bounds. Therefore, it is no surprise to me that Samuel absolutely towelled up at the State championships. Samuel won a gold medal in the under-10s male beach flags event and the male beach sprint. He and his teammates, Campbell Connolly, Emerson Leadbeatter and Kaitlin Rees, also won a gold medal in the under-10s mixed beach relay. Kaitlin also won a bronze medal in the under-9s female surf race, and went on to win the gold medal in the all-age board relay with her teammates, Kai and Blake Cook, Beau McGregor, Samuel Murphy, and Tye Worrell.

That was not the only medal won by Kai, Samuel and Tye—they were not stopping there. Samuel came first in the under-11s male board race, and was joined by Xavier Coates in winning gold in the under-11 male board rescue event. The two were then joined by Zac McDougall in winning gold in the under-11 male board relay. Xavier won a gold medal in the under-11s male ironperson event. Then, along with Samuel and teammates Lewis Davies and Sullivan O'Sheades, he also came third in the under-11 male surf team event. Kai also came third in the under-9 male board race and, along with Harry Hall and Will Paterson, he won a gold medal in the under-9 male board relay. He and Hamish Rae placed third in the under-9 male surf team event. Tye and his teammates, Callum Fox and Ethan Hamilton, won a silver medal in the under-12s male board relay, and were later joined by Sam Bosworth in winning the bronze medal in the under-12 male surf team event.

Kyle Lehmann and Josh Murphy won the gold medal in the under-17s male board rescue event. Along with Jack McGregor, they won another gold medal in the under-17s male board relay. Gracey Hissey, Emma McCallum, and Skyla Poole came third in both the under-9s female board relay and the under-9s female beach relay, where they were joined by teammate Julieanne Fox. Lewis Davies, Thomas Hall and Aiden Rae won a bronze medal in the under-11 male board relay. Finally, Angela Leadbeatter—who is a champion—Mason Snowden and Sally Walters came first, second and third respectively in their events. It would be remiss of me not to tell the House that we did not win the championship. The winner was Newport Surf Life Saving Club, and I wish the club well. The event was a great celebration. I am pleased that the member for Charlestown is in the Chamber. We were both—

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** We did well.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Yes, we did. The Redheads also did well, and the member can tell the House about them. It was a terrific event that showcased surf life saving in New South Wales, and I am proud that it was held in Swansea.

### WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:19):** Tonight I raise some serious issues that my constituents are experiencing following injuries sustained in the workplace. The Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017, which was introduced by the member for Cessnock, and shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property, was debated in this place last week and this morning. I commend the member for Cessnock for introducing this bill because it truly provides protection for workers with legitimate claims for legitimate injuries. Despite what the Premier may repeatedly claim in this Chamber, the fact that the Berejiklian Government voted against the bill this morning proves that it does not support New South Wales workers. This Government may talk the talk, but it certainly does not walk the walk. I was not able to speak directly to the bill so I will now bring the plight of injured workers in my electorate to the attention of the House. Those workers are clearly unable to work and the Government refuses to support them through workers compensation. This bill would have restored some of their wellbeing.

One of my constituents, Frank, had his workers compensation payments ceased on the Christmas Day because of this Government's legislation. Frank worked for the State Rail Authority and the Rail Services Authority as a labourer, cable joiner and foreman for 28 years and he injured his lower back at various times. He was assessed by insurance doctors and informed that his injuries were a result of strain from work. Five years later, Frank was told by QBE that he had had enough financial support and his payments were cut. He not only now has to live with crippling pain but also is unable to earn money. The Government is doing nothing to help him. Frank's compensation was court appointed in 2001. That court ruling is now cancelled. How is that fair? Mahatma Gandhi famously said that the true measure of any society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members. By this measure, the Berejiklian Government is bust because of its appalling treatment of injured workers in New South Wales.

If this Government argues that the workers compensation scheme was losing money—which is a complete fallacy—it should not be the injured and vulnerable members of our society who pay for it. Indeed, the very reason WorkCover exists is to support these people. The workers compensation scheme is not in debt and the Government did not need to cut people off after five years for monetary gain. In fact, the scheme currently has \$1.5 billion more than it needs. About eight years ago the workers compensation scheme had a short supply

of funds. If one had taken a snapshot at that moment, one would have seen it was because of investments and the global financial crisis. The Government was advised that the funds would recover over the forward years as investments returned to normal levels. No changes were needed; this was just another easy money grab from an opportunistic government that holds workers in contempt.

