



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 11 April 2018

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 11 April 2018

Presiding Officers

ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER

The CLERK announced the absence of the Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (The Hon. Thomas George) took the chair at 10:00.

The Deputy Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Bills

CHILD PROTECTION (WORKING WITH CHILDREN) AMENDMENT (STATUTORY REVIEW) BILL 2018

Second Reading Speech

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (10:12): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. This bill represents the Government's ongoing commitment to promoting the safety of children by further strengthening and streamlining laws in relation to the Working with Children Check. It implements the first tranche of recommendations from the 2017 statutory review of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012. The review report has been tabled in this Chamber and the other place. The current Working with Children Check scheme commenced in June 2013 and is administered by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. It is complemented by another principal function of the Children's Guardian, which is to encourage organisations to develop their capacity to be safe for children. We know that this is integral to protecting children and young people as the Working with Children Check on its own is not a panacea for managing risk.

The objective of the Working with Children Check, as stated in section 3 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, is to protect children by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work and by requiring persons engaged in child-related work to have a Working with Children Check clearance. Since it commenced, this Government has extensively tailored the legislation to respond to operational issues identified by users of the scheme, changing community expectations and the serious issues highlighted by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in its hearings and recommendations contained in its interim report on the Working with Children Check [WWCC] scheme.

I am pleased to say that the New South Wales Working with Children Check scheme is already largely aligned with the standards recommended by the royal commission aimed at achieving national consistency. The five-year statutory review of the working with children Act, which was conducted according to the requirements in section 53 of the Act, followed on from this period of continuous improvement. The statutory review and development of this bill are the culmination of targeted stakeholder consultations with government and non-government agencies, including peak bodies and unions.

More than 60 written submissions were received in response to a detailed discussion paper that incorporated consideration of the remaining recommendations of the royal commission. The review found that the policy objectives set out in section 3 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act remain valid, the need for pre-employment screening having been recognised by the royal commission as a safeguard for protecting children and young people when incorporated into broader child-safe strategies. It also found that the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing the objectives. Twenty-nine recommendations were made to further improve the scheme. A second tranche of amendments is expected to come before this House following the completion of consultations with relevant parties.

I will now outline the provisions of this bill, which include a number of general amendments, including to clarify certain definitions and improve transparency in decision-making. Others broadly relate to enhancing information-gathering processes, which are integral to the efficient operation of the scheme and improving overall compliance. Schedule 1 amends the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012. It inserts a definition of

"risk to the safety of children" that is "real and appreciable". This is in accordance with the well-established concept enunciated in *Commission for Children and Young People v V* [2002] NSWSC 949 and adopted by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. The reality is that it is impossible to say that a person poses no risk to the safety of children. In other words, people may present some small level of risk but this is not the level of risk that the Working with Children Check considers in determining whether a person can engage in child-related work.

The test that is consistently used by the NCAT in the case I have referred to is whether, in all the circumstances of the case, a person presents a risk that is a "real and appreciable" risk as opposed to any risk. The legislation is currently silent as to the meaning of "risk" and the threshold that must be achieved. While the Office of the Children's Guardian tends to adopt this test in its risk assessment process, articulating this threshold of risk in the legislation will clarify to applicants the standard that they are assessed against by the Children's Guardian and be consistent with NCAT. The bill also clarifies the definition of "child-related work" found at section 6 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act as recommended by the royal commission to provide that contact with children must be a usual part of, and more than incidental to, the child-related work. The definition is clear to ensuring that the right people are brought within the scope of the Working with Children Check scheme.

The bill also creates a regulation-making power so the regulations can provide the circumstances in which direct contact by a worker with a child or children is taken to be a usual part of, and more than incidental to, a worker's work. Accordingly, direct contact that a worker has with a child or children when engaged in work providing health services, as defined by the legislation, is now taken to be a usual part of, and more than incidental to, their work and, therefore, requires a Working with Children Check clearance. The current legislative approach is to identify an individual as being in child-related work if they are in child-related sectors and roles specified in the Act, and they have direct contact with children. The amendment is consistent with the policy underpinning the scope of the check and will provide further clarity for employers.

Ensuring that the right people are brought within the scope of the check and avoiding over-regulation in the private lives of individuals has always been a complex balancing act and this amendment should provide clarity to employers. It will provide a comprehensive definition of "criminal history", which the royal commission has recommended be adopted by all jurisdictions. This includes convictions whether they are spent or not, findings of guilt that did not result in a conviction being recorded and charges regardless of the status or outcome, irrespective of whether it relates to a person's history as an adult or a child. This information is already considered in the Working with Children Check assessment process in New South Wales, but it is not specifically defined in the legislation.

Additionally, the bill will effect the removal of references to "criminal record" and replace these throughout the legislation with "criminal history", as recommended by the royal commission. In 2015, in response to the royal commission's findings, the Government made changes to the Act to ensure that children in out-of-home care are cared for by people who have gone through significant background scrutiny and checking by requiring that all adult persons residing with authorised carers must have a Working with Children Check. This has had an unintended and destabilising impact on a few very vulnerable young people who themselves are in care and who turn 18. Where a clearance is refused, the young person is required to leave the placement within 48 hours or, if the young person remains, the authorised carer can no longer provide care to the other children, who may be their siblings.

Leaving a stable placement where they have been residing for a number of years supported by carers and siblings can have a significant adverse impact not only for the young person who is required to leave the home but also for the siblings who remain there and who as a result are separated. To respond to this situation, the bill will provide the Children's Guardian discretion to allow a person who turns 18 while residing with an authorised carer and who has been refused a Working with Children Check clearance to continue to reside with the authorised carer if the Children's Guardian is satisfied by evidence of risk mitigation strategies within the placement. This is not a general exemption. It will provide a limited approval known as a "continuing residence approval" to allow the young person to remain in a supported placement where there are appropriate supports and oversight. They will not be allowed to engage in child-related work.

In addition, the Children's Guardian will articulate the existence of a current court order as a factor that is considered by both the Children's Guardian under section 15 (4) and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal under section 30 (1) of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act when assessing the risk that an individual poses to children and young people. This will provide transparency in decision-making, and add weight to the importance of judicial consideration of risk. Other provisions enhance information-gathering processes, which are essential to the operation of the Working with Children Check scheme. All Working with Children Check schemes in Australia, other than in New South Wales, currently have offence provisions in relation to an individual failing

to notify either the employer or the screening agency, depending on the model used in the jurisdiction, about a change in their circumstances.

The royal commission also recommended that failure to notify a screening agency of relevant changes in an individual's circumstances should be an offence. The bill will place a positive obligation on individuals to notify the Children's Guardian of any change to their personal details within three months of the change occurring. While other jurisdictions require individuals to notify of changed criminal history information, the New South Wales scheme already receives New South Wales criminal history information through its continuous monitoring of all relevant New South Wales offences and findings of workplace disciplinary proceedings. Therefore, only an individual's personal details will need to be updated. Failure to notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of changes in personal details within three months without a reasonable excuse will attract a maximum penalty of five penalty units.

The current scheme is reliant on the Office of the Children's Guardian having accurate, timely and high-quality records available to it in order to make rigorous determinations about the risk that an individual may pose to children in future. This is particularly the case when assessing risk in the absence of a conviction. The legislation provides broad powers to compel the production of information to inform the risk assessment process. The bill will extend this power to require the production of information for the purposes of determining whether to grant the proposed continuing residence approvals. It will also extend these powers to equally compel government and non-government agencies to ensure that the scheme is able to meet its objectives in a timely way.

Importantly, the bill will make changes to improve compliance with the Working with Children Check scheme by strengthening employer verification requirements. Section 9A of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act requires that employers must verify through an online process that a worker has a clearance or current Working with Children Check application. This process enables employers to receive up-to-date information about the change in status of an employee's Working with Children Check clearance. It is essential to enabling employers to remove an individual from working with children if they are no longer cleared. Where an employer does not verify online, information about their employees Working with Children Check status cannot be exchanged with them, undermining the effectiveness of the scheme. Employer verification rates require improvement to give effect to the protections afforded by the Working with Children Check.

In 2015 the Government clarified the wording of the legislation to remove ambiguity about the mandatory nature of this requirement and invested heavily at the same time in education to promote compliance. This has had some limited impact. To facilitate greater compliance, the changes in this bill will make failure to verify without a reasonable excuse an offence and attract a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units in the case of corporations and 50 penalty units in any other case. Authorised officers of the Office of the Children's Guardian will be able to issue a penalty infringement notice to persistent non-compliant employers. Prosecution will be a last resort as part of a proportionate and escalating range of enforcement options. However, it is a clear signal about the importance of compliance with the scheme, and the emphasis that this Government places on shared responsibility for children and young people's safety.

The bill also responds to a gap in the verification framework in relation to placement agencies and licensing authorities. Under section 9A of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act employers are required to undertake verification in respect of workers who carry out child-related work for the employer. However, both licensing authorities and placement agencies do not have verification obligations under the Act. This is despite the fact that placement agencies which place children in child-related work and are considered employers and licensing authorities, though not considered to be employers, need to know the Working with Children Check status of individuals as part of certain licensing requirements.

The bill will extend the verification requirements to both placement agencies and relevant licences issued by licensing authorities that will be prescribed by regulation. This will occur after consultation has occurred with relevant placement agencies and licensing authorities responsible for issuing relevant licences. It will not be applicable to all placement agencies and licences issued by licensing authorities, only those that are prescribed by regulation. Schedule 1 will also restrict the circumstances in which the NCAT may make interim stay orders that are subject to conditions to situations where the tribunal is satisfied that there are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision and enforcement of the conditions of the stay order by the person's employer.

Sections 61 and 62 of the Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997 permit NCAT to make an interim order subject to conditions whilst the original decision of the Children's Guardian is being reviewed. However, there is currently no mechanism to monitor compliance with the conditions. This can raise a number of child protection risks as the individual may be unmonitored or unsupervised around children and young people until the NCAT reviews the outcome of their Working with Children Check. The Government is committed to the safety of children and young people, and the bill will require that during the interim period their safety is given

absolute primacy. Any interim order will only be able to be imposed subject to conditions where the NCAT is satisfied of the mechanisms for supervision of any known risk.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes consequential amendments to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012. Importantly, schedule 2 also amends the Child Protection (Working with Children Regulation) 2013 to remove the exemption that currently exists in clause 20 of the regulation for parents volunteering in activities involving their own children, if they volunteer on overnight camps. While the general exemption for parents volunteering in activities with their own children will remain, the scheme will respond to the inherent risks that exist in the context of unsupervised overnight camps. This will be by way of amending clause 20 (2) to specify that the exemption does not extend to a parent or close relative if the volunteering involves attending at an overnight camp. This was a recommendation of the royal commission. It recognises that there are inherent risks in unsupervised settings and that most child sex offenders are known to their victims rather than being strangers on the street.

In its work the royal commission drew attention to research suggesting that abuse by trusted adults who are close to the child can increase the impacts of the abuse—page 36 of the "Final Report Volume 3, Impacts"—and that parents can use their own children to access and groom potential victims in unsupervised settings. This change was widely supported through the statutory review process. As with all volunteers, the Government will not charge these parents for a Working with Children Check. We value the importance of parents taking part in activities with their children and do not want to discourage their participation. I am pleased to introduce these reforms and refinements to the Working with Children Check scheme. The Working with Children Check is an integral tool in the New South Wales framework for protecting children and young people against known offenders. Child abuse of any form is heinous.

The royal commission highlighted the pervasiveness of child abuse through its work, the complex trauma and cumulative effects over the long term for individual victims, and the ripple effects on families and communities. While the check cannot protect against people who are yet to offend or those whose offending has gone unreported, it is certainly an effective tool in a broader framework in New South Wales for responding to people who we know or suspect should not be working with our most vulnerable community members. Since the start of the new Working with Children Check scheme in June 2013 until 12 March 2018, the Office of the Children's Guardian had processed more than 1.5 million Working with children checks, paid or volunteer worker applications. In the same period the office has barred or a refused a clearance to more than 3,000 people known or suspected of posing a risk to children and young people.

Each one of those individuals has been prevented from having access to numerous children and young people through their work. We know that the Working with Children Check has an important role in promoting the safety and welfare of children and young people. However, the most effective approach must be multifaceted, with organisations adopting careful recruitment processes, appropriate training and supervision, robust processes for investigating complaints, a culture of valuing children and young people's participation, and risk management systems centred around children's rights. Importantly, this must be a shared approach across the community. I commend this bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (10:33): I lead for the Opposition on the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. The bill was passed in the other place without amendment. I indicate from the outset that the New South Wales Opposition will not be proposing any amendments and we support the bill. The New South Wales Opposition undoubtedly supports all measures that will strengthen child protection laws in New South Wales. Historically, the Working with Children Check was first pioneered in 1998 by the Carr Labor Government. It was the first such scheme introduced in Australia. The two Acts respectively introduced in New South Wales were the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 and the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1988.

In 2012 the Government introduced the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act in response to 2010 review of the Commission for Children and Young People Act and an Auditor-General's report on the Working with Children Check scheme. The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 overhauled the Working with Children Check scheme and a statutory review was prescribed in section 53 of the Act. The Office of the Children's Guardian then undertook the statutory review and made a number of recommendations. That has given rise to this bill. The review involved consultation and the development of a discussion paper for public comment. That was the first tranche of recommendations as part of the statutory review. It is my understanding that a further set of recommendations are being considered and they will form part of future legislation.

The object of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018 is to amend the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 and other legislation to strengthen and

streamline laws in relation to working with children. In addition to incorporating the first tranche of recommendations, this bill will also implement further royal commission recommendations. It is a continuation of the reform process in this area aimed at achieving national consistency of standards. In 2015 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse examined working with children checks nationwide and made 36 recommendations for all of the Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions to adopt. This was aimed at creating a national framework and consistency across standards.

In June 2015, and in response to the royal commission recommendations for out-of-home care, the New South Wales Government introduced child protection legislation. This included a number of changes to the New South Wales Working with Children Check scheme such as requiring an employer to verify an employee's status on the register, requiring verifications before a worker commenced child-related work and then again five years later, and reducing the time frame for Working with Children Check applicants to provide further information to the Office of the Children's Guardian from six months to three months.

During the debate on the 2015 bill, the Government incorporated Opposition amendments, expanding the list of disqualifying offences to prohibit an applicant from receiving a Working with Children Check clearance within New South Wales and prohibit the right of review to the Office of the Children's Guardian or to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] where an applicant had been previously convicted of a serious criminal offence. That latter issue is being revisited in this bill. In 2016 the New South Wales Government introduced the Child Protection (Working with Children) and Other Child Protection Legislation Amendment Bill. That bill contained a package of further amendments related to child protection, employment and education proposed by the Children's Guardian. Sadly, a number of amendments proposed by the New South Wales Opposition at the time to strengthen child protection laws were rejected by the Government.

I turn now to the specifics of the bill. As I said, this bill will amend the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 and the Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012. I will now refer to a few sections in detail. The bill proposes to clearly define the meaning of any reference to the risk to the safety of children as being a real and appreciable risk to the safety of children. This will ensure that a clear threshold needs to be met—namely, the threshold used by the courts and NCAT. The Opposition supports this change. New section 5C (1) includes the definition of "criminal history". Currently the Children's Guardian undertakes this assessment and has broad powers to look into an individual's criminal history. New section 5C (1) defines "criminal history" as:

- (a) convictions (including convictions that have been spent, quashed or set aside or for which a pardon has been granted), despite anything to the contrary in the Criminal Records Act 1991, and
- (b) criminal charges, whether or not heard, proven, dismissed, withdrawn or discharged, and
- (c) convictions or findings to which section 579 of the Crimes Act 1900 applies ... It is important that this definition is clearly defined in the legislation and that individuals may appeal to NCAT or to the Supreme Court. As I said earlier, this information is already considered by the Office of the Children's Guardian in its assessment process but the proposed amendment is in line with the recommendations of the royal commission. Specifically, it will ensure that all references to "criminal record" in the Act will now read "criminal history" with that specific definition.

New section 6 (1) (a) amends the definition of "child-related work" in the 2012 Act so that direct contact with children must be a usual part of the role rather than more incidental to the work being performed. This amendment is proposed to ensure that the scope of this scheme is narrowed to focus on those people whose role or occupation involves working with children or volunteering with children on a daily or regular basis. I can understand why this definition needs to be clearly made in the legislation. It is important to provide clarity for employers and volunteer organisations in New South Wales to avoid confusion on when it is necessary to seek this clearance.

New sections 9 and 9A amend the 2012 Act to make it an offence for an employer or respective placement agencies on behalf of an employer to fail to obtain and verify the details of an employee employed to work with children or to keep a record of the details that were obtained. This has been proposed to facilitate greater compliance with the scheme. The amendments to section 6 are necessary as there are now further compliance requirements on the part of employers and there will be specific penalties imposed as a result of non-compliance. New section 9AA will be inserted into the 2012 Act to require licensing registration and accreditation authorities to obtain and verify the details of a person to whom a licence, registration or accreditation is provided and to keep a record of the details that are obtained. This has been proposed to address a gap that has been identified in the statutory review whereby licensing authorities and placement agencies do not have verification obligations at this stage.

New section 10 (5) (c) will provide discretion to the Children's Guardian to permit a child who turns 18 to continue to reside with an authorised carer despite not holding a clearance. This will mitigate the unintended consequence of children who turn 18 whilst in out-of-home care—and potentially there are siblings or other

children who are also in that placement—having to obtain a Working with Children Check clearance whilst they reside in that placement. I understand the Minister has clarified that should they seek to work with children or work in child-related employment they will be required to have a clearance. I note also that Mr David Shoebridge in the other House raised some concerns that there could be some bureaucratic issues leading to a delay in the Office of the Children's Guardian granting the continuing residence approval and that it will be important for the Children's Guardian to ensure there is no delay. I understand the Children's Guardian will only provide or grant the continuing residence approval in instances where they are confident that any risks to other children have been sufficiently mitigated.

Sections 27 and 28 have been amended to change the powers of the NCAT when carrying out reviews under the Act. The legislation will propose a new requirement to consider any existing court or tribunal orders that are in place when carrying out a review. There will also be the requirement for NCAT not to stay a decision to refuse or cancel or to impose an interim bar on a Working with Children Check clearance unless the tribunal is satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the supervision and enforcement of conditions. We have seen a number of articles in recent years that have highlighted issues with the lack of enforcement conditions.

This amendment is proposed to mitigate the obvious risks associated with individuals who have committed serious offences from being able to appeal the decisions of the Office of the Children's Guardian to continue working with children. In 2015 the Opposition proposed amendments to the Child Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which addressed concerns about the number of appeals to the decisions of the Office of the Children's Guardian from individuals who had previously committed serious offences. These amendments were incorporated at the time into the legislation by the then Minister.

New section 31 amends the powers of the Office of the Children's Guardian in the 2012 Act to allow it to require persons as well as government agencies to provide information relevant to the preparation of submissions to the NCAT or related to the assessment of risk posed by a person as directed by the Children's Guardian. This is proposed so that the Office of the Children's Guardian and NCAT will have better information available to assess the risk of specific applicants. New section 36B will require applicants for a clearance to notify any changes in their personal details. It will impose a specific obligation on the part of the individual to ensure that their details remain up-to-date with the Office of the Children's Guardian. That is a critical amendment and the New South Wales Opposition welcomes that.

For the first time, new sections 50A and 50B will permit penalty notices to be issued in New South Wales for offences and non-compliance with the Act. The bill will create new offences and penalties for employers who fail to check a person's Working with Children Check status and who fail to record the details. It is already a statutory duty; it will now carry a specific penalty should that statutory duty be breached. The maximum penalty is 50 penalty units for an individual or 100 penalty units in the case of a corporation. That requirement applies also to licensing authorities under new section 9AA. The duty is also imposed on the person who holds the clearance to notify the Children's Guardian within three months of any changes to their personal circumstances that would require a reassessment and, potentially, a subsequent review of their clearance. This is in line with schemes in other States and Territories.

Schedule 2 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 is amended to require parent volunteers on overnight camps to have a clearance. As a mother who said goodbye to her 12-year old child as she went to her school camp this morning, I welcome this amendment. This removes an exemption which currently exists for parents who volunteer on overnight camps with their children. This is proposed to respond to the inherent risks that can exist in the context of unsupervised overnight camps. The royal commission noted that most child sex offenders are known to their victims and, unfortunately, can at times be a trusted adult. We in the Chamber understand that this precaution needs to be legislated formally. The Minister has indicated that it will not place any financial burden on those particular parents, and as for all other volunteers, parents who attend an overnight camp and who need to get a clearance will not be charged. This provides some degree of improved oversight and would be supported statewide by many parents, including myself.

The Minister highlighted a number of statistics from the annual reports of the Office of the Children's Guardian. In the 2016-17 there were 392,000 applications for a clearance. Of those, 831 applicants were refused a clearance, 684 were cleared following a risk assessment and 670 were issued with an interim bar. Interestingly, 2,797 applications were terminated, which is quite a high figure and poses some concern. Comparatively, in 2013-14 there were 123 terminations; in 2014-15, 682 terminations; and in 2015-16, 276 terminations. Perhaps the Minister in her speech in reply or the Office of the Children's Guardian can provide some insight into why the number of terminations is now so high. The 2016-17 annual report indicates that:

The powers of the Office of the Children's Guardian to terminate applications were expanded in 2016-17 to include clearance holders. An increased number of these applications were terminated because applicants failed to adequately engage in the risk

assessment. In previous years, this outcome had not been available to clearance holders, who had had to undergo a full risk assessment.

I would appreciate clarification of whether that explanation covers the high figure of 2,797 terminations. There is some concern. It has been suggested that as people start the process they become concerned that they might not be given a clearance and terminate their application. A better outcome in those situations would be some sort of bar or an outright rejection. The 2016-17 annual report noted that 120 applications went to NCAT for review, although the report does not make the outcomes of those reviews clear. In the same period, 90 matters were referred for investigation of alleged non-compliance with Working with Children Check requirements or misconduct towards children by employers or employees.

It is not clear what action, if any, was undertaken by the Office of the Children's Guardian. Presumably, this bill will allow for future penalties to be imposed for such non-compliance. I ask that the Office of the Children's Guardian provide a more statistical overview of the outcomes of these investigations, including empirical data on penalties that may be imposed in the future, in its next annual report should that data be available, or if not, soon thereafter. Clearly it is important to better understand those investigations and their outcomes. I remind members that in the 2015-16 budget the Government removed 82 staff from the Department of Family and Community Services. That number included a proposed cut of 11 jobs from the Office of the Children's Guardian, which administers the Working with Children Check scheme—for a saving of about \$2 million.

After pressure from the Labor Opposition, the then Baird Government reversed those cuts to the Office of the Children's Guardian. Given the Government's previous form, I seek assurances from the Minister that she will not allow any potential staff cuts in the upcoming budget and that additional resources will be made available to the Office of the Children's Guardian. Given that the legislative changes will undoubtedly require additional resources to meet its new obligations—in particular, authorised officers will now have to impose specific penalties—an additional burden is being placed on the Office of the Children's Guardian. These amendments are welcome but they will create additional work for the Children's Guardian and her staff. The Government should ensure that additional resources will be allocated to the Office of the Children's Guardian to meet these quite burdensome amendments.

In 2015 and 2016 when this legislation came before the House, the then Minister for Family and Community Services, Brad Hazzard, offered me and my staff a briefing. Unfortunately, in this instance a briefing was not offered. The former Minister for Family and Community Services always afforded me briefings and invited me to a number of seminars and forums to give the New South Wales Opposition an opportunity to provide its bipartisan support to a variety of amendments and changes within the department in relation to child protection. Sadly, that has not been the case for the past 12 months. It is unfortunate that those invitations are no longer forthcoming.

Previously in this House I have paid tribute to Minister Hazzard for working with the Opposition. It is so important that we do things in a bipartisan way to strengthen child protection laws in New South Wales. That is not a criticism of the current Minister for Family and Community Services, but in future, particularly for a bill such as this, some type of briefing from the Minister or from ministerial staff would be appreciated. The New South Wales Opposition has provided unqualified support for the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (10:56): I support the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. It is an extremely important amendment bill, but before I commence my contribution I wish to speak about something a bit more light-hearted. Mr Assistant Speaker, I compliment you on your tartan tie.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: It is the Fraser Hunting Ancient tartan colours and I am entitled to wear it.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: It certainly does look good. I congratulate the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on introducing this legislation. The bill makes a number of significant improvements to the Working with Children Check, which is an integral component of the framework in New South Wales for protecting our most vulnerable of the community against known and suspected perpetrators of abuse. Like many others in this House, I have undergone a Working with Children Check and have obtained a document stating that I have completed it.

When I was a detective there was no such thing. As a detective I investigated numerous allegations and events involving child sexual assault. In the 1980s in the Taree area, extra sittings of the District Court had to be held because of the number of child sexual assault cases coming before the court. There was a number of reasons for that. It was not necessarily because there were more child sexual assaults being committed; there was an increased knowledge of such crimes being committed because the assistance that was being given to victims and

their families encouraged them to come forward. That is why people who have committed certain offences should be identified and should not be allowed to work with or near children.

It is great to see that this legislation will be reviewed and amended if necessary so that we can continue to do everything possible as a Parliament and as a government to protect children in New South Wales. Nothing is more horrific than offences against children. We must do everything we can to protect them. The objective of the Working with Children Check is to protect children by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work. It can help to reduce the risk of children being abused by known or suspected offenders. It is understood that given the high attrition rates of child sexual offences through our court system and the criminal versatility of child sex abuse offenders that the check is not a panacea for managing risk. It cannot detect a person who has never been caught or even suspected of perpetrating abuse.

We heard through the determined, and often heart-wrenching, work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse that it is an essential safeguard for children and young people when used as part of a range of effective child-safe policies, procedures and practices that are embedded in the culture of child safety within organisations. The changes in this bill, which further tailor an already robust framework, will make an important contribution to managing risks to children and young people in organisations. I am pleased to note that an evidence-based approach is being taken.

I will now address specific provisions of the bill that reflect how well the balance has been struck between child safety on the one hand and the avoidance of over-regulation on the other. Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 by removing the exemption in clause 20 for all parents volunteering in activities involving their own children if they volunteer on overnight camps. Parent volunteers are currently exempt from the requirements of the Working with Children Check legislation where they volunteer in activities with their child except in limited circumstances.

This exemption was intended to prevent over-regulation where there is no clear benefit that can be obtained from bringing a group within the scope of the scheme, or where it would place an unacceptable burden on the community, as would happen if all parents who interact with their children's peers were brought within the scope of the scheme. The Government has considered whether parent volunteers should be subject to the requirements of the Working with Children Check on a number of prior occasions. Considerable effort has been taken to balance government intervention in the private lives of citizens against the need to promote the safety of children. This bill strikes an appropriate and evidence-based approach by removing the exemption in the case of parents volunteering on overnight camps.

There is now considerable research to show that most child sexual abuse is not perpetrated by unknown strangers; in fact, as little as 10 per cent of child sexual abuse cases are said to be perpetrated by strangers. Overnight camps are often unsupervised, and the risk that parents may present to children when they are on an overnight camp is not mitigated by the fact that their own child is attending the camp. In any event, it is often the case that adults may not be placed with their own child at the time of the overnight camp. This amendment gives effect to the royal commission's recommendation to bring these parent volunteers within the scope of the scheme because of the potential for risk that these unsupervised activities can give rise to, while continuing to maintain the exemption for other parents volunteering in activities with their children. I understand that this amendment had the overwhelming support of stakeholders through the statutory review process that was undertaken by the Children's Guardian.

I again refer to my experience as a detective dealing with numerous child sexual assault cases. The overwhelming majority were perpetrated by a member of the family—a parent, a grandparent, a brother, a sister, or a friend of the family. In fact, I cannot remember investigating a child sexual assault perpetrated by someone other than a family member or a friend. I cannot think of one case involving a stranger. Strangers tend to climb in a window in the middle of the night, and cases of that type are few and far between. As I said, the overwhelming majority involve family and friends, which is absolutely horrific.

Similarly, schedule 1 makes a very considered amendment to the requirement under the Act for children who turn 18 while in out-of-home care to apply for a Working with Children Check clearance. Section 10 of the Act requires that all adult household members residing on the same property as an authorised carer or where a home-based education and care service or family day care service operates must comply with the requirements of the legislation. This captures siblings of the children in care when the siblings turn 18 years old. This section was introduced into the Act with the aim of strengthening the protections offered to children and young people in care by improving the oversight of households where the children reside.

It is recognised that while an authorised carer has the day-to-day care and formal responsibility of caring for a child or young person placed with them and must have a Working with Children Check clearance, other household members also have contact with that child, including in the absence of the authorised carer. Given that,

they should also require a Working with Children Check clearance. However, since then, I understand that this has had a significant adverse impact on a few very vulnerable high-needs young people who turn 18 when they are in care and have siblings still in care. [*Extension of time*]

If they are refused a Working with Children Check clearance, they are required to leave the home within 48 hours or the carer will cease to be authorised to provide statutory care to the other children in care. The royal commission has drawn attention to the fact that some children and young people in statutory out-of-home care have problematic sexual or aggressive behaviours because of previous abuse and neglect. These behaviours can lead them to be refused a Working with Children Check clearance. Finding appropriate carers and supports for these children can be very challenging.

The bill provides the Children's Guardian with discretion to allow a person who turns 18 while residing with an authorised carer and who has been refused a Working with Children Check clearance to continue to reside with the authorised carer if the Children's Guardian is satisfied by evidence of risk mitigation strategies within the placement. This recognises the stable placement where the child has been residing prior to turning 18 years old along with their siblings and the support and supervision provided by designated agencies delivering statutory out-of-home care.

Importantly, it also gives effect to the permanent placement principles articulated under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. It is not a general exemption; it will provide only a limited approval known as a "continuing residence approval" to allow the young person to remain in the supported placement they were in prior to attaining 18 years of age where there are appropriate supports and oversight in place. They will not be allowed to engage in child-related work.

Finally, I note that schedule 1 to the bill also clarifies the definition of "child-related work" at section 6 of the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act to provide that contact with children must be a usual part of and more than incidental to the child-related work. The definition of "child-related work" is important in ensuring that employers understand who should be checked. The current legislative approach is designed to identify an individual as being in child-related work if they are in child-related sectors and roles specified in the Act and have direct contact with children.

This approach is well suited to New South Wales and provides flexibility. By clarifying that the work is a usual part of and more than incidental to the child-related work, employers will be better able to decide who requires a Working with Children Check while avoiding over-regulation and intruding upon the lives of individuals who should not be subject to the requirements of the Working with Children Check framework. This strikes an appropriate balance. The bill contains a regulation-making power to provide for circumstances where direct contact by a worker with a child or children is taken to be a usual part of and more than incidental to a worker's employment. I welcome the proposed changes as they strengthen the important protections provided by the Working with Children Check. The Working with Children Check is not a panacea for managing risk, but it is an essential tool in the framework for identifying and responding to risk. I offer my unqualified support for the bill.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I note that the member for Myall Lakes has the Bromhead tartan on today—a mix of the Mackintosh and Graham tartans—which he commissioned in Scotland on 17 June 2017.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:11): I speak on the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. Whilst the shadow Minister for Family and Community Services has given an excellent response to the bill, I will comment on the broader implications raised by Minister Goward in her second reading speech regarding the Government's framework of dealing with offenders who prey on children and young people. As the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I am concerned that this is just one of a number of pieces of legislation introduced this year which impact the Government's approach to addressing all forms of sexual assault and sexual abuse. This year we have seen the Saint John's College Bill 2017 and the Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

Labor is supportive of any positive steps taken by the Government to reduce sexual assault and to protect children and young people from assault and abuse by people who may prey upon them, particularly where those people have chosen a mode of employment that provides them with access to young children. Labor first established the Working with Children Check in 1998 under the then Carr Government with the introduction of two Acts: the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 and the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998. In 2015 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse examined working with children checks nationwide. The royal commission made 36 recommendations for the Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions to adopt which were aimed at creating a national framework and consistency across standards.

Labor supports the Government's aims in implementing those recommendations and supports attempts to improve frameworks and strategies to address the issues of sexual assault. However, the Government has a broader responsibility to meet its obligations relating to the reduction and elimination of sexual assault and to protect all children and young people from this abuse. As of this week, the Government's sexual assault strategy is two years overdue. It was promised on 25 October 2015 and was to be prepared within six months. In the intervening 2½ years there has been little progress, other than consultations on a draft strategy, which was widely panned by the sector. This issue cannot be addressed in a piecemeal, chaotic and shambolic fashion any longer.

Section 6 of the 2012 Act amends the definition of "child-related work" so that direct contact with children must be a usual part of the role rather than being incidental to the work performed. Consideration must be given to the context of that change. Earlier this year upon the introduction of the Justice Legislation Bill 2018, it was said that there was not an appetite for criminalising people employed in schools who want to have sex with school students aged 16 years or over unless they are in defined clear roles such as teachers or deputy principals. There was a move towards having care and protection put into that space, but the Attorney General's second reading speech left the door open for those employed permanently within our schools as general assistants and maintenance and administrative workers—employees who are not in direct teaching positions—to not be subject to criminal investigations on those matters.

We have an opportunity to ensure there are strong codes of conduct around the actions of all staff working in the public education system. In the briefings I have sought from the Minister for Education, the Attorney General and other Ministers in this place, there are no consistent and clear overarching standards that apply to this type of conduct in all schools. It has been a frustration for me as the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault that in non-public schools there appears to be little recourse for students, parents or others who are impacted by those assaults. The criminal fact has been limited, and although it may be correct in law this was an opportunity to address that issue. A 2004 report produced by the Australian Institute of Criminology entitled "Misperceptions about child sex offenders" states:

Sullivan and Beech's (2004) study of professional perpetrators (n=41) found that 15 per cent chose their occupation (e.g. clergy, teaching, child care) exclusively so they could sexually abuse children and a further 41.5 percent admitted that this was part of their motivation. In addition, Sullivan and Beech (2004:49) also found that most perpetrators interviewed listed several different areas of contact with children, [and] some have spoken of switching to the voluntary or charity sector to continue abusing as a result of being discovered sexually abusing children in their professional capacity.

It is a complex point to convey in the short time allotted to me in a second reading debate. It is clear that some people become clergy, teaching staff or childcare workers in order to gain access to children. It would be naive, negligent and grossly stupid of a government to think that there are not people in other professions who are employed on a regular part-time or full-time basis within schools who also would have these issues. At times we read reports in the media about a maintenance worker who worked at a school on a regular basis to gain access to children. The Minister could have discussed these issues in a briefing with either me or the member for Bankstown, the shadow Minister for Family and Community Services.

Minister Goward talked about the systemic approach that her Government takes to sexual assault and domestic violence, and she talked about bipartisanship. But the lack of a sexual assault strategy for two years is a damning indictment that there is no systemic approach, and the lack of a briefing shows there is no bipartisan approach in this space. The member for Myall Lakes spoke on this matter. Obviously, this issue is close to his heart. From his experience as a police officer, he talked about the number of sexual assaults that are perpetrated by people who are known to the victims. The offenders are known to the victims. This goes to the heart of respectful relationships education, which is another area where this Government is failing. The Government is prepared to let people onto our school grounds to work in a permanent part-time or full-time capacity who are not subject to working with children checks.

At the same time, the Government fails to give children respectful relationships training. The statistics around this show that most perpetrators are known to the victims. I have seen figures of about 70 per cent. Yet we provide no protection at all to children from people who are familiar to them. I am pleased to support the Government's legislation with respect to working with children checks. However, the Government should put in place a comprehensive sexual assault strategy that truly protects all people in this State but particularly the most vulnerable—children and young people—from sexual abuse, particularly in places such as schools and hospitals and where the working with children checks have been identified as a need. Some members have talked about the administrative burdens. We should not forget the cuts to the Office of the Children's Guardian. [*Extension of time*]

When we talk about red tape we should not forget that we are talking about red tape that stops children being sexually assaulted and abused at schools by people whom they have come to trust. It is a bit ridiculous to call it "red tape" in that situation. Red tape is an overburden on administration. Yet in the 2015-16 State budget the Government removed 82 staff from the Department of Family and Community Services, including a cut of

11 jobs, or a saving of around \$2 million, from the Office of the Children's Guardian. Due to Opposition pressure, that money was restored, but we need to be clear about the Minister's actions.

Minister Goward has spoken in this Chamber about systems and bipartisanship, but she must not act to cut funding for oversight. She should not quote figures about red tape and administrative overburden, or allow her colleagues to do so, as a reason to constrain adequate checks. On behalf of all victims of sexual assault and child abuse in this State, I ask the Minister to please release a comprehensive sexual assault strategy as a matter of extreme urgency. Two and a half years is too long to wait. I ask her to think of every single child, every single person, who has been subjected to sexual assault in the past two years who could have been helped by that strategy if it had been delivered.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:22): I support the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. New South Wales has a Working with Children Check framework that is recognised nationally as one of the most robust in Australia. Since the current check commenced in June 2013, it has been tailored extensively to respond to issues highlighted by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and operational issues that have come to light in that time. I am very pleased to note that the statutory review of the legislation found continued support for the policy objectives of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 and that the review process allowed for rigorous consideration of whether the legislation required further fine-tuning to achieve those objectives.

The bill represents the culmination of the first tranche of recommendations arising from the statutory review report, which I understand has been subject to comprehensive consultation between government and non-government partners that are committed to contributing to the safety of children and young people in New South Wales. In reading the report that was tabled by the Hon. Pru Goward, I noted that the Working with Children Check has become well established. The royal commission's work has no doubt contributed to a greater community understanding of the importance of this process. At the same time, it has emphasised the limited efficacy of the checks when other child safety strategies are not embedded within organisations.

It was of interest to me that a number of the recommendations arising from the review related to improving compliance with the policy objectives and operation of the scheme. The scheme can only be effective where individuals and employers are compliant with their obligations under the scheme. To this end, the bill makes a number of changes to improve compliance, which I now turn to. The changes include provisions to enhance information-gathering processes, to strengthen employer verification requirements, and to ensure that decisions by the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal are consistent with the policy intention of the legislation. The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act places obligations on both individuals and employers to promote compliance with the scheme.

A key requirement is for employers to verify that all their employees are using the online Working with Children Check portal to check that employees in child-related work have a Working with Children Check clearance or a valid Working with Children Check application, and that employers take appropriate measures to respond to changes in the Working with Children Check status of employees. New section 9A of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act requires that employers must verify through an online process that a worker has a clearance or current Working with Children Check application. This process enables employers to receive up-to-date information about the change in status of an employee's clearance. This is received by the Office of the Children's Guardian through continuous monitoring of New South Wales criminal records and workplace misconduct records. It is a key feature of the system.

However, where employers fail to undertake this process, the Office of the Children's Guardian is unable to convey any information that is obtained by the office about the applicant's criminal- or misconduct-related history through the continuous monitoring process. This important feature allows an employer who has undertaken online verification to take the necessary steps to remove an employee who poses a risk to children from child-related work in a timely fashion. The bill extends the employer verification requirements to placement agencies and licensing bodies that issue relevant licences. This responds to a gap in the verification framework in relation to placement agencies and licensing authorities.

Under new section 9A of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act, employers are required to undertake verification in respect of workers who carry out child-related work for the employer. However, neither licensing authorities nor placement agencies have obligations to verify online. Although placement agencies are considered employers, they do not have verification obligations under the Act because the workers do not carry out work directly for them. The legislation places no obligation on licensing authorities to verify because they are not considered employers, but they need to know the Working with Children Check status of people when issuing certain licences.

Verification is essential for both placement agencies and licensing agencies issuing relevant licences if the check is to serve its purpose. However, not all placement agencies or licensing authorities issuing relevant licences will be required to have a Working with Children Check. The bill will extend the verification requirements only to placement agencies and relevant licences issued by licensing authorities that will be prescribed by regulation. Further dialogue with the relevant agencies will take place before the regulations prescribe the relevant placement agencies and licences issued by licensing authorities and the requirement is implemented. To promote further compliance with the scheme, schedule 1 to the bill will now make failure to verify without a reasonable excuse an offence, and it will attract a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units in the case of corporations and 50 penalty units in any other case.

This is not a heavy-handed approach. It follows earlier amendments made to the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act in 2015 to remove any ambiguity about the requirement to undertake online verification, along with an extensive investment in educating the public about the importance of this process. This was a direct response to poor employer verification rates which, while they have increased, have not significantly improved. Authorised officers of the Office of the Children's Guardian will be able to issue a penalty infringement notice to persistent non-compliant employers. Prosecution will be a last resort as part of a proportionate and escalating range of enforcement options.

Additionally, the bill recognises the need for accurate, timely and high-quality records to be available to the Office of the Children's Guardian to make rigorous determinations about the risk that an individual may pose to children in future. Schedule 1 will make all agencies, both government and non-government agencies, equally compellable to provide the required information. Failing to provide the required information after warning without reasonable excuse will be an offence. This amendment seeks to ensure that the risk assessment process is as rigorous as possible and is informed by comprehensive information relevant to assessing risk. It also will ensure the requisite information is available to the Children's Guardian when exercising her discretion in relation to granting continuing residence approvals. The bill also places an obligation on individuals to notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of changes in personal details.

The royal commission recommended that the failure to notify a screening agency of relevant changes in circumstances should be an offence and all Working with Children Check schemes in other jurisdictions currently have offence provisions in relation to an individual failing to notify of a change in their circumstances. While the circumstances that must be notified generally relate to criminal history, the bill will require individuals in New South Wales to notify of changes in specified personal information only, as New South Wales already receives new criminal history information through its continuous monitoring of all relevant New South Wales offences and findings of disciplinary proceedings. The Children's Guardian is in discussions with relevant bodies in other jurisdictions about exchanging Working with Children Check information between interstate bodies via a ministerial protocol that will allow for updated interstate criminal history.

The bill will support the obligation with the introduction of a penalty if the individual fails, without reasonable excuse, to notify changes in personal details within three months. Importantly, the bill also will restrict the circumstances in which the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] may make interim stay orders in situations where the tribunal is satisfied that there are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision and enforcement of the conditions of the stay order by the person's employer. This will remove any potential child protection risks that may require monitoring by ensuring that the employer takes responsibility for the monitoring of the conditions until the NCAT makes a final determination.