But none of this helps Frank or any of the other 4,500 people who have been needlessly kicked off the workers compensation scheme. Some of my constituents are now completely destitute. Is this how the New South Wales Government wants to treat our workers? Does the Government want to use them for labour while they are able and kick them to the side once they done? Other constituents of mine have not only been kicked off their workers compensation payments but also do not qualify for Centrelink payments because of their partner's income. They receive zero dollars permanently. What is the Government's advice to these people? It is to call their local general practitioner and seek assistance for depression. I find it confronting to hear these stories relayed by my constituents. These people feel truly betrayed by this Government, as I did.

New South Wales Labor tried to tell the Government that this day would come but it simply did not care. That is pretty poor form for a government that repeatedly tells us it is the "party of the workers". That is an insult to the workers of New South Wales. As legislators, we need to make the lives of the most vulnerable in our community better. Collectively, we can make the lives of the seriously injured better. It is time for the Liberals and The Nationals to start supporting injured workers and to stop ignoring their needs and pleas.

### **WERRIS CREEK INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:23):** It gives me great pleasure to update the Werris Creek community on further funding for that great town. After a long campaign for the upgrade of the Werris Creek swimming pool, the community gathered recently to hear that funding of \$481,400 had been provided to upgrade the pool. That is yet another election commitment that this Government has honoured. It took a little while to get there, but the community's support and hard work has paid off. Works will include the complete upgrade of the water filtration facilities, separation of the water between the infants pool and the main swimming pool, and the installation of play equipment in the infants pool. This is a massive investment into Werris Creek that will provide wide, sweeping benefits to the community.

The Werris Creek Swimming Pool is an important facility to the community, which is why we are investing in improvements so that it continues to serve the town well into the future. Many carnivals and meets are held there and it is the hub of the swimming community in the Liverpool Plains area. Prior to the amenities block receiving an upgrade last year, the swimming pool complex had not seen any major works since the 1960s, which makes this the largest investment in the life of the pool. This is more than just a major infrastructure announcement. This is a message to the people of Werris Creek that they are important; they matter to me and we are investing in the future of this town. Liverpool Plains Mayor Andrew Hope said the project had been on the council wish list for some time and the community will see notable changes. Councillor Hope said:

We wanted to raise the standard of the Werris Creek Swimming Pool which would come at a significant cost to Council, so to have the project fully funded by the NSW Government is a real win for the community.

When the project is completed the Werris Creek community will see a vast improvement to the facility for both recreational and sporting swimmers. Liverpool Plains Shire Council will carry out works following the pool's closure for the off-season later this month. Work is expected to be completed in time for the start of next season later this year. That \$481,400 adds to recent funding to upgrade the water treatment plant at Quipolly Dam and Werris Creek of \$10 million from the Safe and Secure Water Program so that Werris Creek can have clean, fresh, running water and come off water restrictions.

In addition to that funding, there was \$36,000 for a new tractor and air conditioning for the Werris Creek Golf Club. We keep improving the kerbs and blistering in the main street, we are providing \$60,000 for the men's shed and we are allocating funds for the local Lions Club to build a shed to house its barbecue equipment. We are also providing funding for playground equipment. I am finding ways of making sure that Werris Creek gets its fair share and I will continue to work with the community. I thank the community for bringing these important projects to me so that I can get the funding to help it. I will continue to invest in and back the great township of Werris Creek.

### **FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR BLANCA ESPINOZA**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:27):** Today I acknowledge the tremendous contributions of the 2018 Fairfield Local Woman of the Year, Mrs Blanca Espinoza. Blanca arrived in Australia in November 1989, when she left everything behind and fled war-torn El Salvador with her husband, Nelson, and their youngest son, Nelson Jr. When Blanca arrived in Australia she did not speak the language, had no idea how to get a job and did not know where the local shops were. But this did not stop her from getting out there and getting involved, as she



quickly adapted to the Australian way of life. Blanca and her family decided to make Fairfield City their home, and this is where they continue to live and work today.