These are well developed and effective amending provisions that will contribute to a strengthened and robust Working with Children Check scheme, and support the harmonisation of Working with Children Check schemes across Australia. I acknowledge the work of the Minister and the Minister's office in preparing this legislation and for its introduction to the House. The bill will strengthen an already rigorous process. In the light of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse we all know that we must ensure that our systems are robust in protecting our children across our community. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (11:32): I support the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. In my youth I was very fortunate to be engaged in a range of sporting, musical and dramatic activities that brought me into contact with some of the most marvellous and sometimes not so marvellous adult volunteers. The not so marvellous adults were not sexually or otherwise abusive but reflected the great variety of human beings to whom young people should be exposed when growing up. This bill deals with the sorts of adults to whom young people should not be exposed when growing up.

I have tried to honour the volunteers that I came in contact with as a young person by being active in my children's school and sporting endeavours. By doing so I have come into contact with some great young people who, by and large, have grown into great young men and women. I hope to have played a small positive part in their having grown up that way. Some of them are basketballers. I have seen kids grow from being tiny five year

olds and six year olds to become six feet eight inch giants of 110 kilograms plus. When I reflect on that level of growth, the transformation is quite remarkable.

In my professional life as a barrister and solicitor I sometimes came into contact with adults who had been sexually abused as children. I have observed the profound damage that people can suffer for their entire life as a consequence of child sexual assaults. It is in that context that the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault ought to be congratulated. As all members know, last year the groundbreaking Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse concluded. The royal commission shone a light on some of the darkest chapters of our history and allowed voices which had previously been silenced to be heard loud and clear. Those voices were a call to action and the New South Wales Government consistently has heeded that call.

This bill takes another important step along that continuing journey. I am proud to say that the Government has already made several amendments to align the New South Wales Working with Children Check scheme with the royal commission's recommendations. There are only a few recommendations outstanding and ready for inclusion in the New South Wales Working with Children Check scheme. In new section 6 (1) (a) [3] of schedule 1 to the bill, the definition of "child-related work" is clarified. The royal commission recommended that working with children checks should be required only when direct contact with children is a usual part of and more than incidental to the work.

That is so that organisations do not overly or inappropriately rely on working with children checks in isolation without considering what other measures should be put in place. The royal commission recognised that there is a full range of strategies that are necessary to keep children safe. The new definition should go some way towards making sure that working with children checks are used only for their intended purpose, so that a balance is struck between the rights of individuals to choose where they work and what kind of work they do and stopping inappropriate people from having the opportunity to access children through their work.

New section 5C in item [2] of schedule 1 to the bill adopts a second key recommendation of the royal commission in a clear and comprehensive definition of "criminal history". While the Children's Guardian already considers the full range of an individual's criminal charges and convictions, whatever the outcome, the legislation currently refers to two terms; namely, "criminal history" and "criminal record". To make matters clear, the bill consistently will refer to "criminal history" as defined in the royal commission's recommended terms. The definition will remove ambiguity and make it clear to applicants that all criminal convictions and charges are taken into account in assessing whether they are suitable to work with children, whether those convictions may have been spent, quashed or set aside, or are pardoned, or a charge has been not proven or dismissed. It is by looking at the full picture of a person that the Children's Guardian and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal reach a fair and thorough conclusion about a person's risk.

Defining "criminal history" in the legislation is not only recommended by the royal commission; it is also a measure to enhance procedural fairness for applicants. The royal commission also recommended that parents who volunteer on overnight camps be required to obtain a Working with Children Check. In New South Wales, parents who volunteer to supervise their own children currently are generally exempt from having to obtain a Working with Children Check in recognition of the right of parents to participate in activities with their own children. After careful consideration, the Government has come to the view that a change would recognise the risks of overnight activity and take account of the fact that stakeholders consulted during the statutory review process widely supported this change.

It is clear how the bill is the result of considered listening not only to the royal commission but also to key stakeholders and to the community. The royal commission recommended that failing to notify a screening agency of relevant changes in circumstances, particularly changes to "criminal history", should be an offence. That requirement is already in place in jurisdictions around Australia. The Government has listened to concerns raised in consultations that suggested such an offence could be unjustifiably punitive and possibly disadvantage vulnerable individuals who, through no fault of their own, simply forgot to update their details with a government department. But the Government is mindful of minimising inefficiencies. Making it an offence for individuals to fail to notify the Children's Guardian of, for example, minor traffic offences, would be an overburden both on individuals and government and would not necessarily improve child protection outcomes in this State.

A system is already in place for the NSW Police Force to inform the Office of the Children's Guardian of relevant new criminal charges against applicants and holders of working with children checks. This enables the Office of the Children's Guardian to ensure that clearances can be cancelled and applications refused, based on the most current and relevant information. In light of this, the bill introduces a measured offence for failing to notify of changes to personal details only, within three months of the charge and without a reasonable excuse. Again the Government is endeavouring to strike a fair and appropriate balance between overburdening citizens and doing what is needed to protect the most precious members of our community: our children.

The proposed changes have been recommended by the royal commission after careful deliberation. Further, they have been consulted upon widely during the statutory review process and should be welcomed by all. They consolidate the position of the New South Wales Working with Children Check system as the most effective system in Australia and demonstrate this Government's commitment to continuing to improve the system by adopting the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, taking necessary steps towards nationally consistent standards. This is important work. We should never allow a generation of children to be abused as has happened in the past. With each piece of new legislation we incrementally improve the protection for the most vulnerable in our community whilst ensuring that people have the best part of their youth, which is to engage in fruitful and beneficial activities with adults as they themselves learn to become adults and contributing members of our community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (11:41): I speak in support of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. I congratulate the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on the work she has done to introduce this bill. New South Wales has a broad framework for protecting children from known perpetrators of abuse. A number of legislative platforms allow for the identification and monitoring of known and suspected perpetrators of abuse in our State. This includes the mandatory reporting framework under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, the monitoring and reporting of registrable persons under the Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 and the use of the Child Protection Register. The Working with Children Check is another component of this framework and the one component that touches on the lives of perhaps the biggest proportion of people in the State.

The objective of the Working with Children Check is to protect children by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work. However, it is not an end in itself. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse acknowledged that the Working with Children Check is an essential safeguard for children and young people when used as part of a range of effective child safe policies, procedures and practices that are embedded in a culture of child safety within organisations. Many members will be aware that New South Wales was the first jurisdiction in Australia to introduce pre-employment screening.

The current model of the Working with Children Check is significantly different to the pre-employment screening that was undertaken when the check first began in 2000. In 2013 it was radically remodelled to address a number of former weaknesses that gave rise to gaps in child protection. Since 2013 the Working with Children Check has been tailored to further improve protections for children and young people. The proposed changes to the check arise from the comprehensive statutory review of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 undertaken by the Children's Guardian in 2017 and the recommendations of the royal commission in relation to working with children checks. The review report was tabled by the Hon. Pru Goward last month. We need to continue to look after, protect and provide a safe environment for those who are the most vulnerable in our community: children and young people.

The proposed changes refine what can only be described as an already robust framework. They tighten and provide further clarity of key definitions within the Act, enhance information gathering processes, increase transparency and strengthen employer verification requirements that are crucial to the effectiveness of the Working with Children Check scheme. The statutory review process involved extensive consultations with government and non-government agencies, including a number of sector-specific peak bodies and unions, as well as a large number of written submissions. I am very pleased to note that the review, which was undertaken against the backdrop of the royal commission, found that partner agencies have developed a strong understanding of the role of the Working with Children Check within the broader framework of keeping children and young people safe. There was found to be strong and continuing support for the policy objectives of the State. I note that there are young people in the gallery. We are looking at the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018, which is legislation designed to look after and protect those most vulnerable in our communities: young people and children.

I understand the remainder of the recommendations contained in the report will be the subject of further consultations to ensure that the right settings are maintained and that any further changes are equally effective. The feedback and written submissions have contributed to the 29 recommendations contained in the review report, the first tranche of which are contained in this important bill. A number of bill provisions that were developed through careful consideration of feedback and consultations through the statutory review process are of particular note. Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 by removing the exemption that currently exists in clause 20 of the regulation for all parents volunteering in activities involving their own children if they volunteer on overnight camps. I note that there are students in the gallery—they would all understand what we are talking about today in the New South Wales Parliament, as many schools now have overnight trips and camps where students are accompanied by volunteers, parents, carers and teachers.

This parent volunteer exemption was intended to prevent overregulation as would happen if all parents who interact with their children's peers are brought within the scope of the scheme. However, the royal commission recommended that parents volunteering on overnight camps be required to have a Working with Children Check. As a result, this issue was robustly considered through the statutory review process. This bill acknowledges the considerable research that now exists to show that most child sexual abuse is not perpetrated by unknown strangers and the potential for risk that these unsupervised activities can give rise to. I understand that the bill had overwhelming support from stakeholders through the statutory review process that was undertaken by the Children's Guardian.

Similarly, schedule 1 to the bill clarifies the definition of "child-related work" in section 6 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act. It provides that contact with children must be a usual part of and more than incidental to child-related work. The royal commission clarified that a key factor in determining the need for a Working with Children Check should be the nature and amount of contact with children. This is critical in ensuring that employers understand who should be checked, while avoiding overregulation of the lives of individuals who should not be subject to the requirements of the Working with Children Check framework. The current legislative approach is to identify an individual as being in child-related work if they work in child-related sectors and roles specified in the Act and have direct contact with children. The statutory review process identified that stakeholders find this approach to be well suited to New South Wales and that it should be maintained. However, further clarification through the requirement that the work must be a usual part of and more than incidental to the child-related work was welcomed.

Additionally, the bill will also make changes to improve compliance with the Working with Children Check scheme by strengthening employer verification requirements. New section 9A of the bill requires that employers must verify through an online process that a worker has a clearance or current Working with Children Check application. This process is crucial as it enables employers to receive up-to-date information about the change in status of an employee's Working with Children Check clearance. When an employer does not verify information online, information about their employee's Working with Children Check status cannot be exchanged with them, which undermines the effectiveness of the scheme—it is about transparency. In 2015 the Government clarified the wording of the legislation to remove ambiguity about the mandatory nature of this requirement and invested heavily in education to promote compliance. This has had a limited impact. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the Minister for Health for his support.

Mr Brad Hazzard: I am here to help.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Of course he is. Provisions in the bill will facilitate greater compliance by making failure to verify without a reasonable excuse an offence with a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units in the case of corporations and 50 penalty units in any other case. There was strong stakeholder support for this amendment through consultations with the Children's Guardian as an appropriate and important response to employers who persistently fail to comply. I welcome the proposed changes to the Working with Children Check scheme, many of which give effect to royal commission recommendations and which have been thoroughly considered and consulted on during the recent statutory review process.

I offer my unqualified support for the bill. I say to the students, teachers, carers and workers in the public gallery that this is all about protecting the most vulnerable people in our community: those who come under the care of others, whether they are on excursions—as perhaps the students in the public gallery are—on trips, in day care or wherever they may be. Children and young people need to be protected. It is up to us to ensure that we provide an environment for them so that they feel safe when they step outside of their own homes in the care of others. That is why we support changes to this legislation.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:53): I welcome the students and teachers in the public gallery to the New South Wales Parliament. I congratulate the Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Pru Goward, on the delivery of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. I also note the great work of the former Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Brad Hazzard. I note that those opposite are not objecting to this bill. I acknowledge the contributions of the members for the electorates of Bankstown, Myall Lakes, Maitland, North Shore, Ku-ring-gai and Tamworth. As the member for Terrigal, I am pleased to support this bill.

The bill further strengthens the Working with Children Check framework by amending the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012. As outlined by other members, the proposed changes are the first tranche of reforms arising from the recommendations of the statutory review of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act. By way of background, the bill proposes changes that arose from the recommendations of the statutory review, as I said, and incorporates the outcome of extensive

consultations, written submissions, recommendations of the royal commission and other minor amendments to streamline operations. It contains 14 legislative amendments of the 29 recommendations in the review report. Overall, the review found strong and continuing support for the policy objectives of the Act. It recommended some fine-tuning—which is always needed—and strategies to improve compliance and enhance information gathering.

It is a great privilege as the member for Terrigal to spend so much time with the young people in my electorate. Very rarely does a week go by when I am not lucky enough to spend time with students, student leaders and volunteers in my Central Coast community. In saying that, we have to ensure that safeguards are in place so that young people, children and students can attend events, camps and trips such as the one students are attending in Parliament today and know that the people they are attending with have undergone the necessary checks to ensure they are cared for safely and appropriately.

The bill covers a number of areas. As the member for Tamworth mentioned, there are general amendments that bring parent volunteers taking part in overnight camps within the scope of the Act. It clarifies the definition of "child-related work", inserts the definition of "risk" to the safety of children in "criminal history", and grants the Children's Guardian the discretion to allow a person who turns 18 years of age while residing with an authorised carer and who has been refused a Working with Children Check to continue to reside with the carer if identified risks can be mitigated. It is important to note that those risks have to be mitigated. In addition, there are proposed amendments to strengthen employer verification requirements by creating an offence and authorising Office of the Children's Guardian officers to serve penalty infringement notices on employers who fail to do so. The bill also proposes to create the ability to prescribe certain agencies by regulation, after further consultation, to comply with verification requirements and be subject to offence provisions.

There has been low compliance of agencies ensuring that their staff have a Working with Children Check, if one is required. This bill will provide the mechanism to ensure agencies understand and take responsibility for ensuring that their staff have the required working with children checks. In addition to that, the bill aims to streamline the Children's Guardian and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] processes by requiring that the NCAT may only make interim stay orders that are subject to conditions if it is satisfied that an appropriate mechanism for supervision of an order is available. When the Children's Guardian issues a refusal of a clearance and it is challenged at the NCAT, it is open to the NCAT to lift the refusal of clearance with conditions while it reaches its final decision.

The Children's Guardian has no capacity to monitor whether the applicant is complying with the conditions. This change puts the responsibility on the NCAT to only apply conditions when it is confident that the risk to children can be monitored. In addition, there are proposed amendments that will enhance information gathering processes, which were outlined by the member for Tamworth, by placing a positive obligation on individuals to notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of any changes to their personal details and to require non-government organisations to provide information at the request of the Office of the Children's Guardian to assist in the risk assessment process.

As a backbench member of the Government I acknowledge the great work done by the office of Minister Goward. I was given unfettered access to the Minister's staff and to the Minister with regard to this legislation. Opposition members who have spoken in debate on this bill said they were not able to engage with the Minister or her staff on this legislation, but unlike them I found the Minister's staff were happy to answer any questions I had on the bill during the drafting process. I congratulate the Minister and her staff on their open-door policy for members of Parliament. As a result, amendments in this bill will lead to great outcomes. As the Minister said in her second reading speech, there is more to be done in child protection, but obviously the Government will continue to work on this issue.

We are fierce advocates for the protection of young people across New South Wales, as Temporary Speaker Aplin would attest. His electorate of Albury is in a regional area, and we know it is vital that we have the appropriate legislative framework in place to ensure we provide the best possible protection for all our young people, no matter what their circumstances. I noted comments by those opposite that our amended sexual assault strategy took two years to implement. In reality, we consulted widely with experts and stakeholders, and listened to their feedback on the strategy. Drafting the strategy did take time, but in the 16 years that those opposite were in government no sexual assault policy was implemented and therefore a two-year debate would seem to be a short time. I have no doubt that in her speech in reply the Minister will cover the concerns raised by those opposite during this morning's debate.

The bill recognises the judicial consideration of a person's risk by including current court orders in the list of factors that the Children's Guardian and NCAT consider in assessing and reviewing their working with children decisions. The member for Ku-ring-gai, who was a very learned member of the bar, spoke of his experiences in child protection cases as a practising lawyer. He noted the destructive nature of child assault and

its lasting impact on his clients. The member for Myall Lakes spoke of his experiences as a police officer in dealing with similar cases. We know about the ongoing devastation of child sexual assault on young people as they become adults and move forward in their lives. By introducing the framework in this legislation as part of a statutory review, we hope to provide an even greater level of protection for young people so that they do not suffer at the hands of abusers.

The bill also contains amendments to strengthen the employer verification requirements by creating an offence and authorising the Office of the Children's Guardian officers to serve penalty infringement notices on employees who fail to disclose information, as well as creating the ability to prescribe certain agencies for regulation after further consultation to comply with verification requirements on the subject of offence provisions. As I said, compliance has been low in the past, and implementing this provision will put in place verification requirements. I note the great work done by the Office of the Children's Guardian, in particular by Sharminie Niles, Geetha Vamshese and Andrea Sun. I also note the work done by the Parliamentary Counsel's Danielle Thurstan and Mark Cowan. Last but not least I acknowledge the outstanding staff in the Minister's office, Anne King and Dean Shachar. Dean has been in the Chamber for this debate. His attendance in this Chamber shows the level of dedication of the Minister's staff. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (12:03): I support the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. The bill further strengthens the Working with Children Check framework by amending the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012. It should be noted that these changes are the first tranche of reforms arising from recommendations of the statutory review of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act. The bill contains 10 legislative amendments and a number of regulatory changes, which have been covered in detail in previous contributions to this debate.

I will concentrate on the personal effects of this legislation in my electorate of Murray. This is important legislation; it is part of suite of legislation that is designed to protect our children. I have seen the impact of child sexual assault and I know that it continues to have an effect on that person's life. For more than 30 years I have been involved in football clubs, and camps for children and teenagers and schools, and during that time I have noted the development of frameworks to protect children. It is important that the frameworks achieve a balance between providing protection for our children and improving the processes so that affected employer organisations and, particularly, volunteer organisations can function adequately within the framework.

I particularly highlight a cross-border issue. My electorate covers more than half of the Victorian-New South Wales border and so encompasses a lot of communities that sit on either side of the border. In past years there has been work to develop a national registration for important workers such as nurses. When my wife first registered as a nurse many years ago, she had to have three separate registrations in a short period because of moving and changing jobs. There is now national registration for nurses, and that is a great thing. Unfortunately, we have not fixed other processes and our working with children checks are still State based.

In my electorate there are hospitals that have tried to employ nurses but have found that it is difficult to attract them to some rural areas, especially when hospitals are close to the border and could perhaps employ nurses from another State. A Deniliquin hospital told me of a case of employing a nurse from Western Australia and then applying to get the nurse's Working with Children Check from Western Australia. In the time it took for this to happen the nurse said, "This is too difficult and I am not coming."

During the drafting process for this bill I approached the Minister to check that the amendments would not impede the goal of having a national framework. The Minister met with me to go through the issues I had with this bill. She assured me that these changes will not impede this work, and that we will continue on the path for national alignment. We know that national alignment is fundamental to our rural areas, in particular, and it will have an impact in capital cities that attract workers from other States. I thank the Minister for the time that she spent addressing this issue, which is only one of many covered in this legislation. I admit that this issue might be seen as peripheral to the amendments in the legislation, but the Minister was generous with her time, for which I thank her. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:08): It is an honour to speak to the Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018. The bill continues the great work this Government has been doing in adopting the royal commission's recommendations and taking steps towards inter-jurisdictional consistency. As we have heard in previous contributions to this debate, the royal commission marked a turning point in our history. We have now turned a page on some of the darkest chapters of our past, and have a clear path forward to ensure those atrocities never happen again.

The royal commission has also urged all of the jurisdictions to work together on the commitment to protect all children in Australia, wherever they may be. Indeed, one of the royal commission's main concerns has

been inconsistencies between jurisdictions and how those differences have allowed offenders to "forum shop" in the past—that is, choosing to move between States in a bid to continue accessing children even after being prohibited from doing so in a particular jurisdiction. The Government has taken the strong stance that this is unacceptable—all children, wherever they live in Australia, deserve the same level of protection.

With this in mind, the bill adopts one of the royal commission's key recommendations in clarifying the definition of child-related work. Contact with children must be a usual part of and more than incidental to work to be considered child-related work. The definition of child-related work is important in ensuring that employers understand who should be checked. The royal commission recommended that all jurisdictions adopt this consistent definition of child-related work. The bill also requires Working with Children Check [WWCC] applicants to notify the Children's Guardian of changes to their personal details. This was also a recommendation of the royal commission, and all WWCC schemes in other jurisdictions currently have offence provisions in relation to an individual failing to notify of a change in their circumstances.

The Government is taking a measured approach by requiring individuals in New South Wales to notify of changes to their specified personal information only, as New South Wales already receives New South Wales criminal history information through continuous monitoring of all relevant New South Wales offences and findings of disciplinary proceedings. The Children's Guardian is in discussions with relevant bodies in all other jurisdictions about exchanging WWCC information between interstate bodies via a ministerial protocol, which will enable an updated interstate criminal history. The bill supports the obligation with the introduction of a penalty if an individual fails to notify of changes in personal details within three months without reasonable excuse, which will align the New South Wales scheme with other jurisdictions.

The royal commission recommended that all parent volunteers on overnight camps should have a Working with Children Check clearance. In New South Wales, parent volunteers are currently exempt from this requirement of the WWCC legislation when they volunteer in activities with their child, except in limited circumstances. This bill strikes an appropriate and evidence-based approach by removing the exemption in the case of parents volunteering on overnight camps. It will align New South Wales with other Australian jurisdictions and give effect to the royal commission's recommendation to bring these parent volunteers within the scope of the scheme because of the potential for risk that can arise during such unsupervised activities. The bill will continue to maintain the exemption for those parents volunteering in activities with their children. This amendment was overwhelmingly supported by stakeholders through the statutory review process that was undertaken by the Children's Guardian.

Lastly, the bill adopts the royal commission's recommended definition of "criminal history". Although the Children's Guardian already considers the full range of an individual's criminal charges and convictions, whatever the outcome, the legislation currently refers to two terms: "criminal history" and "criminal record". To make things clearer, the bill will consistently refer to "criminal history" as defined in the royal commission's recommended terms and as the royal commission recommended that all jurisdictions implement. The definition will remove ambiguity and make it clear to applicants that all criminal convictions and charges are taken into account in assessing whether they are suitable to work with children.

Defining "criminal history" in the legislation is not only recommended by the royal commission, but also will enhance procedural fairness for applicants. It will also go some way to achieving consistency between the jurisdictions on what is considered in assessing whether an individual should be able to work with children, wherever in Australia that individual is going to work with children. The Government remains committed to continuing discussions with our interstate counterparts to ensure that all children across Australia benefit from the same high level of protection. The bill has benefitted from the highly productive discussions that we have had to date, and the Government will continue that dialogue into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:14): In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Heathcote, Bankstown, Myall Lakes, Maitland, North Shore, Ku-ring-gai, Tamworth, Terrigal and Murray for their valuable contributions to this debate. I also thank the Children's Guardian and her office for their hard work and ongoing commitment to protecting children, who are the most vulnerable members of our community, against known perpetrators of abuse. All decision-making in child protection should be driven by what is in the best interests of a child in relation to their safety, welfare and wellbeing. This is the paramount consideration of the Working with Children Check [WWCC] legislation and all our child protection legislation, and it is what drives our policy-making and our practice.

The Government is deeply committed to continually identifying ways of improving our capacity to keep children safe. Although the Working with Children Check legislation is one important tool in this process, it is not the only one and is certainly not a panacea in itself in managing risk. It can only protect children against known offenders. It cannot detect a person who has never been caught, so I cannot stress enough the importance of the

whole community, including employers, parents, schools and all those who have any interaction with children, ensuring that good, sound, child-safe practices are always adopted. We must be vigilant at all times about the risks that our children face and, more importantly, proactively address them as they arise.

The bill is another step in the right direction. It represents the culmination of the first tranche of recommendations arising from the five-year Working with Children Check statutory review report and also contains a number of recommendations from the royal commission, all of which have been thoroughly considered and comprehensively consulted on during the statutory review consultation process. The bill makes a number of general clarifying amendments. Assessing risk is central to the process by which a decision is made about whether a person should or should not be granted a Working with Children Check. The bill provides a definition of risk that is in line with a well-established test commonly used by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], which is whether in all the circumstances of the case a person presents a "real and appreciable risk" to the safety of children. Articulating this threshold of risk in the legislation will afford greater clarity, particularly to applicants who are being risk assessed by the Children's Guardian.

Another significant amendment addresses young people affected by the requirement to move out of stable placements if, when they turn 18, they are refused a Working with Children Check clearance. The Act provides, for good reason, that any adult person residing with an authorised carer must have a Working with Children Check clearance or a current application, but this requirement can have a destabilising effect on some of our young people who are refused a Working with Children Check, but who are nevertheless in a stable placement with a carer, as they are forced to leave within 48 hours or the carer must cease caring for other children in care.

I am pleased that, rather than being locked in such a situation, the bill provides discretion for the Children's Guardian to grant a continuing residence approval so that the young person can continue to reside with the authorised carer despite being refused a clearance. It will not enable the young person to engage in any child-related work. As I have explained, the Children's Guardian will exercise her discretion only if she is sufficiently satisfied of risk mitigation strategies within the placement. The bill also clarifies that the NCAT should only make an interim stay order pending the determination of a matter if it is satisfied that there is sufficient supervision of any known risk. This is to give due regard and primacy to the safety of children while the original decision of the Children's Guardian is being reviewed.

Including a definition of "criminal history" in line with the royal commission's recommendation is doing nothing more than clarifying what is already being considered in the risk assessment process—for example a person's broadest set of criminal information, including convictions whether spent or unspent, quashed or set aside and criminal charges whether or not heard, proven or dismissed, withdrawn or discharged. This definition will have no practical ramifications for applicants. Similarly, including an amended definition of child-related work to ensure that direct contact with children must be a usual part of and more than incidental to the child-related work of the person also aligns with a royal commission recommendation.

The royal commission clarified that a key factor in determining the need for a Working with Children Check should be the nature and amount of contact with children. This is critical to ensuring that employers understand who should be checked while avoiding overregulation in the lives of individuals who should not be subject to the requirements of the Working with Children Check framework. The bill also includes the royal commission's recommendation requiring parent volunteers on overnight camps to be brought within the Working with Children Check scheme because of the potential risk that these unsupervised activities can give rise to. This is also in alignment with most other Australian jurisdictions. In keeping with other volunteer checks, parent volunteers on overnight camps will not be charged a Working with Children Check fee. The current exemption for other parents volunteering with their children will be maintained.

Another recommendation of the royal commission is the requirement that Working with Children Check applicants notify the Children's Guardian of changes in their personal details. This requirement will not extend to changes in "criminal history" because the Children's Guardian already receives New South Wales criminal history and disciplinary findings through its continuous monitoring process. The bill strengthens employer verification and compliance. One of the very important aspects of this bill is that it improves compliance with the Working with Children Check scheme by strengthening employer verification. If an employer does not verify online, information about their employees cannot be shared with them, which undermines the effectiveness of the scheme. To facilitate greater compliance, the bill introduces an offence for failure to verify without reasonable excuse.

Prosecution and issuing penalty infringement notices will be last resort options, but will signal the importance of compliance with the scheme. The requirement to verify will also be extended to certain placement agencies and licensing authorities that will be prescribed by regulation; however, this will occur only after further consultation with the relevant agencies. The bill enhances information-gathering processes. Currently, the Office of the Children's Guardian can compel only government agencies to provide information about applicants. The bill makes provision for information about applicants from non-government agencies to be equally compellable and

makes it an offence to fail to provide information that is required without reasonable excuse. Once again I thank all those involved in the reform process and in the preparation of this bill. I thank members for their support in seeing these amendments through the House. I commend this bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms PRU GOWARD: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2017-2018

Debate resumed from 15 March 2018.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (12:23): Regional cities, such as Albury, are growing—growing in population, economic strength, housing, opportunities and needs. If such cities are assisted to grow even faster, they can take some pressure off problems besetting a capital city such as Sydney, or at least how these towns and cities become a serious option for individuals, families and businesses that want to own more of their day and their lives with ridiculously shorter commute times, quick access to rivers and snowfields for recreation, more time with the people they love and less time working to afford the bank mortgage.

It is time to focus on supporting development of major regional infrastructure that will attract and support private enterprise. A good example is the signal given by Qantas that it would like to find a home base for pilot training. This would attract hundreds of students and instructors, bringing millions of dollars of income and value to the selected town or city. Albury has put up its hand and I would suggest Corowa can also demonstrate a strong case. A regional flying school of the scale proposed by Qantas is ideally positioned on the outskirts of a medium-sized centre, well connected to transport links such as highways and rail, with plenty of accommodation within a comfortable radius, and within reasonable proximity to higher education facilities. The impact would be far-reaching, and this Government can play a role in making it happen in a regional New South Wales location.

Thanks to the flood of new grants programs across regional New South Wales we are looking at how to develop significant, indeed iconic, regional infrastructure. At last there is an opportunity to think and plan for success in regional communities, powered by economic development. A couple of Albury projects give an indication of how regional economic growth is coming out of the grants programs and the successful 2017-18 New South Wales budget. I am working with the Albury Wodonga Equestrian Centre and the Albury Tennis Association, which are looking to modernise and expand their facilities in Albury. Both organisations have a successful track record attracting regional, State and national events, both have unique arenas and fields, and both are well located to accommodate large numbers of competitors within a convenient distance of necessary supplies and supporting businesses. I am encouraging these, and many other organisations, to think big and to seize this moment of budgetary generosity to the regions of New South Wales. It is an exciting time to be working with regional clubs, councils and organisations.

Last week I was able to announce the granting of more than \$11 million in funding for an amazing, cooperative tourism and lifestyle venture. Called the Murray River Regional Experiences, these projects will see our Government partner in funding with the councils of Albury, Federation and Berrigan Shire, which are contributing a further \$9 million, to open up access to a vast section of the Murray River and its foreshore. This will develop new tourism precincts stretching from Albury to Tocumwal along the banks of the Murray River, connecting three major projects—the Albury Riverside Precinct, Parks and Wetlands Redevelopment; the Tocumwal Foreshore Activation and Economic Revitalisation project; and the Corowa-Mulwala trail and Foreshore Project—thereby creating the ultimate river tourism experience.

These projects will generate a huge return on investment, attracting an estimated additional 365,000 tourists to the region each year, directly creating new local jobs in the tourism industry and ultimately ensuring that tourists stay longer and spend more in our local towns and cities. Surely this will turn into a classic and iconic tourism pathway, thanks to the Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund. I congratulate the Treasurer and Premier on a superb budget for 2017-18. I have been a member of this Parliament representing the Albury electorate for some time, but I have never seen this level of current and future commitment of resources and funding to our local area—never. Our regional communities were in such need, and this Government has

delivered in spades for Albury. I am proud to be working as part of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, building a better Albury electorate for all.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:27): My constituents of Charlestown, the people of the Hunter and New South Wales deserve the best. But the best is far from what the 2017-18 budget and this Liberal-Nationals Government continues to deliver. This Government boasts a surplus in excess of \$3 billion but fails to mention it is taking the axe to vital services and important institutions. TAFE, schools, transport, the land title registry and social housing have all been left underfunded or sold to a private operator that cut services and increased prices. The New South Wales Government has sold off more than 20,000 properties, including schools and public housing dwellings, since it came into office.

I do not know how any member of this Government can defend the extent of these asset sales when they are abandoning the most vulnerable members of our society. The Government argues that these sales and cuts will result in necessary infrastructure projects, including Sydney stadium rebuilds and refurbishments, tax cuts, and lower unemployment rates. But the supposed benefits of these are all based on the fallacy that is trickle-down economics. The truth is that tax cuts are for big business, the necessary infrastructure projects are completely unnecessary, and youth unemployment in my electorate is still 10.5 per cent. This budget is a reflection of the warped priorities of a government that has completely lost touch with the reality of everyday people.

So many essential services, including schools, hospitals and social housing, could have benefited greatly from the money allocated to the Berejiklian Government's Sydney stadium rebuilds. Despite an ongoing housing affordability crisis, spending on social housing has reached its lowest level since 2014. Housing NSW is under intense pressure to deliver services in New South Wales. The department is under the pump, with a backlog of maintenance issues and almost 60,000 families in desperate need of shelter. That is why I was shocked that housing upgrades in my electorate of Charlestown have been cut yet again. Every day, my office—which is next door to the local Department of Family and Community Services office—is inundated with maintenance requests from social housing tenants. I meet people in desperate need of housing and repairs day in, day out. In the past financial year, the median wait time for social housing increased by 19 per cent. Those residents who are fortunate enough to be granted housing are in desperate need of maintenance as they face rat infestations, flooding, mould and holes in the ceilings of their homes. Like all of us, social housing tenants deserve healthy and safe housing conditions.

I am lucky that my staff and I have a great working relationship with Housing NSW staff, who are hardworking, dedicated and responsive. However, it is difficult when they are not provided with the necessary means to do their jobs adequately. It is appalling that people in our community are living in unsafe and unhygienic conditions and that the Berejiklian Liberal-Nationals Government continues to give them little support. Underfunding basic maintenance leads to higher future costs as small problems become significant structural faults. Maintenance backlogs are unacceptable and place huge pressure on tenants. Social housing does more than just provide someone with a home; it is a valuable asset that belongs to New South Wales taxpayers. Surely it is in the Government's interest to invest and make sure that the properties are well maintained. This Government needs to stop neglecting and start protecting the people and assets of New South Wales, rather than feeding people the lie that the income from public housing sales will be invested into future public housing. It is not being invested into public housing; it is being invested into Sydney stadiums.

This budget allocated no funds for significant improvements to Hillsborough Road, a main road in my electorate with an incredibly busy intersection that desperately needs an upgrade. That is extremely disappointing in light of the 2016 tragedy in which young Jade Frith died from injuries sustained after being hit by a car on Hillsborough Road. This notorious stretch of road has always been an accident waiting to happen—and they do—and it needs to be fixed before tragedy strikes again. Following this tragic incident, a petition with more than 15,000 signatures was debated in this House, with bipartisan support to urgently address the road safety issues on Hillsborough Road. Yet still no funds have been allocated for a much-needed significant upgrade.

In the past two decades, this long thoroughfare joining Charlestown with Warners Bay has become increasingly busy. There are major shopping and entertainment destinations on both sides of the road, which empties into the equally busy King Street and Macquarie Road through an often congested roundabout. It is a stretch of suburban road that has struggled to keep pace with the area's growth, development and expansion. On one side of the roundabout is Warners Bay High School, and on the other side is a McDonald's restaurant. Despite all the pedestrians and traffic, the only safe place to cross the road is at a set of pedestrian lights 400 metres back up the hill.

Hillsborough Road is one of the Hunter's busiest roads and a choke point for traffic that this Government has failed to resolve. Motorists have had enough of the peak-hour crawl between Warners Bay and the Charlestown bypass and have been waiting years and years for an upgrade. I acknowledge that Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] is in the process of undertaking a \$400 million traffic study, the results of which were

meant to be released in the second half of 2015. I understand that the study was then extended to include all State roads between Warners Bay and Charlestown and was rescheduled to be finished in 2017. Unsurprisingly, still no results have been published. Residents are sick of prolonged and delayed studies; they want funds allocated for solutions—and now. Considering the Government's awareness of this issue, which affects so many of my constituents on a daily basis, it is inconceivable that significant money has not been assigned to resolving the matter.

Students from Warners Bay High School risk their lives every day trying to cross the road. Following correspondence that I sent to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight after Jade's tragic accident, I was advised that RMS will look at options for providing median pedestrian fencing between the roundabout and the pedestrian signals in front of Lee Rowan's Gardenworld. It will also upgrade pedestrian refuges on Hillsborough Road, and look into the safest locations for bus stops along Hillsborough Road and arrange for any relocations. I understand that a total upgrade to Hillsborough Road will be expensive; however, a government's primary responsibility must be ensuring the safety of our community. On behalf of my community and the thousands of signatories to the 2016 petition, I call on the Government to commit to funding Hillsborough Road upgrades to improve its safety and to prevent the loss of another precious life.

The denial of public access to information about how the Government plans to fix the Hillsborough Road problem shows again a lack of transparency. It is another example of the arrogance of the Berejiklian Government towards the people of the Hunter. I was outraged to learn that I was denied requests for public information on this issue. The Liberal Government refused my request to release information on the studies into fixing Hillsborough Road. I requested that information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act, known as the GIPA Act. My constituents and I have the right to know what is being investigated. We want a solution before another life is taken. I meet regularly with residents of Hillsborough, and I will not stop raising the matter of Hillsborough Road safety in this place until residents, commuters, pedestrians and schoolchildren can use the road safely.

The Government Information (Public Access) Act was established to create a more proactive and open approach to gaining access to government information. The Act's objectives are to maintain and advance a system of responsible and representative democratic government that is open, accountable, fair and effective. The guiding principle of the Act is public interest. It is generally presumed that all government agencies will disclose or release information unless there is an overriding public interest against doing so. As elected officials, we work for the residents and taxpayers of New South Wales. Transparency enables citizens to hold governments to account on how they spend taxpayers' money. Openness provides much-needed checks and balances against the misuse of government assets, finances and hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

I lodged the Government Information (Public Access) Act request for information on the \$4 million Hillsborough Road traffic study, and no documents were released by the Liberal Government. What has the Government got to hide about Hillsborough Road? Why is it refusing to release the work it has done so far on the traffic studies? What does it not want us to know? I call on the Government to stop the secrecy, to be honest, open and transparent in its dealings with the people of New South Wales and to improve appropriate levels of funding for worthwhile projects in all State electorates. I was pleased to see \$45.1 million dedicated to the much-needed redevelopment of Hunter Sports High School. Despite \$19.9 million being wiped from the Hunter region's school maintenance backlog over the past 18 months, Hunter schools still need an urgent \$71.9 million just to bring them up to scratch.

Schools within my electorate—such as Whitebridge High School and Windale Public School—have a maintenance backlog well in excess of \$1 million each. The Berejiklian Government is turning a blind eye to the needs of local schools, spending 4 per cent less than the average funding across all other States in Australia. Schools in Charlestown and across New South Wales need an urgent cash injection. The Government's plan to more than double the number of demountable classrooms in New South Wales schools is a quick-fix solution to a long-term problem. This proposal will mean that some children may never receive an education in a school with brick walls. Teachers and students need well-maintained facilities to create the best learning environments. Overcrowded schools, playgrounds filled with demountables, and classrooms in disrepair are simply not good enough.

The funding needed for our schools is not for luxury items; it is for basic things like broken heaters and fans, leaking taps, peeling paint and badly worn carpet. I will not get started on the need for adequate air conditioning in classrooms in the heat of summer, or even in autumn. Earlier this year I received letters from parents and citizens association representatives outlining the desperate need for the following essential items: security fencing for the safety of all students; grounds improvement to encourage our kids to be active; painting and the removal of mould so that our children can learn in a healthy environment; and maintenance of undercover play areas to stop leaks. These are by no means unreasonable requests from parents and carers, who simply want

to ensure the security, health and safety of their children at school. The solution is simple: The Government must do more for Hunter schools and ensure that our children have the best possible learning environment.

Schools are being neglected while the Government brawls internally over how to spend billions on Sydney sporting stadiums. In the words of the former Minister for Fair Trading, the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, it is a damning indictment of the current system that "a couple of sporting stadia can be prioritised before the welfare of the most vulnerable children and families in our community." I wholeheartedly agree. Another way in which the Government has shown an obscene misdirection in priorities is its failure to invest in public transport, particularly in my electorate. This Government, as per the standard Liberal-Nationals Government model, ran the public transport of Charlestown into the ground and sold it off to the highest bidder. Former Premier Mike Baird said that the privatisation of Newcastle Buses would not go ahead if additional and better services were not provided. Despite the fact that those services were not provided, the Berejiklian Government persevered.

Like Swansea, Newcastle and Wallsend, the Charlestown electorate is seriously affected by the privatisation of Newcastle Buses, which led to the chaotic effects of the timetabling and routes implemented by Keolis Downer under the direction of Minister Constance on 14 January 2018. Commuters are now facing increased journey times, late buses and missed connections. The situation is so undeniably bad that the on-time bus rate has dropped from 87 per cent to 52 per cent since the privatisation of Newcastle Buses. Yet the Premier and the Minister continue to defend the privatisation. The new timetables and routes simply do not work. So much so, that my constituents provided almost 2,000 signatures on the 10,000-signature petition that will be debated in this House tomorrow. In that debate we will be asking the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, yet again, to intervene and to restore direct bus services to key destinations like Charlestown.

The tabling of the petition proved that additional and better services have certainly not been provided. Despite that, the Minister refuses to intervene. He stated that the purpose of selling off our bus network was to increase patronage. It seems that the private operator's method of increasing patronage is to cut direct services so that commuters are forced to catch multiple buses to get anywhere. This attempt to distort the statistics has deeply affected the most vulnerable members of our community. They include, but are definitely not limited to, the intellectually disabled community. My constituent Jodie has had to quit her job at the House with No Steps in Lambton after 30 years due to the dramatic increase in journey times and the complications associated with multiple connections.

Schoolchildren are also affected. Children were left waiting at the Charlestown interchange for more than one hour—from 3.40 p.m. until 5.00 p.m.—for the 781 school bus service that never arrived. Of course, everyday commuters—constituents who are simply trying to get to work—are also being negatively affected. They constantly contact my office because buses are late, connections are being missed, journey times are longer and livelihoods are at stake. No wonder people are getting back into their cars. In 2018 alone, I have personally written almost 200 letters to the Minister, I have made private member's statements, and I have spoken on various motions asking the Government to ensure that Hunter commuters can get to work or school reliably using this bus service. I have given notice of four motions asking the Minister to intervene as a matter of urgency. I have also asked that this House give priority to my motion regarding buses leaving schoolchildren stranded across my electorate because this Government refuses to act on the issue.

This Government's obsession with privatisation does not stop with our public transport. The Hunter economy has copped multiple blows from this Liberal-Nationals Government through the sale of many of our vital assets. One particular sale, which has recently come to the attention of and is the target of the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission [ACCC], is the sale of the Port of Newcastle. Dodgy, secret deals were created by the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals when they privatised the port to lock it out of operating as a container terminal. I welcome the ACCC's recent decision to examine these secret deals. Rubbery figures are being unveiled that throw a new and confronting light on the Government's claim that all containers should go through Port Botany because most of the cargo supposedly is destined for Sydney.

Despite this, the Government continues to defend its dubious container policy. It is adamant that Port Botany will be the State's sole container terminal. The attractiveness of the Port of Newcastle as a container terminal is proven by today's news that two container terminal companies are in active discussions with the port authority while the ACCC is investigating the port lease deal. Too often the concerns of Hunter residents are ignored while decision-makers in Sydney pander to the big end of town. The 2017-18 New South Wales budget is a reflection of the systematic failure of this Government, which continues to leave our most vulnerable community members without reliable transport, housing, security and education while Sydney enjoys the benefits of newly built stadiums with air-conditioned corporate boxes and fewer seats.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:46): The State Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering for every local community in New South Wales. It is clear that now, more than ever, only this Government can deliver a strong economy for our State and our future. That strong economy enables the Government to create more local

jobs, to build new infrastructure, to ease cost-of-living pressures for both families and seniors, to improve services, and to invest in our important local economy and, even more importantly, in our local communities. That is exactly what the Berejiklian Government is doing.