Prior to immigrating to Australia, Blanca was a lawyer in El Salvador who also volunteered her time in the local community. Despite the language barrier, Blanca was motivated to help out wherever she could and resumed her longstanding affair with volunteering once her son Nelson Jr started school. Blanca has an unyielding desire to help others and to impart her knowledge to those in her community. It is this fire that continues to drive and motivate Blanca to this very day, as she continues to support and advocate for residents throughout the Fairfield community.

Over the years Blanca has worked within and alongside the Spanish-speaking carers group, Anglicare, the NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance, and her local church in Villawood—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—and many more organisations. Anyone who knows Blanca is well aware of her unwavering commitment, dedication and positive attitude towards helping others. Volunteering and assisting those in need is a huge part of Blanca's life. That is why I am so proud to be here today, acknowledging Blanca for her contributions to our community.

In light of Blanca's dedication and commitment not only to our Fairfield community but also to the Spanish-speaking community, it was great to hear that her efforts were recognised by her home country when she received the Salvadoran Woman of the Year award this year. That was a tremendous surprise to hear from the Honorary Consul of El Salvador, Mr Jose Vasquez Rivas, at a recent afternoon tea, which was held in my office to celebrate Blanca's achievements. The Salvadoran Woman of the Year was awarded to Blanca as a result of her longstanding dedication and service to the Salvadoran, Latin American and Australian communities. Also present at the afternoon tea were a number of representatives from several organisations to which Blanca has dedicated her time and energy over the years. I will share a few of their testimonials to emphasise the important role that Blanca plays in the lives of so many people in our community. Carlos Encina from the NSW Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance wrote:

It has been a blessing to know Blanca and her family. Over the years, she has proven herself an exceptionally talented individual who is focused on the local community. Her assistance to those who are trying to settle here from a Spanish speaking background are to be commended and her contributions to our local community are invaluable.

Tevita and Akenese Amone, from the Villawood Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, wrote:

Blanca has always sought to help those who struggle in health or those who lost a loved one. She's taken the initiative to organise donations from other members of the church to assist in the Refugees Program and she continually reaches out to those who are in need and does everything she can to help them.

Last but not least, Blanca's husband, Nelson Espinoza, said:

I am very proud of my wife, Blanca. She's a wonderful woman with a big heart. She's always ready to serve the community and help those in need, no matter the circumstances.

Blanca is a truly remarkable woman who deserves nothing short of our community's sincerest appreciation for everything she has done. Blanca truly makes Fairfield a better place for us all. She is an amazing person. I am incredibly proud to have had the opportunity to work alongside her for so many years. She is a role model in our community and her continued efforts are appreciated far more than she will ever know. I congratulate Blanca Espinoza, our 2018 Fairfield Local Woman of the Year.

#### **OATLEY ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR ROSEMARY BISHOP**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:32):** Tonight I recognise International Women's Day, which was celebrated on 8 March. I acknowledge and congratulate Rosemary Bishop on being named Oatley's Local Woman of the Year for 2018. It was an honour to attend the NSW Women of the Year Awards ceremony with Rosemary last Thursday at what was an inspiring morning with many successful, hardworking and outstanding women in attendance. Rosemary is a community-minded, driven individual with a heart for helping people and seeing them excel in every sphere of life. As the chief executive officer of 3Bridges Community, Rosemary strives to embody the organisation's vision to make a positive difference and to impact on people's lives through engagement, integration and activation. Rosemary has fostered this through her longstanding commitment to partnering with the community by helping disadvantaged individuals in the most vulnerable of circumstances.

In addition to being community minded, Rosemary is an excellent businesswoman. Rosemary's previous experience in private enterprise has enabled her to assist 3Bridges Community in increasing its return from social enterprises and to invest in services that do not receive government funding, such as Early Years Support, a program offering vulnerable families assistance with their newborn babies. Rosemary has also increased 3Bridges Community engagement across business, community and government by leading the 3 Point Connect series, which brings together leaders to discuss problems and to work to address them. In 2017 the problem that gained the greatest engagement across sectors was "Living to 100—a blessing or a curse?" Since being appointed

chief executive officer in 2014, Rosemary has overseen many improvements in service reach, capacity, impact and sustainability.

Some of her achievements include improving the access for local clients through new, place-based service outreach and community centres at Gymea, Kogarah, Oatley, Mortdale and Roselands; overseeing the construction of the new Penshurst Community Centre, which opened in July 2017; increasing the number of clients supported by 3Bridges, from 25,000 in 2014 to 35,000 in 2017; accessing funding to introduce the Early Years Support Service in the St George area to support young families and their babies; increasing the number of active volunteers who help support clients, from 200 in 2014 to 325 in 2017; acquiring \$1.4 million in funding for the Meeting Centre Support Program in order to research and demonstrate the impact of a new carer model for people living with dementia; and achieving three years of surpluses at 3Bridges to help extend service impact and upgrade infrastructure across five community centres.

Although being the chief executive officer for only four years, it is clear that Rosemary is hardworking, dedicated and committed to fostering a safe, healthy and happy community. Her achievements over the span of just a few years prove exactly that. Along with honouring Rosemary in the House today, I also wish to take this opportunity to highlight the outstanding work of 3Bridges Community as a well-integrated, well-known organisation in my electorate and across the St George area. I note that the member for Rockdale and the member for Kogarah are in the Chamber at the moment.

3Bridges Community's historical roots are firmly entrenched in the local communities across Sydney's south. Through the amalgamation of three key community-based organisations in 2014 to form 3Bridges Community, the organisation has grown in capacity to deliver more comprehensive services while maintaining a very local feel—not just in the St George area, but in the Sutherland Shire as well. The team at 3Bridges Community have brought together their community networks and knowledge to provide the best possible services for many residents within my electorate—from babies in playgroups to pensioners at group outings. The services focus on four main life stages: children and families, youth, adults, and seniors.

The team of staff and volunteers are well immersed in the local area, enabling them to understand, support, nurture and make a positive difference in a way that will grow and improve the community. I thank the hardworking staff and volunteers at 3Bridges Community for the work they do in my electorate and the broader South Sydney area. My appreciation is again extended to Rosemary. I could not think of a more deserving woman in my electorate to be awarded Woman of the Year for 2018. I thank Rosemary for leading by example and sharing her vision so purposefully and passionately with her team, partners and the Government. She is an inspiration and role model to many, which is why I believe she is well deserving of recognition in the House today.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** The sense of feeling between the members in the St George area—the members of Rockdale, Kogarah and Oatley—has impressed me. We do not get a feeling of love very often in this Chamber, but I say to them: well done for bringing the feeling of joy and love to this Chamber.

## F6 TUNNEL

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (18:37):** I am feeling the love—bring back John Flowers! I would like to associate myself—as would, I am sure, the member for Rockdale—with the comments of the member for Oatley about 3Bridges Community and Rosemary Bishop. She is a well-deserving recipient of that award. I congratulate the member for Oatley for nominating her; it brings great credit to our community. Today I will talk about the utter chaos in the roads policy for southern Sydney—in particular in the St George region. I think you may have spoken about the love a little too soon, Temporary Speaker! We have been left with a chaotic situation whereby the Government—with a straight face—has announced that a section of the F6 will be built with the stated premise of reducing surface traffic. At the same time, the Government is executing a secret plan to introduce 24-hour clearways through the heart of many of our active civic precincts.

This is a misguided, half-baked project, and I ask any St George resident who is inclined to believe the Government: why is the Government attempting to introduce 24-hour clearways if it is genuinely building the tunnel? The reason is that this is not a road from the city to the shire; it is a tiny road from Presidents Avenue, Kogarah to the WestConnex. The Government is in the process of introducing oppressive changes to traffic rules because it is convinced that there will be a "carnageddon" through the streets of St George as thousands of cars are dumped onto local roads in order to join the WestConnex. The F6 is not a complete project; it should be called the "F1½" because that is all that is being built—only a very small section of the road. I witnessed for myself the tone-deaf approach to local St George businesses watching Channel 9 news last week when the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, in response to community concerns raised by my colleague the member for Rockdale, said:

These are busy roads and we have to weigh up the benefits to the majority of the population.

What a message to hardworking businesses in St George! In other words, "You guys are collateral damage; deal with it." I can only associate myself with the words of the Mayor of Bayside, Bill Saravinovski, who declared war on the proposal. To paraphrase Churchill: "He will fight them in the clearways, he will fight them in the tunnels and he will never surrender." We need to look for a public transport solution for southern Sydney before we jump into a half-baked road project that will do nothing but trash local businesses.