It is thanks to this Government's strong and responsible economic management that we are able to invest in our local communities, including in my home region of the Central Coast and in the beautiful electorate of Terrigal. It is unfortunate that the Labor Party has no plan for our future, no plan for the Central Coast, and no alternative vision to improve our region or the rest of the State. It has taken a lot of hard work to turn around New South Wales following 16 long years of Labor neglect. We simply do not want to go back to those dark old days. We must maintain this State's record as having the country's number one economy by retaining a strong Liberal-Nationals Government that has an incredible record of fiscal responsibility and strong economic management.

As the member for Terrigal for the past three years, I am very pleased to report an extremely long list of achievements on the Central Coast under this Liberal-Nationals Government. I will spend some time summarising this Government's achievements and the positive impact they are having on the Central Coast across all policy areas, including education, roads, cost of living, the environment and, of course, health. The health sector is the largest employer on the Central Coast. In February 2015 this Government committed \$368 million to redevelop Gosford Hospital—a hospital that was neglected for years. Visitors to that hospital could see the piecemeal way in which the former State Labor Government tacked on additions.

The wonderful clinicians and nurses at Gosford Hospital were working in third-rate conditions delivered by those opposite, and Labor should be ashamed of that. The \$368 million redevelopment, which is going very well, will provide a new and expanded emergency department, a new and expanded intensive care and high-dependency unit, more operating theatres, more medical imaging services, more inpatient beds for medical, acute and subacute services, a new psychiatric emergency care centre and cardiac unit, and expanded maternity, cancer and cardiovascular services.

The progress of the redevelopment is nothing short of miraculous. The 11-storey main tower has now been completed, having been delivered three to four months earlier than expected. Delivering the project early released an additional \$20 million into the budget. That responsible budgeting is important because the \$20 million was reinvested in a new Central Coast medical school and medical research centre, which is a very exciting State, Federal and university partnership project. I congratulate the Federal member for Robertson, Lucy Wicks, MP, on her great work in partnership with the State Government and also the University of Newcastle. By releasing that \$20 million, the Government has invested \$75 million in this medical research institute and medical school, which could provide up to 700 additional jobs on that health precinct site. By partnering with the Federal Government and the university, the Government has been able to deliver this outstanding addition to the wonderful Gosford Hospital redevelopment.

Next week I will tour the completed main tower, which is currently being fitted out with equipment. I had a sneak peak in advance when the Hon. Brad Hazzard, Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, recently toured Gosford Hospital. We witnessed the outstanding work being performed by the cancer day unit, which is located on level 1 of the main tower at this stage while its area is being refurbished. It is an amazing building. The space, natural light and service provision for the people of the Central Coast are first-rate and world class. The Minister and I could see the enthusiasm of the staff working in the new tower. Maddie, the nursing unit manager of the cancer day centre, could barely contain her excitement when the health Minister arrived, explaining how beautiful the building is. Anyone who knows nurses, as many of us do—

Mr David Elliott: You know them very well.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: My wife is a nurse. They have an obsession with neat, tidy storage. Maddie was very keen to show the health Minister the new storage facility and how very well laid out it is. It is a very exciting time on the Central Coast, and we will embark on that tour next week. I also recently greeted the new interns who have started at the hospital. This is the third round of interns whom I have greeted since becoming the member for Terrigal. These new doctors will be based permanently at both Gosford and Wyong hospitals for the next two years as part of their placement with the Central Coast Local Health District. This is a fantastic program because it secures the interns' employment for the next two years across the region. I have told many of them who did not grow up on the Central Coast that it is a wonderful place to call home should they wish to stay. I obviously encourage them to take up the opportunity to work in our first-rate hospitals and to live on the Central Coast.

Mr David Elliott: Why would you not?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I acknowledge the Minister's interjection. He is absolutely right: Why would you not want to live on the Central Coast? The Minister is a regular visitor to the Central Coast. Joined by his

delightful wife, Nicole, the Minister usually comes in a very generous mood, delivering funds for Central Coast projects. In addition to the main tower and as part of the redevelopment, the Government is providing a new 800-space car park that is currently under construction across the road from the hospital.

Mr James Griffin: How many?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: It is 800 spaces, which is a huge car park. That is in addition to 600 existing spaces. The hospital on the northern beaches in the electorate of the member for Manly is in the process of being opened. This is another fantastic facility delivered by this Government—I assume on time and on budget.

Mr James Griffin: Yes, nearly.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: That is pretty safe to say. This 800-space car park will make a huge difference to staff, patients and commuters who struggle to find parking around the hospital precinct. With a substantial growth in the Central Coast population, we must ensure that there are adequate health facilities, including parking, to meet requirements. Some \$7.7 billion is being invested in health infrastructure across the State, and I am extremely pleased to have been able to secure a share of this funding for the Central Coast community. In addition to the \$368 million provided for Gosford Hospital, plus the \$20 million for the medical research unit and medical school, an additional \$200 million was announced for Wyong Hospital.

I was pleased to stand with the health Minister recently as we turned the first sod on the Wyong Hospital redevelopment. That is more than half a billion dollars provided for health infrastructure on the Central Coast. That is a number that was only dreamed of under those opposite, who for 16 years talked the talk but never walked the walk on the Central Coast, especially when it came to health. Labor was going to shut down Woy Woy Hospital with no public consultation. That is not a record to be proud of. One record to be proud of is the hospital performance improvements on the Central Coast. Under this Liberal-Nationals Government, there have been significant statistical improvements to service standards at Gosford Hospital.

From July to September 2010, approximately 90 per cent of elective surgeries at Gosford Hospital were performed on time. When those opposite were in government they understaffed and undersupplied our local health district. Between July and September 2017, I am delighted to say that this standard increased to 97.7 per cent of elective surgeries being performed on time. That is a record this Government is particularly proud of, and I congratulate Andrew Montague and the team at the local area health district. When it comes to emergency department efficiency, under Labor from July to September 2010 only 49.3 per cent of patients left the emergency department within four hours of presentation.

Between July and September 2017, this number had increased to 63.2 per cent—an improvement of almost 14 per cent. This occurred while Gosford Hospital was being redeveloped. There has been an incredible turnaround in emergency department presentation times while staff work with a major redevelopment of that site. The Labor Party ran our hospitals virtually into the ground, with low levels of investment and staffing resources. In contrast to the 16 years of neglect that I have outlined, I am delighted that my constituents in the Terrigal electorate are now benefiting from the positive performance improvements delivered by the Central Coast Local Health District.

A new BreastScreen NSW service opened in Erina last June, at a cost of \$957,000. This will allow approximately 10,000 women per year to access free, life-saving mammograms. This new, state-of-the-art facility will boost breast-screening capacity on the Central Coast by almost 20 per cent. All women over 50 years of age should make use of this fantastic new centre, which is located almost across the road from my office at Erina. There is ample parking and it is easily accessed off the Central Coast Highway. I was delighted to attend the opening of this new facility with Minister Hazzard and to see the staff and community response to the provision of upgraded services for women on the Central Coast. It is simply outstanding. The service is free and does not require a doctor's referral. It takes only approximately 20 minutes to complete an appointment.

One in eight women in New South Wales will develop breast cancer in their lifetime—my wife being one of them. The earlier that breast cancer is detected, the better and easier it is to treat and to overcome. Early intervention delivers much better outcomes for those suffering from this insidious disease. As well as the \$957,000 investment in this new facility, a further \$450,000 has been contributed by the State Liberal Government for high-quality imaging equipment to be used at that centre. I was pleased to see the excitement and passion of the staff members at the opening of that facility. A fantastic smoking ceremony was conducted by the local Aboriginal Land Council. It was brilliantly carried out by Gavi Duncan, who does one of the most moving welcome to country smoking ceremonies anywhere in New South Wales. It was a fitting tribute to the opening of the building, located just off the Central Coast Highway.

I turn now to education. Earlier we heard a lot from those opposite, who were bemoaning the Liberal Government's supposed lack of investment in education. Nothing could be further from the truth with respect to

the Central Coast and the rest of New South Wales. The Government is building new classrooms. When this Government was elected in 2007 there had been a litany of failures to deliver for schools across New South Wales. The infrastructure was literally falling down around our ears. The Central Coast Regional Plan shows us that in 20 years—from 2016 to 2036—the region's population is estimated to grow by 75,000. Obviously this presents many challenges for all levels of government to develop infrastructure, housing and other services to cater for that growth. I am really pleased that this Liberal-Nationals Government is addressing this issue, with huge upgrades on the way for Terrigal Public School and Wamberal Public School. This was announced as part of last year's budget.

Statewide, the New South Wales Government's 2017-18 budget includes \$4.2 billion over four years to build more than 120 new and upgraded schools. This is the biggest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of this State. At Terrigal Public School, the Government has committed to building 10 new future-focused teaching spaces, as well as upgrading existing core facilities, including administration and staff amenities and facilities and student amenities. Terrigal Public School has more than 830 students. It is a fantastic school with an incredible community spirit and a wonderful parents and citizens association. The school is led extremely well by Principal Michael Burgess. Michael and I have a fantastic relationship. He knows that he can contact my office at any time. Every year, when I attend the Christmas party, I see work going on at Terrigal Public School, including improvements to the oval.

That school needed to expand to cater for the growing population of Terrigal. Michael and I often discussed this issue, and I was so excited that we were able to secure the funds to build extra classrooms. The Government will remove every demountable classroom at Terrigal Public School as part of its redevelopment. The new open-space facilities are absolutely fantastic. I congratulate School Infrastructure NSW and the incredible work of the Terrigal parents and citizens, who have worked hand in glove with the community to achieve these great results. The development application for the redevelopment of Terrigal Public School which was lodged with the council received not one objection from the public. This shows how community engagement and working together can deliver outstanding results.

I have seen the drawings for the development and I have been involved in the consultation. I have been a strong advocate of that redevelopment at Terrigal Public School. The vision for the new school is absolutely outstanding, and I will be delighted when construction work begins later this year. It is a very exciting time for the students, the parents and citizens association, and the staff at Terrigal Public School. At Wamberal Public School in my electorate, the Government has committed to building 15 new permanent future-focused classrooms, as well as to upgrading the core facilities. Again I make the point that this investment in educational facilities is only possible because of the responsible economic management by the Liberal-Nationals Government. Under Luke Foley and Labor, such a significant capital upgrade to our local public schools would never have happened.

Wamberal Public School is another outstanding education facility in my electorate. It has more than 734 students. I attended the school only last week for the annual general meeting of the Central Coast Council of P&C Associations. That organisation is led very ably by Sharryn Brownlee. I congratulate her on being reappointed as president. Wamberal Public School is growing, and record investment is being made in that school. The 15 new permanent future-focused classrooms will help futureproof Wamberal Public School for the foreseeable future. As the population grows, Wamberal and Terrigal are incredibly popular spots for young families. Those families want to know that their children will have top-class education. I know that the Government will deliver top-class facilities to complement the outstanding teachers.

I again pay tribute to the wonderful parents and citizens association, which has worked hand in glove with School Infrastructure NSW and the staff of Wamberal Public School, led by Principal Paul Miller. Because of community engagement with local residents, there have been no objections to the development application which was lodged with the council. That speaks volumes for the vision and the quality of the educational facilities that the Government is providing in my electorate of Terrigal and all across the Central Coast.

I saw the excitement of the families, students and—even more importantly—staff about getting the world-class facilities that they deserve, and which they have not had for more than 16 years. This could only have been achieved by a government that was able to get the budget under control. I know that Temporary Speaker Provest would have seen exactly the same sort of record investment in his electorate of Tweed. I know that half a billion dollars has been spent on the hospital in his electorate, and I congratulate him on his tireless work to secure that investment for the Tweed. It is a vital investment, which was lacking for more than a decade under Labor. [*Extension of time*]

I note that the member for Albury, who made a contribution earlier today, is in the Chamber. He would know about the excitement of local members who see these projects come to fruition—projects in Albury, the Tweed, Drummoyne, Manly and Cootamundra. We are living in a very exciting time. The Government has the budget under control, and is repairing the damage and dealing with the maintenance backlogs that were the

legacy of those opposite. Public schools on the Central Coast are also benefiting from the Government's good management, which has resulted in maintenance lists being reduced by more than \$24 million. It is worth noting the 10 reductions in maintenance lists at schools on the Central Coast. At the top of the list is Wadalba Community School, which received \$2.16 million. Next is the fantastic Kincumber High School—a brilliant school—which received \$1.18 million. I pay tribute to principal Janine Debenham, and to the parents and citizens association of that school, which together with the teachers and the staff of the school, do fantastic work.

Gosford Public School has received \$1.13 million for maintenance and upgrades. Erina High School was neglected for 16 years under those opposite. It was an utter disgrace, with a 52-year-old building that needed maintenance. Labor failed to deliver that for Erina High School, which does a fantastic job. The brilliant principal there is Karen Nicol. She leads a dedicated team whose members show wonderful passion. The school has received \$1.03 million to assist with its backlog. Henry Kendall High School has received \$949,000 of additional funding for maintenance. Brisbane Water Secondary College Umina campus has received another \$948,000 in funding. Narara Valley High School has received \$796,000 of additional funding.

The wonderful Terrigal High School received more than \$1 million in funding to improve facilities. In addition, the school has secured \$763,000 for maintenance backlog work, which it is getting on with. The school looks wonderful. I advise anybody who is visiting the Central Coast, particularly the beautiful electorate of Terrigal, to drive past Kincumber High School, Terrigal High School and Erina High School and see the work that has taken place at those schools. In the holidays alone, more than \$1 million was spent on maintenance work in schools in my electorate. Narara Valley High School was allocated \$796,000. Woy Woy South Public School received \$680,000, and Gosford High School received \$656,000. All across New South Wales, the Liberal-Nationals Government has reduced the State's planned school maintenance list by more than \$200 million over the past 18 months.

As recently as yesterday I was delighted to announce that two schools in the Terrigal electorate will be open to the community during the April school holidays. There are 81 schools across the State taking part in this new initiative. It has never made sense why schools remain locked up during school holidays. Schools have fantastic facilities that include great basketball courts, reserves and cricket nets. I pay tribute to the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, for throwing open the gates to 81 schools so that local families can enjoy those fantastic public assets. This will allow everyone to enjoy free use of playgrounds, sports courts and ovals. The Kincumber Public School and the Avoca Beach Public School are participating. They will be open from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., seven days a week, from 16 to 27 April. Over the 2017 Christmas period, the Kincumber Public School participated in a trial. The feedback was positive and the trial was incredibly successful. The Government also is providing \$5,000 to each school to assist with minor facilities improvements in the lead-up to the April holidays.

I turn now to discuss roads. The Central Coast Highway begins at Kariong and continues along a number of Central Coast roads, including The Entrance Road, until it meets the Pacific Highway at Doyalson. It is an important arterial road that covers almost the entirety of the Central Coast region. This route also provides an important connection between the M1 Pacific Motorway and Gosford. Given its importance, the Liberal-Nationals Government has upgraded three key sections of this road: the Brisbane Water Drive and Manns Road intersection at West Gosford, the section from Carlton Road to Ocean View Drive, and the intersection of the Central Coast Highway and Racecourse Road. I cannot overstate the importance of the impact those upgrades have had on traffic flow, much to the relief of the many thousands of Terrigal residents who commute daily to and from the Central Coast.

The Liberal-Nationals Government also recognises the importance of the M1, which was formerly the F3 and is one of Australia's busiest and most important roads. Currently two sections of the M1 are being upgraded on the Central Coast. Work is underway between Tuggerah and Doyalson interchanges to improve traffic flow and safety. The upgrade involves widening the motorway to provide three lanes in each direction and rebuilding the roadway to provide a smoother and more durable surface. Work has just begun at the Kariong and Somersby interchanges to improve traffic flow and safety. The upgrade involves widening the motorway and upgrading three of the four ramps at the Kariong interchange. Every single day there are hundreds, if not thousands, of people from the Terrigal electorate who use the motorway to travel to and from Sydney for work, and to travel north to Newcastle and beyond. That is why it is so important to keep the M1 in good condition.

The upgrades will help to improve traffic flow for better and more reliable trips, make it easier to move freight, allow for predicted future increases in traffic and provide safer access to and from the incredibly busy motorway. The Empire Bay Drive intersection upgrade was a pre-election commitment I championed because it was vital to the people of my electorate. The intersection of Empire Bay Drive, The Scenic Road and Cochrone Street, which is right in the centre of my electorate of Terrigal, has more than 25,000 travel through it every single

day. Of course Empire Bay Drive is a key link between suburbs on the peninsula and Empire Bay in the south, and up to Kincumber, Green Point and the beach suburbs of Avoca in the north.

The proposal to upgrade this intersection was a core election promise of the Coalition in 2015. I remain 100 per cent committed to delivering this vital project for the Terrigal community. It will improve traffic flow and travel time for those 25,000 motorists who travel through it every single day. Indeed, each morning during peak times on weekdays, traffic banks south along Empire Bay for several kilometres. The situation is even worse on Saturday mornings when people want to take their children to local sporting events. It is for this reason that an upgraded two-lane roundabout will make a huge difference to travel times for our local community. That shows that our Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to large projects like the M1 motorway upgrade as well as important local projects like the Empire Bay Drive intersection upgrade in my electorate.

A couple of weeks ago the final round of community consultation, called the Review of Environmental Factors, went on display. Roads and Maritime Services has already received about 25 submissions from the community. I look forward to the design being finalised and construction commencing within months. Another important traffic improvement in my electorate is traffic change around the Terrigal central business district. I am pleased that, as a result of the successful amalgamation of Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire into Central Coast Council, \$10 million was granted to the council for important community projects. More than \$2 million of that amount has been allocated to the Terrigal traffic flow improvement plan. Some opposition and concern has been expressed by local businesses and residents during the council's engagement in consultation relating to the proposed change. I continue to encourage my community to participate.

Business interrupted.

Community Recognition Statements

SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:16): It was a great honour to present the Seniors Local Achievement Awards and recognise those across the Myall Lakes electorate who contribute to making our community an invigorating, inspiring, active and healthy place in which to live. Award recipients included the Halliday's Point Community Church community, which for the past 23 years has prepared a luncheon on alternate Wednesdays for over 55s. They provide home-cooked meals, friendship and companionship to all who attend. Forster resident Hazel Keepence received the honour for her extensive volunteer work in the community including at the Tuncurry Senior Citizens Association, Lifeline and Red Cross. Ross Williams of Forster has been an active member with the Forster Croquet Club, Probus Club, the Forster Tuncurry Community College, the Great Lakes Women's Shelter and the Art Society. Taree resident Fay Van-Vegchel was recognised for her tireless work as the Parents and Citizens Association President of the Chatham Public School.

NEW LAMBTON FOOTBALL CLUB 100 YEARS OF SUCCESS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:17): If people want to know how to grow a football club's junior base, they should ask the New Lambton Football Club. The club boasts the biggest junior participation in the whole of the Hunter. The club's Chairman, Clayton Harrison, said the club's success was due to a real focus on being part of the local community and striving to have more women playing the game. Last year 460 women played football at the club—a record that prompted case studies by the Football Federation Australia. New Lambton is very popular, as evidenced by the entry of females in the lower grades as well. What fun it was to watch the Women's Premier League [WPL] under-14s last Sunday. I thank the WPL club's president, Joseph McCarthy, for his kind invitation. I have fond memories of watching the same team when they were young Budgies in 2012, wearing the pink socks that I donated. I wish New Lambton Football Club all the best, and I look forward to enjoying future WPL games.

MURRUMBURRAH HIGH SCHOOL FARM CLUB

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:18): Please join me in congratulating Haylee Allen, Rory Fogg, Hannah Phillis, Gus Shea and Chad Webster, who are students of the Murrumburrah High School Farm Club, and their teacher, Jan Young, on their recent success at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The students broke all records in the steer auction with their beast, Christopher, selling for an amazing \$66,000. The proceeds of the sale will be donated to the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. Christopher, the steer, was bred by Graham Simmonds from Boorowa and was prepared for the auction by the students of the Murrumburrah High School. This successful partnership also raised funds for the Can Assist charity that provides financial assistance and practical support to country people in New South Wales who are affected by any type of cancer. Murrumburrah High School has long held a strong reputation for agricultural excellence. The Farm Club works on a system where older students mentor younger students in the craft of showmanship.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES SILVER MEDALLIST ERIN CLEAVER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:19): I again congratulate my constituent Ms Erin Cleaver, who, since I last spoke about her, has accomplished the huge achievement of winning silver in the T38 women's long jump in front of a home crowd at the Commonwealth Games. Erin leapt a whopping 4.36 metres. At the age of 18, Erin can add a third medal to her collection as she has already won a world championships silver medal and Olympics bronze. What an achievement! Erin was born with cerebral palsy right-sided hemiplegia, which significantly affects the movement in her right arm and leg. She has not let that get in her way of becoming a world-class track and field athlete. Erin is a star.