Another example of this collateral damage is the incredibly short-sighted decision to remove the right-hand turn from the Princes Highway into Gray Street. The Minister is removing an access route to an emergency department, a very dangerous decision and one that I attempted to stop with direct appeals to Roads and Maritime Services and the Minister. There were 12 letters to the editor of the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* today decrying this appalling decision. Here are two of them. Jane Lee wrote:

Typical poorly thought out traffic management plan designed by people who don't even use these roads in peak periods and/or just don't care!

Marie Giovannis wrote:

So the plan is to stop access to the street which accesses the emergency department of the hospital? Has this been considered at all?

Well, Marie, the answer is: No, it has not been considered at all. I have tried in vain over many years to fight on behalf of two constituents who live in Beverly Hills. John English and his wife, Kathy, live 20 metres from a 25-metre shaft built to accommodate the expansion of the M5. Since construction began, deep cracks have appeared in their house. I have seen for myself plaster fall to the floor in their beautiful home. Despite repeated attempts to access the geotechnical reports from the WestConnex contractor, they have been refused at every turn.

I say to the people building this road: How would they like it if a giant road was built next to their house, giant cracks started to appear in their house, compensation was resisted and they were repeatedly denied access to any of the documents that would prove whether the roadworks were or are responsible for that damage? Is it any wonder that community support for the WestConnex has drifted away? The bottom line is that our community is being treated like a dumping ground for wayward cars, and we are sick of it. Any plan to ease congestion in the south and ensure people get to their jobs must take into account roads, businesses, houses and parks. They cannot just be bulldozed as if we do not exist. It is our city too.

#### **LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE DRUG AND ALCOHOL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION CENTRE**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (18:42):** I draw to the attention of the House the situation of the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre [DAMEC] and its need for support through ministerial intervention. This is an organisation that provides services generally within south-western Sydney, and specifically within the State electorate of Liverpool. DAMEC is a non-government organisation that works to reduce the harm associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs within culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] communities in New South Wales. DAMEC provides culturally appropriate support services for individuals and families from a CALD background that are affected by drug- and alcohol-related issues. It provides education for CALD communities and services on alcohol and other drug issues.

The centre provides research and training for other drug and alcohol services to help services provide culturally appropriate training. It was established in 1989 and is funded by both the New South Wales and Australian governments. The particular program that has been raised with me as a problem is DAMEC's Transitions Project. I have received representations from Thanh Van Nguyen, who is a senior case manager at DAMEC and, as it happens, a former President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, NSW Chapter. He is quite a well-known figure in the Vietnamese community and has had a wide range of community involvement and achievements. In explaining the role of the program, the letter in part states: I am writing to you asking for your support. As you may be aware in the last ten years I have worked for the drug and alcohol multicultural centre's transitions program.

Transitions provides intensive case management support for Arabic and Vietnamese speaking people who are leaving prison and their families. The project's objective is to prevent participants from lapsing into crime and drug use, and to assist them to improve the quality of their lives, and reconnect with their families. In doing so we provide them with counselling and engage them with other services and programs, drug and alcohol treatment, health services, financial support services, employment and training, legal and family and community support—and importantly, housing and accommodation services.

The program's problem presently relates to accommodation. The writer goes on to state:

In the last ten years DAMEC has worked closely in partnership with Hume Community Housing to assist our clients in obtaining appropriate and affordable accommodation. This has been crucial to the successful transition of our clients back into the community, as having a suitable roof over their heads means that participants have the stability and security to focus on addressing issues such as substance use that can impact their chances of reoffending. Hume Housing has kindly provided us with 11 properties within their supported partnership program. Unfortunately, last week we were informed by Hume Housing that 7 of 11 properties must be

returned to Hume Housing for allocation for long-term customers or other programs. We are also uncertain as to the status of our remaining 4 properties.

The properties are located in a variety of suburbs in the local government areas of Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool. The writer also states:

As you are aware, offenders may not have a family home for them to return to upon release. The stigma of substance use and incarceration can lead to serious breakdowns in family relationships. Possession of a criminal record and a broken employment history also make it very difficult for many of our clients to obtain employment, and consequently to afford private rental accommodation. Many of our clients have stated that in the past they have needed to move frequently from one temporary shelter to another including emergency accommodation.