TAFE NSW RIVERINA EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:20): On Friday 6 April I attended the 2018 TAFE NSW Riverina Excellence Awards in Wagga Wagga and had the honour of presenting the regional campus awards to four students from the Albury electorate. Roslyn Twycross of the Albury campus received the Outstanding Achievement Award and the Community Services and Health Excellence Award. Esther Jackel received the Corowa campus Outstanding Achievement Award and Business Administration Excellence Award. Luke Wright from the National Environment Centre Thurgoona campus received the Outstanding Achievement Award and Luke Jones, also from the National Environment Centre Thurgoona campus, received the Mining and Civil Services Excellence Award. I congratulate each of these students on their marvellous achievements at TAFE NSW.

MEALS ON WHEELS VOLUNTEER PAM CAMMARERI

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (13:20): I acknowledge the remarkable service to the Lake Macquarie community by Pam Cammareri. Pam has been volunteering at Morisset and Toronto Meals on Wheels for 25 years, which is an extraordinary effort. As I have said many times, volunteers are the backbone of our local communities and are absolutely vital to the survival of many community services. Last year alone Morisset and Toronto Meals on Wheels delivered more than 35,000 meals to those in the local community who needed them. All up more than 44,000 items were received, packed and delivered through the Morisset and Toronto kitchens. In more recent years Pam has worked as a kitchen supervisor in the Morisset kitchen where she has managed a small team. She is greatly respected by everyone around her and has adapted to significant change over the 25 years she has served as a volunteer. I note that Pam's efforts were recently acknowledged in the Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program. I am very pleased to be able to further recognise her milestone in the Parliament.

PRETTY BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOL SENSORY GARDEN

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:21): Recently in my electorate of Terrigal I visited Pretty Beach Public School to announce a special funding grant of \$3,500 from the environment Minister to the school to establish a sensory garden as part of the Government's Eco Schools Program. In the words of Principal Deborah Callender, this new sensory garden "will support students with specific learning needs and encourage environmental sustainability." I congratulate the school on being one of only eight schools in New South Wales to receive money in this round of funding to support this new learning opportunity. Having visited the school many times, I know there is a very strong sense of community amongst the families at Pretty Beach Public School. I congratulate Parents and Citizens Association President Denae Dela Paz as well as all staff, students and parents involved with the school. I look forward to the sensory garden being built.

VOLUNTEERING CENTRAL COAST

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:22): I congratulate the whole team at Volunteering Central Coast—board members, employees and, most importantly, all volunteers—on all that they are and all that they do. Since 1986 Volunteering Central Coast has been linking members of our community with organisations that benefit from the expertise and support of volunteers. Volunteering Central Coast has been squeezed out of its council accommodation. It supports people who have volunteering requirements in order to receive their income benefits and it receives no government funding to do so. It is a skill-matching agency that offers a valued service to individuals and refers more than 1,200 volunteers to more than 110 community organisations every year. Volunteering Central Coast provides support, practical assistance, and information and training. It maintains a strong volunteer base that is an integral part of our wonderful Central Coast community. The love and positive energy I felt in the room when I visited last week reflects its approach to giving generously to our community. I say cheers and thanks to the whole team.

TRIBUTE TO TRISH ROBERTSON

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:23): I recognise an unsung hero in my community, Trish Robertson from Humphreys Newsagency, who has provided endless support to our much-loved Bear Cottage. Trish ensures that the collection tins at Humphreys Newsagency—one of the best newsagencies in Manly—are consistently maintained to provide a steady stream of important funding to support the children and families in the care of Bear Cottage. The staff at Bear Cottage, who are incredibly grateful for the efforts of Trish, have told me that Humphreys Newsagency also provides art supplies for the art therapy program as well as many donations for fundraising events. We are incredibly fortunate to have Bear Cottage in Manly and fortunate to have so many committed fundraisers and volunteers like Trish among us. Trish tirelessly advocates for people who do not have a voice. She also helps the homeless and those in dire need of life's basic necessities. I am grateful to Trish and other staff members at Humphreys Newsagency for their community spirit. I commend them to the House.

NSW-ACT YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD FINALIST STEPHANIE REED

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:24): I congratulate Stephanie Reed on being a finalist in the Soroptimist International Women Creating Change category of the 2018 NSW-ACT Young Achiever Awards. The Soroptimist International Women Creating Change Award acknowledges and celebrates the commitment of young women in initiating and leading activities that enable change in the lives of women and girls locally, nationally and/or internationally. Stephanie was nominated for her work with the HunterWiSE program based at the University of Newcastle.

HunterWiSE is designed to establish avenues for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] in the Hunter to liaise with, collaborate with and mentor each other. The initiative also aims to positively affect perceptions of STEM careers amongst school-aged girls, thereby increasing overall participation in STEM by women. Stephanie is currently mentoring and providing support for young women who are interested in pursuing a STEM-related career. Stephanie is a wonderful role model. I thank her for her positive contribution to Newcastle and the Hunter.

NORTHERN SUBURBS RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB WOMEN'S SEVENS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:25): Last weekend at North Sydney Oval the Northern Suburbs Rugby Football Club Women's Rugby Sevens team took to the field for the first time in the Women's Rugby Sevens competition. I was excited to be there to see them compete against Penrith Brothers at one of their four games. This is a significant milestone for the club. I particularly congratulate President Grahame O'Donnell, the board and General Manager Jack Burey, who has taken the team under his wing as their coach. I also congratulate Caitlin Aquilina, who has joined the Norths community and the women's program. Caitlin is the NSW Rugby Female Development Officer at the Waratahs and has been assisting the women on and off the field. With 90 per cent of the team having never set foot on a rugby field, it was wonderful to see the Northern Suburbs Rugby Football Club make such big strides towards a more diverse rugby season. I look forward to supporting the team throughout the season and for many years to come.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ADVISORY BOARD TENANT REPRESENTATIVES

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:26): I acknowledge the tireless efforts of Neighbourhood Advisory Board tenant representatives and acknowledge the important role these volunteers play in our communities. Tenant representatives give up a substantial portion of their free time to advocate on behalf of their neighbours who live in public housing. They are leaders in their communities, liaising with the Department of Family and Community Services—which we all know is not an easy task—as well as councillors, City of Sydney staff, local services and electorate officers in order to assist their neighbours with their issues and concerns and coordinate community building activities. I acknowledge the hard work of the representatives in providing what is a difficult and often thankless service. I applaud the efforts of the incredible tenant representatives, particularly those in Redfern, Waterloo and Surry Hills. I congratulate them on their leadership and thank them for their advocacy on behalf of so many.

PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION FINALIST AMITY GILMOUR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:27): I recognise Port Macquarie student and outstanding young public speaker Amity Gilmour, who on 17 February 2018 won her way through the semifinals of the Rotary District 9650 public speaking competition held at Walcha. Rotary District 9650 covers an area from Woolgoolga in the north to Armidale in the east and as far as Lightning Ridge in the west and Taree in the south. At the event hosted by the Rotary Club of Walcha at Walcha Central School, Amity's speech was a standout presentation as she spoke passionately about those who are persecuted for their religion. Amity was one of eight students from an original pool of 59 clubs who won through to that stage of the competition, with the finals held in Armidale at the Rotary District 9650 conference on 8 to 11 March. Amity is now one of the final four students.

The winner of the public speaking competition will progress to New Zealand. Youth Director of Rotary Club of Port Macquarie West Julie Constable believes Amity has a great chance of winning the competition because she executes every speech with great professionalism. I wish Amity all the best in her quest for the title and her future in public speaking.

AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE GROUP FIELD COMMISSIONER PAM PRICE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:28): Group Field Commissioner Pam Price is the heart of the Australian Air League NSW Girls Group. In the beginning stages Pam had no place to hold her lessons. At one time they were meeting in a car park. That was until they were very kindly offered a house in Doyalson at the back of the RSL club where they could hold their meetings. The girls section began in December 1944, giving young women the opportunity to take part in aviation studies. Pam exemplifies this by giving young girls a chance to expand their knowledge. She is dedicated to her work and goes above and beyond for her squadron. On 25 June 2017 the Doyalson girls squadron celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. I thank Pam and her colleagues for all of their hard work, time and effort. I acknowledge that this community recognition statement was written by Jade Matthews, my current work experience student.

GRAFTON TAFE GOLD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT NATHAN THOMPSON

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:28): I congratulate Nathan Thompson who was recently awarded the Grafton TAFE Gold Award for Excellence. Nathan received this award as a result of his studies in certificate III in barbering. Three candidates were nominated for this award. Receiving this award is testament to Nathan's skill, determination and commitment. Grafton TAFE is a dynamic campus. It provides the appropriate vocational education and training for students to meet the needs of our local businesses and it is training our future workforce. Well done to Grafton TAFE. My congratulations to Nathan. I wish him continued success in his new career path.

BLACKTOWN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL TEAM 4802

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (13:29): Today I inform the House of the success of 22 wonderful young ladies from Blacktown Girls High School who created team 4802 and have been competing in the FIRST—for inspiration and recognition for science and technology—robotics competition. FIRST combines the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology. Four hundred teams have won through the regional competition to compete at the world championships next week at Houston in the United States of America. Team 4802 recently won the 2018 Southern Cross Regional championships by defeating many university, public and private high schools in order to compete at the world championships. Under the guidance of teacher Mark Johnson and Principal Jeffrey Lumb, these ladies are breaking through the male-dominated world of science and technology. My congratulations to team 4802 from Blacktown Girls High School. The people of Blacktown City, Western Sydney and across Australia are proud of your achievements.

TWELVE STRONG GOLD CLASS SCREENING

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (13:30): On Wednesday 28 March 2018 my wife, Nicole, and I were honoured to host a gold class experience of the film *Twelve Strong* for veteran members of the Castle Hill and District RSL Sub-Branch, their partners and war widows at the Event Theatre, Castle Towers. The film *Twelve Strong* details a tale of real-life heroism against staggering odds concerning United States of America paramilitary officers and special forces sent to Afghanistan immediately after the September 11 attacks. I felt privileged to socialise with Hills shire veterans who had served our great nation across the world—from Malaya to Indonesia to Papua and New Guinea—including the legendary Colonel Don Tait, OAM, who served our country in Vietnam. I thank Scott Leach, President of the Australian Hotels Association (NSW), who sponsored the event. I thank also the President of the Castle Hill and Districts RSL Sub-Branch, Brigadier Phillip Bridie, AM, for his tireless efforts in supporting the New South Wales veteran community and helping us to organise this event. I am sure that all veterans who attended will recall this gold class experience as a treasured one.

CORAL MCLEAN AWARD 2018 RECIPIENT GAYLE BARBAGALLO

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (13:31): I invite the House to join me in congratulating Mrs Gayle Barbagallo on being awarded the Coral McLean Award for 2018. This award celebrates the outstanding achievements of local women. It was awarded by the Federal member for Chifley, the Hon. Ed Husic, MP. A long-term resident of Rooty Hill, Gayle is an active volunteer and community member. She volunteers at the Mount Druitt Hospital where she has assisted with activities, including fundraising for the donation of vital equipment to the hospital and the operation of the gift shop. Gayle also visits and assists patients at the hospital. Gayle has been a long-term member and facilitator of the St Marys Writing Group, which assists members to increase their skills in imaginative writing and to socialise with others who share similar interests. Gayle is

involved in many other community organisations such as the Mount Druitt and Area Community Legal Centre and the Rotary Club of Mount Druitt. This award is well-deserved recognition of Gayle's selfless efforts on behalf of the Mount Druitt community.

AUSTRALIAN SIKH GAMES 2018

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:32): It was an honour to represent the Premier at the 2018 Australian Sikh Games in Bass Hill, along with the hardworking member for East Hills. Mr Glen Brookes has been a strong advocate for the Sikh community. Recently Mr Brookes and I presented a \$5,000 grant to support the magnificent Gurudwara in Revesby. Also in attendance at the games were the Federal member for Banks, the Hon. David Coleman, MP, representing the Prime Minister, and the member for Parramatta, Dr Geoff Lee.

The Sikh Games were a spectacle to behold. The event attracted more than 60,000 visitors and 2,500 athletes competed across a wide range of traditional Sikh sports such as Kabaddi, tug of war and wrestling. It was topped off with a delicious free lunch, which is a typical Sikh tradition. I thank Australian National Sikh Sports and Cultural Council President Avtar Singh Sidhu for taking me on a tour of the Sikh games. I commend all the other devoted members of the committee for organising such a successful 2018 games, including Vice President Mohinder Singh Bitta, Vice President Mehnga Singh Khakh, Secretary Jasbir Singh Randhawa and Treasurer Michael Singh.

TRIBUTE TO JO GALLOWAY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:33): I pay tribute to the immediate past president of Gardeners Road Public School Parents and Citizens Federation, Jo Galloway of Beaconsfield, who in March this year completed two years of service. Jo's record of achievement is one of which to be proud. I have previously told the House of the success of the parents and citizens federation inaugural fete. It is now a keenly attended annual event and continues to raise thousands of dollars for the school community. Under Jo's leadership, the parents and citizens federation has worked tirelessly to fund a new playground for the growing school. Thanks to her advocacy, I was pleased to grant the federation \$55,000 from the 2017 Community Building Partnership program to finally make the project a reality. Generations of students at Gardeners Road Public School will have Jo Galloway to thank. I am so proud to have known and worked so closely with her. I commend Jo Galloway's work to the House.

ATHLETICS AUSTRALIA LIFE MEMBER LAURIE KEATON

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:34): Today I make special mention of Laurie Keaton, who has been named an Athletics Australia life member. Laurie is an extremely active and well recognised member of the athletics community. He has been working with juniors and seniors alike for more than an incredible 50 years. Laurie first got involved in 1964 as manager for a New South Wales high school zone, and by 1970 he was on the founding committee for the New South Wales All School Championships.

Laurie continued by officiating New South Wales Schools and New South Wales Australian Athletes' Alliance Inc. meets. He worked during the world junior championships and was recognised internationally as an Oceania International Association of Athletes Federations area technical official. Laurie has also held senior technical official appointments at two Commonwealth Games, the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. This is by no means a conclusive list of Laurie's achievements; in fact, it barely scratches the surface. Laurie is an absolute inspiration to those around him. He has always shown that he is willing to work. Indeed, Laurie has inspired a generation of youth athletes from my community.

JIM ANDERSON SCHOLARSHIP

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (13:35): Each year my community celebrates the legacy of the former member for Londonderry and the former Mayor of Blacktown Jim Anderson, who is fittingly remembered through the Jim Anderson Scholarship. Jim was renowned as a passionate advocate for public education in Western Sydney. I am sure that many current members and parliamentary staff remember him fondly. On Monday I attended Colyton High School for the presentation of this year's Jim Anderson Scholarship winners to support students studying at the University of Western Sydney or TAFE. Congratulations to Amanda Singh from Colyton High School, Muhammad Ghazanfar from St Marys Senior High, Shawn Micallef from Wyndham College, Amilda Kasper from Rooty Hill High School and Shewwta Naidu from Chifley College.

SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW 2018 AWARD RECIPIENT KATIE TISELL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:36): I congratulate Katie Tisdell who claimed several awards at the 2018 Sydney Royal Easter Show for the sixth consecutive year with her hy-line brown hens. This year she received a first, second and third place in each of the two categories she entered: bantam brown eggs and

standard brown eggs. Katie said, "Hy-line browns are lovely and quiet. They make beautiful winning eggs and are great pets." Katie, who is 11 years old, often faces tough competition, with most challengers being significantly older. Her extensive career in the industry has taught her a thing or two about the perfect egg, as well as how to give her pets the chance of creating it. This is a family affair. Her uncle Barry Tisdell is a renowned hen breeder and shower, while another uncle, Garnett Wamsley, has been breeding hens for more than 45 years. Her father, Peter, and late grandfather Clem were also noted hen breeders. Along with the family tradition, expertise in picking out the perfect egg also has been passed on to Katie.

TRIBUTE TO SAM MAYNE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:37): We all have special people in our electorates who volunteer their time and skills to make our communities a more special place. Today I give a special mention to local Port Stephens builder Sam Mayne who recently volunteered his skills to complete a renovation at Karingal Preschool in Nelson Bay. This beautiful local community preschool is run by a parent management committee and they were overjoyed with the results of their recent renovation. Put simply, this incredible outcome would not have been possible without Sam volunteering his time and know-how, as well as being ably assisted by his apprentice, over a four-week period during the Christmas break. Sam is also a parent at Karingal, so he understands the importance of quality preschool education. With the renovations completed, the preschool is more open and welcoming. The new once-cramped entry area is now light filled and much more open. I thank the preschool's director, Adelaide Stockman, and her wonderful staff for making a difference every day to children's lives. I also thank Sam Mayne for his generosity.

CENTRAL COAST RETURN AND EARN COLLECTION POINTS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:38): In recent months across my electorate of Terrigal on the Central Coast the Return and Earn container deposit scheme rollout has been underway. This scheme has been incredibly successful, and the Central Coast now has four reverse vending machines operating. Since opening on 1 January at Erina Fair, 1.2 million drink containers and bottles have been deposited, and at Carpet Court Erina, 1.4 million drink containers and bottles have been deposited. Recently, two more Return and Earn machines have been installed and are being highly utilised by local residents. At Kincumber Village, 43,000 returns have been clocked up, and 195,000 drink containers and bottles have been returned to Green Point Shopping Village. Thank you to everyone who is doing the right thing by disposing of bottles responsibly through the Return and Earn collection points. More collection points will continue to be rolled out right across the Central Coast. I encourage everyone to go to www.returnandearn.org.au to find all locations.

MEALS ON WHEELS VOLUNTEER CHRISTINA GIANNAKENAS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:39): Recently I had the opportunity to join a Multicultural Communities Council of the Illawarra [MCCI] Meals on Wheels delivery run with Christina Giannakenas, an MCCI volunteer and an absolute champion. Along the way I met some wonderful Wollongong characters and had a chance to see how valued the meals and Christina's work are to her clients. Everyone was looking forward to her arrival and to the meals she was delivering, which were prepared locally by disability enterprise the Flagstaff Group. As the Meals on Wheels slogan says, it is more than just a meal. That was certainly clear to me. Given how keen everyone was to update Christina and me on what had been happening, it was obvious that her visits are most welcome, as I am sure is the case with the thousands of other Meals on Wheels delivery volunteers. I thank Christina and every one of those volunteers. They not only help people to make sure they eat well but they also brighten so many people's days.

AUSTRALASIAN OVER 50S HOUSING AWARD RECIPIENT CATH QUIRK

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:40): Today I recognise Port Macquarie resident Cath Quirk on the receipt of her Australasian Over 50s Housing Award. For the past 20 years these awards have celebrated excellence in the Australasian over 50s housing and care sectors. Cath's award was presented for her outstanding work preparing a newsletter for St Agnes and Lourdes villages after receiving a resident satisfaction survey rating in the high 90 per cent mark. Through interviews, Cath chronicles the personal stories of village residents. She feels privileged to be able to share incredible stories of the residents' lives and to save them in print. Cath Quirk's award was a just reward. The judges noted her newsletter fostered communication between residents, their family and friends and the wider community. I congratulate Cath Quirk on her innovation and excellence in communication serving the elderly.

**INDIGENOUS ALL STARS TEAM MEMBER LINCOLN SMITH
MAITLAND GROSSMAN HIGH SCHOOL QUAD SCULL TEAM**

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:41): I congratulate local sportsman Lincoln Smith of the Maitland Pickers on his recent selection to the Indigenous All Stars front row last weekend. Mr Smith proudly represents his Indigenous culture through his participation and offers Indigenous youth a great role model by showing a snippet of what is achievable with persistence and hard work. Mr Smith has been a committed sportsperson and has represented the Morpeth Bulls juniors and the Maitland Pickers. Last season he earned both Newcastle Rebels and NSW Country selection. I congratulate Lincoln on his selection. We are excited to watch him develop in his sport.

I congratulate also students and sportsmen Jack Davey, Cameron McConville, Mitchell Scales, Robert Weatherall and Michael Eveleigh of the Maitland Grossman High School quad scull team on their recent regatta performance. The newly established team made great efforts and represented Maitland very well. Mr Davey was awarded the Reg Galvin Memorial Award as outstanding male rower for the second year. The team were named champions, beating Sydney Boys High School and Sydney Secondary College. Congratulations.

BALLERINA ELLISE PELLIZZER

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (13:42): Today I recognise the exceptional talent and accomplishments of ballerina Ellise Pellizzer, who is from Griffith. Ellise was chosen to join the internationally renowned Ajkun Ballet Theatre in New York. As a child, Ellise travelled to the neighbouring town of Leeton for ballet classes. She also studied at the National College of Dance in Newcastle. I understand auditioning for the theatre was a rigorous process, with 2,000 other hopeful dancers from various parts of the world. In the end, she was one of just 10 dancers to be accepted. Ellise has made many sacrifices along the way to pursue her dreams. She has trained hard and for long hours and has missed many opportunities that others take for granted in their post-school years. Living in the country adds a few more hurdles for elite dancers, and, indeed, for sportspeople of any kind, as many competitions are held in the big smoke. It is so exciting that her hard work has paid off. I congratulate Ellise on this fantastic achievement. Her dedication and talent are remarkable and I wish her all the best for the future.

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR CONSTABLES WADE FULLER AND CRAIG HANSEN

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:43): Our Police Force does an incredible job in keeping our community safe and secure. It is certainly a tough job that is often thankless at best and met with hostility and violence at its worst. I extend my thanks to serving and retired police officers generally, but today I pay tribute to two officers from the Lake Macquarie Local Area Command in particular, who were recently among eight others recognised for their acts of courage in this year's Australian Bravery Decorations. Senior Constable Wade Fuller and Senior Constable Craig Hansen were formally recognised for their involvement in the rescue of three children and their father at Caves Beach in 2016 after they were caught in a rip. To conduct the rescue, the two officers used boogie boards that were on the beach, demonstrating a level of resourcefulness and quick thinking that is admirable. The two officers will receive a commendation for brave conduct, an award that is most fitting for such demonstrations of courage and selflessness.

STATE CRICKETER CONNOR COOK

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:44): Today I recognise Camden Haven High School student and talented cricket player Connor Cook. Connor plays regularly in the Mid North Coast Premier Cricket League and has been a shining light for his Port Pirates team, which has struggled in the inaugural season of the competition. After appearances for the Mid North Coast Zone team, Connor was selected in December 2017 for New South Wales in the All Schools cricket side. Connor recently made the final selection cut, joining the squad that travelled to Queensland to compete in several matches and to visit the National Cricket Centre. Connor is passionate about winning and playing for his State. I wish Connor Cook much success representing New South Wales and following his dream to one day wear the baggy green for Australia.

BANKSTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:45): Last Saturday I had the pleasure of joining a number of guests at the season launch of the Bankstown City Netball Association at Deverall Park, Condell Park, in the Bankstown electorate. It was an absolute delight to attend the season launch, during which hundreds of girls participated in their loved sport of netball. A wonderful march took place, the Yagoona Band played and lots of families were in attendance. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Wayne Chesterton, the president, and the entire executive team, including Leah Lewis and Helen Lee. I also acknowledge Dick Phillips from the Bankstown Sports Club and Councillor Rachele Harika, who also attended the season launch. It was an amazing

event. Every year I go along to the season launch to wish all the girls the best. I thank the umpires, the coaches and all the volunteers who make netball such a great success in Bankstown.

CUB SCOUT GREY WOLF AWARD RECIPIENT ALYSSA EDEN

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:46): I am very excited today to congratulate an amazing Cub Scout, Alyssa Eden, on being awarded the prestigious Grey Wolf Award. The Grey Wolf Award is the highest award a Cub Scout can achieve. Cub Scouts must complete a number of tasks in order to receive the award, including leading a hike, organising inter-pack activities, participating in an overnight camp, and obtaining certain levels of badges. Alyssa ran a hike from the Sphinx Memorial to Bobbin Head on 23 December. Even though it was a very busy time of the year, Alyssa made sure she was able to successfully complete the hike accompanied by five Cubs and two leaders. Alyssa has been a very active member in her 1st Hornsby Heights Wombat Pack. She has partaken in every single camp with the pack and has worked hard to achieve all of the requirements of the award. Alyssa is a truly deserving recipient. She comes from an amazing family and I have no doubt that she will do exceptional things for our community and our country.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome this afternoon to representatives from the Scots College Indigenous Education program, guests of the Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage and the member for Vacluse, as well as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Melinda Pavey.

I also welcome to the Chamber a delegation from the Probus Club of Nowra, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. I acknowledge the students and teacher from North Sydney Girls High School, guests of the member for North Shore. I also acknowledge in the gallery the students and teacher from Granville Boys High School, guests of the member for Granville.

I recognise in the gallery this afternoon the Hon. John Dowd, former Attorney General and Leader of the Opposition. It is great to see him.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that today the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing.

Question Time

SYDNEY STADIUMS

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Premier. The Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust says that the new stadium the Government is building for them will "deliver gold and platinum members an incredible range of exclusive benefits". Will the Premier provide more detail to the House about these exclusive gold and platinum member-only benefits and, in particular, how much they will cost the taxpayers of New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24): I am happy to address this question from the Leader of the Opposition because we know how much he enjoys the corporate boxes, don't we? In fact, there is not a weekend when he is not seen in a corporate box somewhere in Sydney. Is this not the ultimate irony that while the Government is building schools, hospitals, roads and rail, he is in the corporate boxes? That is what he is good at. For someone who says that we talk too much about stadiums and not enough about schools and hospitals, why does he not ask me a question about schools and hospitals? Why does he not ask me to repeat how much we are investing for the people of this great State? Let us go back a step. I know he does not have any transport policies, except for axing them. I know he does not have any policies regarding health or education. But he does not even have a policy on stadia—or does he?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: It is 129. The Premier said she was happy to answer the question that the Leader of the Opposition asked. Will she answer the question?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Maitland should say thank you for the \$450 million hospital we are building. Whilst the Leader of the Opposition—

[*Interruption*]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes, I know it is a touchy subject for you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier will be heard in silence. I suggest members listen to the answer to the question that was asked by the Opposition.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Whilst the Leader of the Opposition worries about his corporate boxes, we on this side will worry about the schools and hospitals we are building throughout the State. The Leader of the Opposition has had a bit to say about stadia. He said he supported Parramatta Stadium: "Do you support the Parramatta Stadium being built?" "Yep." "What about a rectangular stadium at ANZ?" "Yep." "And what about Allianz?" "I'll keep my options open." But just like with every other aspect of Government policy, he has no policy. He has no values and he does not care about the issues that matter to the people of New South Wales.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (14:28): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government's delivery of infrastructure improving people's quality of life and livability?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28): I thank the member for Davidson for his question and I take this opportunity to thank him for the role he undertakes as Parliamentary Secretary. Like all of us, I know the member for Davidson cares deeply and passionately about ensuring that his community receives infrastructure upgrades as are delivered across the State. It is important to build roads, rail, schools and hospitals, but it is also important to ensure during this process—especially where there is major construction—that we are considering our future livability, ensuring more open spaces and public space available for playgrounds. Today I was very pleased to announce, along with the Minister for Planning and the Minister for the Environment, our absolute intent to plant five million trees—in fact, 380,000 every year.

Whenever we have to unfortunately remove a tree, we have made sure that in all the environmental impact statements we have doubled, tripled or quadrupled the number of trees. In some projects it is eight to one. Only in the last month we have made huge inroads in infrastructure. I love talking about all the projects that are underway, all the projects we are delivering. In fact, a lot of those Labor members opposite know that the only way they will get anything built in their electorates is through us. Whilst they were in government, Campbelltown Hospital was never built, Blacktown Hospital was never built and Maitland Hospital was never built. These are all projects that we are doing.

Mr Greg Warren: Yes, it was. Do you think it just miraculously appeared? Fall from the heavens, did it?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Is the member for Campbelltown alright? Just say thank you for the \$600 million, bunny.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Bunny, just say thank you for the South West Rail Link, Campbelltown Hospital, all the road upgrades—and the list goes on. Just say thank you. But I digress. I am pleased to inform the House that since the House last sat, in addition to the \$111 billion we have already invested in infrastructure and the \$80 billion committed in the forward estimates, in health alone we are continuing the delivery of 77 major upgrades to hospitals and health facilities. A huge proportion of these are in rural and regional New South Wales. Since Parliament last sat, as part of our \$7.7 billion record investment in health—which, let us remember, is double what Labor spent in its last term in Government—the member for Penrith, member for Mulgoa and I announced stage two of the funding for Nepean Hospital, something for which the community has yearned for a long time.

Stage two will provide at least \$450 million in addition to the stage one funding, which brings the contribution to that hospital to more than \$1 billion. This is just one of a number examples across Western Sydney, Sydney and New South Wales of the Government's investment in infrastructure. On that occasion, I was pleased to also talk about the fact that in Western Sydney alone, the Government is spending more than \$5 billion on new health infrastructure. That is before we get to the upgrades at Tweed, John Hunter, Gosford, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and Broken Hill—the list goes on.

We are also delivering new and upgraded hospitals in Parkes, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga, as well as in Labor's heartland in places such as Blacktown and Mount Druitt where we recently opened the last stages.

Those opposite never managed any of these accomplishments because they did not know how. Similarly, in education, I cannot say how much it pleases me when the Minister for Education and I visit students in schools with new surroundings, environments and equipment. Again I know it is shocking for those opposite to realise. They do not like to admit that they shut down 90 schools when they were in government. Any of them are welcome to come along with me any time I go to these openings and visit these school communities.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: But how would we get them out of the corporate boxes to come to look at these things? Anyway, I digress. Because nothing can be more important. Having met the students from The Scots College before question time, I know how important it is to give every person in this State the opportunity to have the best education possible. That is what the Government's aim is. A person's postcode should not determine what chance they have at a great life. That is why we on this side take our \$4.2 billion investment in school infrastructure seriously—because we know how important it is. [*Extension of time*]

Recently I visited the school at O'Connell Street, Parramatta with the member for Parramatta—that was a wonderful new facility for the students, a \$40 million new school which accommodates up to 1,000 students in 40 classrooms. The way it is designed, you could not tell it had so many students. The way the school was designed and planned means there is ample room for the children to play, in addition to the up-to-date facilities.

Dr Geoff Lee: Thank you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Parramatta is very pleased, as are all the parents of children at the school. It was wonderful to open the new Wentworth Point Public School in Sydney's inner west. We appreciate what social infrastructure or road and rail projects mean for our communities. The only policy in relation to infrastructure announced by those opposite when they were in government was to cancel projects. That is the Labor way; they have not learned from the past and they have no plan or vision for the people of New South Wales. Not only are we getting on with the job of building infrastructure but we are also making sure that we provide the most livable communities we can have, because we want everyone to feel proud of their suburb.

We want everyone to know that they can enjoy the communities in which they live while we build the roads and rail infrastructure that will reduce their travel times and the new schools and best hospitals for them. We know that when those opposite interject, they are embarrassed. We are delivering what they never could deliver. We are getting on with the job of governing, which they never did. I want to make this point clearly: I am sick of their arguments about class warfare. We deliver for everyone in New South Wales because we are the party of the workers. We deliver for the hardworking people of New South Wales, no matter where they live.

SYDNEY STADIUMS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:36): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the business case for the two new stadiums indicates that there will be 10 new blockbuster events at each stadium each year, will the Premier tell the House which 20 new blockbuster events we can look forward to in the two new stadiums?

[*Interruption*]

Mr Ryan Park: The Stawell Gift is not leaving Melbourne.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:37): For the benefit of the people in the gallery, the person who asked the question is the shadow Treasurer, the person who hopes to be the Treasurer of this State. The Leader of the Opposition cares about which corporate boxes he sits in when he is at events, and the shadow Treasurer cares about blockbuster events. The question started well when he talked about a business case, and I thought he might ask me a question related to the business case. I say to the member for Keira—

[*Interruption*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira asked a question. Members on his side of the House could at least have the courtesy of listening to the Premier's answer.

[*Interruption*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Maitland on two calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When the member for Keira jumped up to ask a question, I thought he might ask a good question about the budget, about the economy, about jobs. I say to him that I think it is extremely

sad that those opposite do not want New South Wales to be better. Those opposite do not want us to invest in the infrastructure that this State needs.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The question was about the promised 10 blockbusters, but we have not yet heard about one of them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Infrastructure NSW provides a robust independent business case. Do we take the word of Infrastructure NSW or the word of the shadow Treasurer? Weighing up the business case of Infrastructure NSW against the business case of the member for Keira, I would back Infrastructure NSW any day of the week. This is a serious matter, and I think the shadow Treasurer has demonstrated his lack of capacity to hold the portfolio of the shadow Treasurer, let alone to be the Treasurer. I say to the member for Keira: If you seriously consider yourself to be the next Treasurer of this State, you should ask us about the jobs that we are creating. We are creating more jobs in New South Wales than all the other States combined. How much are we spending on infrastructure? More than the other States.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: I ask the Premier to address her comments through the Chair. My second point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. We on this side of the House want to know what the 20 blockbuster events are going to be.

[*Interruption*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Keira on three calls to order. Those opposite cannot hear the Premier's answer, so how do they know whether she is being relevant?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will end on this note. We know there is one blockbuster happening in March that those opposite do not want us to broadcast live, and that is the trial of former Labor Minister Eddie Obeid.

MOTOR VEHICLE EXPENSES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:41): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How is the Government working to lower the cost of living for motorists across New South Wales, and are there any alternative approaches?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (14:41): Yes, there are alternatives. I thank the member for Seven Hills for this very important question. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has been working very hard to drive down the cost of living for motorists right across New South Wales. We have introduced FuelCheck, we have lowered the costs of green slips and we are working hard to provide motorists with free registration through our Toll Relief plan. In my response I will focus on Western Sydney, but rest assured that I will speak about the good news for regional motorists another day. By just using FuelCheck, the NRMA has said that Western Sydney motorists "could save more than \$500 a year by filling up at the cheapest service station".

Under this Government's green slip reforms, Western Sydney drivers are expected to save up to \$157 on their premiums this year, based on what they would have paid without reform. Compulsory third party refunds of up to \$120 are also available for motorists as a result of our Government's reforms. Under Toll Relief, the average Western Sydney driver is expected to save \$410 by receiving their registration for free. If eligible for these three programs, a single Western Sydney motorist could save more than \$1,000 a year. That figure does not take into account our Active Kids program—and I know the Treasurer in particular loves that—which could save people even more. The take-up of these initiatives has been very popular—let me give some facts: 180,000 people in New South Wales have downloaded the FuelCheck app since October 2017. More than 4.5 million motorists will benefit from premium reductions on green slips. In relation to green slip refunds, since March 2018 more than 720,000 motorists have claimed their refunds, with almost \$40 million already refunded.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: How many?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Seven hundred and twenty thousand motorists are already there. In the Seven Hills electorate alone, around 14,000 motorists have claimed about \$800,000 worth of green slip refunds. That is money in their pockets. These programs are not only popular—citizens across New South Wales are loving them. I want people to understand the context of this. When Newspoll does a survey, it normally has a sample size of about 1,700 people. We have a sample size in relation to all these programs. In relation to FuelCheck, we do not have a sample size of 1,500 people; we have a sample size of 6,000 people in New South Wales who

have given us feedback. And what has their feedback been? The customer satisfaction rating is 94.9 per cent—between friends, call it 95 per cent thumbs up.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: In relation to green slips—it is insane how good this is—91,000 people were surveyed. And the percentage of those 91,000 that said, "We give green slips a thumbs up," is 98.9 per cent. Call it 99 per cent thumbs up.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Round it up.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Yes—why not? And what about Active Kids? Again, about 20,000 people have given us feedback on Active Kids and the percentage of satisfaction is 99.8 per cent. The 0.2 per cent are those opposite. They do not like it. They hate this initiative because it puts money back into the pockets of the people of New South Wales. There is an alternative. We have finally found out what the dark side—those opposite—have to put on the table when it comes to their policies. They have been out there selling their policies. This is what the Opposition's spokesperson, the member for Swansea, said in relation to FuelCheck:

It is galling that the Berejiklian Government is claiming schemes like FuelCheck are saving motorists money ...

Forget what we on this side say. Listen to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, listen to the NRMA and listen to the motorists. In fact, when the member for Swansea was out there talking about FuelCheck, more people were downloading the app. [*Extension of time*]

The same person is equally clear when it comes to green slips. She said on radio: "I do not think it is worth the few bucks you get in your pocket if you have a car accident." Tell that to the 99 per cent of motorists who are saying, "We love it." Those opposite obviously do not love it and they are going to scrap it. They do not like FuelCheck and they are going to scrap it. They absolutely will. There are some shining lights out there. There are not many, but there are some. I will give some examples. The member for Gosford is a great person. The member for Gosford is out there, campaigning hard, and she has said in *Hansard*: "Go and use the Government FuelCheck website because that is where you can find cheaper prices." Well done, member for Gosford.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: One of my favourite members, the member for Maitland, is doing the right thing. She is saying on social media, "Claim your refund! Claim your refund!"

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Gosford on two calls to order.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I have great news for the member for Maitland. Her constituents are saying, "Thank you very much"—

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: —to the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government because more than \$600,000 has been returned to her constituents as a result of the Government's great reforms. Those opposite want to take that money away—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Maitland to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of three hours.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maitland left the Chamber at 14:49.*]

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: But I want the member for Maitland to hear more good news. [*Time expired.*]

SYDNEY STADIUMS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (14:49): My question is directed to the Premier. Why does it cost the Government \$360 million to rebuild a 30,000-seat stadium at Parramatta but more than twice that to rebuild a stadium with only 10,000 more seats at Moore Park?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:49): Colleagues, this is why we are doorknocking in Granville. The people of Granville want a representative who will represent their values in this Parliament. Whilst we deliver the health precinct at Westmead, upgrade the railway access in Granville and spend money on schools in the Granville electorate, the member for Granville is asking questions that have been fed to her by those at the end of the Opposition front bench. A good local member should stand up and represent their community, not be misled by a few in the strategy meeting who have no strategy for New South Wales. Heck,

they do not even have a strategy for question time! How on earth are those opposite going to take over the Government front benches? They are not ready. They are lazy, lazy, lazy.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: If the member for Granville actually cared about the issues that matter most to her community, she would have asked me a question about a school, a hospital or a rail or road project.

Ms Julia Finn: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. Rather than talking about superfluous things like wandering around Wentworthville for an hour asking people if they know who she is, the Premier should answer the question.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: The member for Granville should ask me a question that impacts her community, because at the next election the people of Granville will be looking very closely as to who should represent them—I can tell her this. I speak to them all the time.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. The people of Granville want to know why the Government is wasting money on stadiums in Moore Park.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has been answering the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I note the interjection from the member for Swansea, but is she not wondering what her leader's position is? She has interjected but she does not even know what his position is on stadia. What is it? The member for Swansea says she knows the position of the Leader of the Opposition. Why doesn't she tell us what the position of the Leader of the Opposition is? Because we do not know, and he does not know either.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: This is associated to the point of order I took yesterday about respect for the Deputy Speaker's position. I request that you ask the Premier to direct her comments through the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier has been directing her comments through the Chair.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: We have made our position on stadia clear. What does the Leader of the Opposition stand for? He does not stand for anything. He asks to talk about stuff, but he cannot even tell us what his position is. None of those opposite know and he does not know either. What is his position?

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The question related specifically to how the Premier can justify only 10,000 extra seats for so much additional cost. That is what the question was in relation to.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: The question was about stadia. I am simply making the point that the Opposition is asking questions when it does not have a position, and that is disgraceful.

THOROUGHBRED RACING INDUSTRY

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (14:55): My question is addressed to the Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The attitude of members this afternoon has been unacceptable. Every member who is on a call to order is now on three calls three calls to order. Every question from here on will be heard in silence. The member for Coogee has the call.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: How is the Government's support for the racing industry delivering fantastic events such as The Championships, making New South Wales the premier State for thoroughbred racing in Australia?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

Ms Jodi McKay: I am not even on a call.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Strathfield of my previous ruling that all members who were on one call to order were deemed to be on three calls to order.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 14:55.]

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours. I do not know whether the member heard my earlier ruling when I said that everyone who was on a call to order was deemed to be on three calls and that the questions and answers would be heard in silence.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Gosford left the Chamber at 14:55.]

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (14:56): I thank the member for Coogee for his question and for his interest in thoroughbred racing in New South Wales. He is a member who understands its importance and value to his electorate, but also how that is magnified to communities across New South Wales. It was an absolutely magnificent day at Royal Randwick last Saturday. This was day one of The Championships, the grand finals of Australian racing. This year marks the fifth year of The Championships, a showcase of the very best of Australian racing. It is the jewel in the crown for Sydney's Autumn Carnival. There is \$20.2 million in prize money on offer over the two days. These two days are now cemented in the Sydney calendar on the first and second Saturdays of April.

Last Saturday at Royal Randwick the atmosphere was amazing, and the racing and the crowds were incredible. But there can be no doubt that the eyes of the nation will be on Royal Randwick once again this Saturday. We will see Winx, which is set to line up to equal Black Caviar's record of 25 straight Group One wins. Let me go back to last Saturday and in particular race 4, the Newhaven Park Country Championships, which are a highlight of the season. The New South Wales Government has supported the Country Championships since they were established. They generate a huge amount of interest across the State and are designed to promote racing in country New South Wales. They ensure horses from across the State are part of the championships at Royal Randwick.

This year the lead-up races were held from February through to April in Port Macquarie, Goulburn, Mudgee, Wagga Wagga, Scone, Dubbo and Muswellbrook, all culminating last Saturday in race 4 at 1.20 p.m. Each of the country races is worth \$150,000 in prize money. They are contested by eligible horses that must be under the care of a country trainer in that region. The first and second horses in each of those regional races qualified for the \$500,000 Country Championships. What a day it was for Port Macquarie trainer Jenny Graham who trained the winner, Victorem. The win brought in \$407,000 in prize money—not bad for a horse that was purchased for around \$60,000. It was a family affair because among the ownership is Jenny's partner, Shane Conroy, and her mother, Janice Avery.

This is not just about racing because more than 1,000 staff were on the job at the racecourse on that day, including the Australian Turf Club [ATC] and those from Tabcorp. It is absolutely fantastic to see that so many jobs have been created from an event such as this. This Saturday's event will be even bigger. The ATC is expecting the biggest crowd of the Sydney Autumn Carnival and I do not think there is any doubt that expectation will be met. Already all corporate hospitality and reserve spaces are sold out. This Saturday at Royal Randwick crowds will witness Australian history. In her home city Winx is set to equal Black Caviar's winning streak in the \$4 million Longines Queen Elizabeth Stakes. As of today the TAB is paying \$1.15 for Winx, which is not surprising for a horse that last year was named the Longines highest-rated horse on turf in the world. Next is Humidor, paying \$12. That simply illustrates the expectations this Saturday at Royal Randwick.