Unfortunately for a sizable number this involved staying with former associates who continue to be involved in drug use and crime. This makes it very difficult for people to escape from a vicious cycle of re-offending and re-incarceration. Therefore, helping newly released men and women find affordable housing is a vital part of a successful transition back into the community.

I ask the relevant Minister to assess this matter and its systemic implications. I also ask Hume and other community housing providers to consider the assistance they might be able to provide, or available alternatives they might be able to suggest. The program run by the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre [DAMEC] includes housing, but its central role is about reducing recidivism, which is obviously significant for participants in the program. But even more important, one view is that it means fewer victims. If reoffending can be reduced, obviously the number of victims will be reduced. This is not a matter of simply meting out compassion to people who have been in trouble; rather, it is a way of making our community safer and reducing the number of victims of crime. I reiterate my call to the relevant Ministers to review this matter.

### ILLAWARRA TRAIN SERVICES

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:46):** Another day and we have another woeful blunder from our State's transport Minister. Over the past few months the people of the Illawarra have watched our train system stumble from disaster to disaster and delay to delay. Sadly, today is no different. Previously, we saw the carnage that was the transport Minister's changes to the train timetable, which resulted in colossal delays and stemmed entirely from his refusal to properly staff the trains. Then there was the decision that was made to build the trains in South Korea which effectively offshored \$2 billion worth of jobs and opportunities. These are the same trains that will not fit the current tracks to the Blue Mountains and have forced the Government to either spend time and money on scraping down and widening tunnels, or compromise on the safety of passengers. As it turns out, the trouble has not stopped there.

Documents obtained under freedom of information laws were released earlier today and confirm what every commuter in my electorate would dread. The New South Wales lead transport agency has chosen fixed seating over reversible and flexible seating to be installed in the State's fleet of new intercity trains. This decision seemingly was made despite research showing "strong customer appeal and usage of reversible seating" and commuters holding the view that fixed seating would be a "backward step". This backward step will mean that thousands of commuters will be forced to sit backwards while travelling on trains every day for hours on end. For members of the public who suffer from motion sickness, sitting backwards just will not be an option. More than likely they will be forced to stand. Maybe this fleet would suit those on short journeys, but for commuters from the Illawarra who are unable to sit backwards on a train for more than two hours, it is a long time to have to stand, or to have to suffer.

We need to work to ensure that passengers' commutes are as comfortable as possible. Our State's workers should not be worried about getting sick on the way to or from work each day. If those opposite are going to force commuters to sit backwards around bends on the escarpment for a three-hour journey each way from the Illawarra every day I hope NSW Trains will be providing commuters with complimentary sick bags. This design will mean less flexibility for families or groups travelling on our trains. Each carriage will be fitted with only two sets of seats at either end facing each other. If those seats are occupied parents will be forced to sit behind or across the aisle from their children.

If ever we needed a subtle reminder about where the Illawarra sits within this Government's priorities this is it. These trains are not what my community wants and it will receive them last. Investment in the Central Coast and Newcastle train lines will begin in late 2019. It will begin on the Blue Mountains line in mid-2020. Lithgow will see its trains about four months after that. As always, the poor Illawarra and South Coast lines are last in the queue; they will not receive funding until the beginning of 2021. The new trains will not go into service on the South Coast line until nearly 1½ years after they have been rolled out throughout the rest of the network. It is clear that this Government always puts the Illawarra last. Every week I hear from constituents complaining about the overcrowding of trains on the Illawarra line and about the lack of seats and carriages.

Those opposite clearly have one message for my community, "It will get worse before it gets better and in the end you will not get what you want." My community knows that. It has experienced the gutting of TAFE

and the privatisation of the hospital. Illawarra residents cannot afford to wait for three years for trains that will not suit their needs. I invite those opposite to struggle with motion sickness while sitting backwards on a train for nearly three hours. Maybe then they will have a little sympathy for my community. Better yet, perhaps they should reconsider the flawed design of these trains. I call on this Government to admit that its decision to install inflexible fixed seating on the new intercity trains was plain wrong and misguided. Our State's commuters deserve a safe and pleasant journey to work. I ask those opposite to reconsider this matter and to give people what they want. This is yet another Government backflip.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:52  
until Tuesday 10 April 2018 at 12:00.**