The tax changes introduced by this Government will deliver an extra \$90 million into all three codes of racing by 2020. This Government has done more to support the thoroughbred racing industry than any other. Although Labor might be happy to let New South Wales be a distant second, the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government wants to ensure that New South Wales is where it belongs, and that is at the centre of Australian racing. It is the Liberal-Nationals Government that makes events such as the Country Championships possible, as well as the success last year of The Everest. I encourage everyone to get to Royal Randwick this Saturday to watch history in the making, and see Winx cement her place in Australia's history.

NEWCASTLE BUS SERVICES

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (15:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. On 6 March 2018 the Minister told the House that patronage on Newcastle buses had increased in January 2018 compared to January 2017 but official Opal statistics released by Transport for NSW show that patronage numbers had decreased, not increased. Will the Minister now apologise for misleading the House?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! An Opposition member asked the question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:02): To help the member for Newcastle I will relate some figures—Opal data comparing January to January. There was an increase in the patronage from January one year to January the next. There is the story. I note that those opposite have been running around Newcastle in a panic because ultimately the Government has rescued their transport problems, and, I might add, rescued the city, too. The revitalisation has gone off like a cracker, unlike the cracker over there that fizzles. The Government has been building infrastructure. There has been \$2 billion worth of private sector investment since we ripped up Labor's heavy rail line which ran through the heart of the city. The University of Newcastle is going gangbusters and affordable housing will be built on the railway corridor. The Labor Mayor of Newcastle is very complimentary of the Liberal-Nationals Government. We like her; we think she is good.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. This is a very serious issue. The Minister misled the House with the figures that he brought to the House last week and he should apologise.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have never seen a group of people complain so much about 1,000 extra bus services in their city. It is just extraordinary. Those opposite feign anger; they come in here and get cranky. They are really good at it. And as for Crackers—mate, seriously—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refer to members by their electorates.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I apologise to the member for Newcastle for calling him "Crackers". The bottom line is that Newcastle has a new network. It is an Australian first to integrate the network. It is in line with what Newcastle City Council was calling for in terms of an integrated transport network. We have been able to integrate the ferry, the Wickham interchange, the buses and—guess what—the light rail, and it is going gangbusters. There are 350 people up there working on the project today.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What is the member's problem?

Ms Jodie Harrison: The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is my problem.

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

Ms Jodie Harrison: It is Standing Order 129. The question related specifically to Opal data; it had nothing to do with light rail or infrastructure in Newcastle.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question related to Opal data?

Ms Jodie Harrison: It related to Opal data and whether or not the Minister was going to apologise.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is correct, figures for January this year compared to last year. The Minister has answered that part of the question. I have had difficulty hearing the Minister's answer. With all the noise in the Chamber, members would be unable to hear the Minister's answer well enough to know that he was not answering the question. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I just got a text message from my adviser saying that the figures used by the member for Newcastle do not include Transport On Demand, the School Student Transport Scheme [SSTS] and the free fare zone. Now who is misleading the House? That is selective use of data. The member for Newcastle thought he had a cracking question. I have given a cracking answer. The only reason patronage would drop on Newcastle buses is if the member for Newcastle was travelling on them.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:08): My question is addressed to the Minister for Disability Services. How is the Government supporting people with a disability?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (15:08): I acknowledge the member for Kiama for his question. He has been an outstanding advocate on behalf of people with disabilities throughout his life—not least as the member for Kiama. Very recently, I had the great pleasure of joining the member for Kiama, together with the Speaker and member for South Coast, on a visit to the South Coast to open a new lift and change facility at the beautiful Kiama beach, which will provide an opportunity for people with disability to access that beautiful beach. The lift and change facilities also improve opportunities for tourism in those areas. Together with the member for Kiama, I also travelled to Unanderra to meet the wonderful people of The Flagstaff Group, which provides hundreds of jobs for people with disability.

In Nowra, we caught up with the wonderful organisation Civic Disability Services and visited its Nourish Kitchen and Café, where the majority of staff are people with disability. These are outstanding organisations and

I really want to acknowledge the work done by both of those members; they are outstanding advocates. I am also very proud to advise the House that of the 100,000 people in New South Wales alone who will be eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS], 87,000 of those people are currently accessing the NDIS. That includes a huge number of people—some 30,000—under the age of 18 and some 6,000 children accessing early childhood intervention. It has been a wonderful success. I am very proud to say that we are delivering this remarkable reform on time and on budget. But it just does not happen by chance. When we are supporting the NDIS to the tune of some—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would have thought that every member would be interested in this answer.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I tend to agree with you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would have thought that given the bipartisan support for the NDIS previously—

Ms Kate Washington: It is about the implementation of it. We all support the NDIS.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Well, I am sorry. I am happy to acknowledge the interjection by the potty-mouthed member for Port Stephens.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: It is an absolute disgrace that the Minister would refer to the member for Port Stephens in such dreadful language. I ask the Minister to withdraw his comment now.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Swansea has asked the Minister to withdraw his comment. I heard what the member for Port Stephens said but I did not hear what the Minister said.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: We agree with the "dreadful language", and it is all coming from the potty-mouthed member for Port Stephens.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I ask that the Minister withdraw those comments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I said that to the Minister.

Ms Kate Washington: They are outrageous. I mentioned a word in this place quoting one of your people in local government—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

[*Interruption*]

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Only yesterday, after we had announced some \$26 million on behalf of advocates, the member for Port Stephens suggested in a press release that these people had received a "stay of execution". I have to say that that is the most undignified comment that I have heard—apart from the foul language that the member for Port Stephens has used previously in the House—in relation to some of the most vulnerable people in society. [*Extension of time*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Kogarah to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 15:13.*]

I place on the record my thanks to the Premier for providing that \$20 million for advocates over the next two years. I particularly appreciate her recent announcement about livability. Included in that funding for open space and playing fields is an allocation for inclusive playgrounds. That is one of the most important things for families with children with disability. We know them as Livvi's places. They are accessible to children with disability and also deliver great outcomes for children generally. I have been very proud to be part of the delivery of those benefits in my role as Minister for Disability Services.

As it has been for the Government and my department, it has been my priority to improve employment opportunities for everyone in New South Wales. The one group I do not want to leave behind is people with disability. The Government is making incredible improvements in that area, including by doubling the percentage of people with disability working in the public sector. If members have not already watched the series *Employable Me*, I encourage them to do so. The Government has been extremely proud to partner with that wonderful organisation the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, otherwise known as the ABC, in producing that program. It follows nine wonderful people with neurodiverse conditions who are seeking employment. It is wonderful to witness them dealing with the challenges they face in gaining employment and also in their daily lives. The New South Wales Government is standing up for workers and, importantly, for people with disability.

PRISONER TRANSPORT

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:16): I direct my question to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney's department provide sufficient funding to enable the Department of Justice to meet its responsibility to manage and to facilitate all prisoner transport, allowing the State's limited police resources to be focused on the NSW Police Force's core responsibility of remaining in and protecting our communities?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (15:16): Although the operational matters the question raises are primarily the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Corrections, I am happy to answer it. I acknowledge that prisoner transportation is an important issue, which the Government is tackling head on and for which it is committed to developing a solution. The member for Orange referred to "limited police resources". In fact, police numbers are at record highs across the State. As at February 2018, authorised NSW Police Force strength was at 16,800. This Government added 994 positions to the NSW Police Force establishment between December 2011 and February 2018, including a significant number west of the Great Dividing Range. It has also invested in youth diversion to stop crime before it begins by establishing the Youth on Track early intervention scheme at sites in Dubbo and Mudgee, and servicing Orange. Youth on Track coordinates services to 10- to 17-year-olds before they become entrenched in the criminal justice system.

The member's question also referred to "core responsibility". The NSW Police Force core responsibility is keeping our community safe, and this Government takes that responsibility extremely seriously. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research figures for December 2017 confirm that in the 24 months to December the incidence of only one out of 17 major offences was increasing in New South Wales, four were trending downward, and the remaining offences were stable. I will address this issue as it relates to the Central West, where the 17 major crime categories have remained stable or trended downwards in the two years to December 2017. In fact, 14 have been stable and there is a remarkable downward trend across the area. Break and enter dwelling is down 19 per cent, break and enter non-dwelling is down 31 per cent, and steal from motor vehicle is down 22 per cent. Across each of the local government areas of Cabonne, Forbes, Orange and Parkes, the 17 major crime indicators are either stable or down over those two years.

Corrective Services NSW and the NSW Police Force manage a shared responsibility in transporting prisoners and mental health patients between justice and health facilities, especially in regional New South Wales. The Police Association has requested changes to the division of duties between police and correctional officers in relation to guarding and transporting offenders who are bail refused by the courts. A notice of dispute was lodged in the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission on 15 March, and the matter is listed for conciliation at the end of the month. Given that, I will not run a commentary on the dispute, which will go through the formal process. That said, I do understand the concerns that have been raised.

We must recognise that the prisoner transport arrangements in New South Wales are incredibly complex, and have been for decades. While all agencies are working to find ways to do things better, it would be naive to think that decades of practice can be turned around overnight. However, I can say that this Government is committed to developing a solution to prisoner transport issues and is taking significant steps to do so. It has invested almost \$20 million over three years to upgrade audiovisual link [AVL] technology across the State. AVL saves taxpayers millions of dollars. It eliminates the high cost of transporting accused persons across the State for bail applications, sentencing hearings and other short court appearances. It also helps to keep police officers on our streets fighting crime, and correctional officers in our prisons guarding inmates and keeping our communities safe. As I said, that is a core responsibility that this Government takes extremely seriously.

The Government has invested \$370,000 to install comprehensive AVL facilities at Orange Court House. Those new digital high-definition AVL facilities are up and running, delivering to the people of Orange faster and safer justice. Last week, changes to the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Regulation were gazetted to exempt Parkes—in the electorate of the member for Orange—Tweed Heads and Deniliquin police stations from the physical appearance requirement in bail proceedings for detainees in custody. Prisoner transport is a complex issue that will take time to resolve. The Government is committed to developing a solution and it is working hard to deliver it.

GREENING SYDNEY

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:21): I address my question to the Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's plan to increase livability through greening Sydney, and are there any related matters?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:22): I thank the member for Riverstone for his question and for his interest in the

Government's new open space policy and the positive impact it will have across Western Sydney. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Hon. John Dowd, who is in the gallery. I thank him for his service to New South Wales, Australia and internationally. I also acknowledge the 87 million people joining us today via the internet watching the New South Wales Parliament Question Time. I am joking. However, I will acknowledge one—that is, my 80-year-old father, who would be watching today if he were not playing golf.

This Government is providing \$37.5 million in funding over four years to add five million trees to greater Sydney, which is about one tree per resident. That is part of the Government's overall \$290 million open spaces and greener Sydney package, which includes \$100 million to secure strategic green space and \$20 million to build more than 200 new or upgraded playgrounds. As the Premier and I announced earlier today, those five million new trees will be planted in Sydney by 2030. That is a tree for that member, that member and that member. Unfortunately, Crackers will not get a tree. Okay, I have changed my mind, he can have one. This Government is committed to ensuring the planting of 420,000 trees every year until 2030.

I say with great apologies to my father—who may see this because he records question time—that a further 15,000 trees will be provided for free to people building in new land release areas. That is what dads like my dad and I and other dads out there would describe as tree-mendous. We are going to double the tree canopy in Sydney from 16.8 per cent now to 40 per cent by 2030. You might even say this is indeed root-and-branch reform. I am not going to beat about the bush; in fact, I will probably trunk-ate my answer this afternoon. But we all know that planting more trees contributes to lowering urban heat in Sydney and improves the environment for pedestrians at street level. Shade from trees will reduce the surrounding temperature by up to eight degrees Celsius, reducing the need for the costly cooling of our houses. Planting this number of trees across Sydney is equivalent to 350,000 cars leaving our roads each year.

According to the World Cities Culture Forum 2017, Sydney is listed third in the world in percentage area of public green space, behind Moscow and Singapore. This Government intends to move Sydney up that list because, unlike those who are quite happy to be Eddie the Eagle occasionally, we are not going to settle for a bronze medal in the world—we are going for gold, and we will have gold by 2030. The Government is committed to ensuring that future generations have the infrastructure they need to live and work in our great cities—not only heavy infrastructure but also social infrastructure. Whilst we are in the middle of a construction and infrastructure boom, it is a Government priority to ensure that trees are an essential part of this infrastructure.

I am pleased to inform the House that the Government has established the Office of Open Space and Parklands to work with the community to guide tree-planting initiatives to minimise possible future removal and sow the seeds of good planning policy. The Government is also making sure that we provide a variety of different size trees because it is vital that our new trees do not age at the same time, ensuring sustainability and longevity. People will be able to register to obtain their free trees through my department's fantastic new planning portal, which will come online shortly. People will be able to pick up their tree from an eligible nursery, put it in the trunk of their car and they are good to go. Maybe the Leader of the Opposition could help plant some of those trees as he is so good at digging holes for himself.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I extend the Minister's time by three minutes, not tree minutes.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The Leader of the Opposition should do something, as it gives me no pleasure to inform the House that there is nothing to be seen on important planning issues from the Opposition. Labor members show up to community meetings and look genuinely concerned, announcing that they will cancel policies and projects. But they do not have a planning policy. Those opposite have not announced a single tree so far—so the Government is already five million trees ahead of them. The Labor Party has announced a big, fat tax on new dwellings for first home buyers by forcing inclusionary zoning practices on new developments. Compare that with the Government's very thoughtful, measured, considered and feasible affordable housing plan led by the Greater Sydney Commission.

Labor is going to cancel the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro, destroying our new parkland and open spaces and cutting thousands of houses and jobs from the area. It is going to rip up the independent planning measures that the Government has been putting in place since 2011. That is the Labor policy: every development, like the old days, approved in secret. Everyone gets a Sussex Street case manager and you decide on who gets what by spinning the old lazy Susan down at the Golden Century. Under Labor, there will be no more IHAPs, no more JRPPs and no more IPC; the only decision-maker will be the ALP. And we all know how that ends. That is why when you ask Opposition members about open space they talk about Cooma jail—that is open space to them; that is where they are looking forward to visiting and joining. Labor hates good planning policy and has no plan to improve the livability of this great city; there is not a tree in sight. The Labor Party knows that good, transparent planning policy does not pay the bills down in Sussex Street.

*Personal Explanation***MINISTER FOR CORRECTIONS AND MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES COMMENTS**

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:30): By leave: For members who may be unaware, the continued attempts to impugn my character on the floor of the House are based on my efforts to represent a constituent who is in a wheelchair and whom a Liberal mayor described in the most vile way. Any further attempts in this place by the Minister for Corrections and the Minister for Disability Services to impugn my character only endorse that vile, obscene and denigrating behaviour directed towards a person with a disability in a wheelchair from my community.

*Documents***UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at Wednesday 11 April 2018.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION****Government Response: Review of the Health Care Complaints Commission Annual Report 2015/16**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 2/52 of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission, entitled "Review of the Health Care Complaints Commission Annual Report 2015/16", received on 10 April 2018.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Pet Shops

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

Short-term Holiday Letting

Petition calling on the Government to ban the conversion of entire homes into short-term holiday lets and to introduce appropriate controls including a short-term letting registration system, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

Bundanoon Residential Developments

Petition calling on the Government to ensure that future residential developments in Bundanoon do not damage its village atmosphere, environment and Indigenous ecology, received from **Ms Pru Goward**.

Sydney Football Stadium

Petition requesting that the Government upgrade rather than rebuild the Sydney Football Stadium and invest the money saved into health, education and community sports facilities, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Glebe Island Multi-User Facility

Petition calling on the Government to commission an independent impact assessment of the proposed Glebe Island Multi-User Facility and to protect adjacent residential amenity by imposing operating conditions such as night and weekend bans, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3):

- (1) General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2458 to 2476 have lapsed.

- (2) General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No. 1 [Local Government Legislation Amendment (Stormwater Drain Filters) Bill 2017], General Business Order of the Day (for Bills) No. 4 [Companion Animals Amendment (Dining Areas) Bill 2018], and General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2477 to 2495 and 2497 will lapse tomorrow.

Business of the House

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Reordering

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (15:33): I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [Centenary of Anzac] have precedence on Thursday 12 April 2018.

This is the last opportunity that Parliament will have to pay respects to the Anzacs and to those men and women who today defend our country and our freedom. It will be the last opportunity for members in this place to come to the lectern and acknowledge the great sacrifice that has been made by service men and women protecting this great nation. On 25 April 1916 the Anzacs landed in a place now known as Anzac Cove. These men were young and many were inexperienced fighters, more used to farming or to city life and certainly unprepared for the industrial-scale slaughter they were about to face.

The Great War marked a new kind of combat, as new technologies, coupled with the huge number of men fighting, made the battlefields deadly and horrific places. These young men fought their way through mud and over ravines and cliffs, and, at the end of the day, 2,000 of them were dead. As the campaign ground on, news of the casualties fell hard on the ears of families and communities waiting at home for news of their loved ones. It is likely that every family in every community was touched by tragedy in some way. Today, 100 years later, we stand together to honour and commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service men and women. We will never forget their sacrifice.

The Gallipoli campaign marked the first time that Australia fought as a nation, and it really defined the Australian character in the eyes of the world. The battle brought with it extraordinary tales of mateship and bravery that have made their way through our history to become folklore—the stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things and doing them in an entirely selfless way. This Government continues to honour our veterans through our community grants that restore and refurbish existing war memorials across the State. In my electorate alone, two grants were received in the past 12 months—one for the Reserve Forces Day Council and another for the Tri Service Workforce.

The Veterans Employment Program has seen approximately 523 former Australian Defence Force personnel employed in New South Wales Government roles since commencement, exceeding the original target of employing 200 new veterans by 2019—two years ahead of the proposed end date. The Government has also invested \$37.9 million towards the refurbishment and completion of the Anzac War Memorial. Every member in this House should support this motion; this is the last opportunity we have before Anzac Day—the Centenary of Anzac—to acknowledge the great sacrifice and contribution that our men and women have made.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:36): Today I speak for hundreds and hundreds of families whose lives were completely uprooted two weeks ago when the Minister for Western Sydney decided to change a transport corridor that has existed since 1951 and put a new corridor straight through the middle of their homes. The past two weeks have been an instructive experience. It has shown me that bad decisions by government can destroy communities. It has shown me that arrogant decisions by government can destroy people's lives—the sorts of people that this out-of-touch Government does not even bother talking to any more. It has proven to me that this Government—and this Minister, in particular—has simply given up on Western Sydney. When is this lot going to understand that the decisions they make blindly in their ministerial offices actually have devastating impacts on people?

Decisions made by Ministers can have devastating impacts on people like Vic Camilleri. Listen to his story. Mr Camilleri is a market gardener who has been growing vegetables on 10 acres of prime agricultural land for 30 years in Cranebrook—the food bowl of Sydney—right next to the Minister's electorate. His land, his livelihood and his home are now gone. Consider the impact on Georgette Apap. She is unable to sleep at night—just think about that. Her family home is now gone. These are people who have lived in their communities for decades and built lives for themselves and their families, knowing that another corridor has existed since the 1950s—at least that was the case until Stuart Ayres got to it.

We know that, at the end of the day, this Minister does not give two hoots about these people. Whether it is slugging us with an M4 toll, wasting billions on his stadiums or tearing up people's houses, Stuart Ayres cockiness knows no bounds. It is one thing to be incompetent—to be the architect of the Government's political

problems—but it is another to absolutely destroy people's lives. The people of Western Sydney have long known that they do not have an advocate in this Minister, but now they know they have an enemy. The Opposition will not be forgetting that any time soon.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Wagga Wagga be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Motions Accorded Priority

COST OF LIVING

Consideration

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:39): My motion deserves priority because the Government understands that the cost of living is a definite concern for the people of New South Wales, especially for those in Western Sydney. This motion deserves priority because the New South Wales Government is helping to ease cost of living pressures. In this motion I propose that there are three important things that we are helping with in terms of the cost of living—three major components that contribute to the cost of living in this city and that affect people's lives, especially those who live in Western Sydney and those who rely on cars. Some 80 per cent of the people in my electorate of Parramatta—the capital of Western Sydney; in fact, the capital of the world—rely upon their cars to get to work every day and to travel around Western Sydney.

The Government is helping to ease the cost of living through our fuel app, reductions in green slips and rebates on registration for tolls after people reach a certain level. Overall, 88 per cent of Western Sydney residents depend on a car to travel to work. This motion deserves priority because the FuelCheck app has been a wonderful success. It is not just the Government saying that; the NRMA also says it is a wonderful app. Since its launch in 2016, the FuelCheck website has had more than 2.6 million visits. We heard the wonderful Minister for Finance confirm that there have been 180,000 downloads. This motion deserves priority because of the Government's reductions in the costs of the green slip scheme. Like many people, I was quite interested in those reductions.

I have two vehicles registered to me and I recently renewed those registrations. I saw firsthand the reductions in those prices—they were listed in the bottom right-hand corner of the green slip. It showed what I would be paying without the reductions and the price I was paying with the reductions. I am very proud of this Government, which is delivering real cost savings to the people of Western Sydney. The Government has also introduced toll relief for toll road users. Eligible motorists who spend an average of \$25 a week or more for private vehicles may be entitled to free registration if they spend that over a 12-month period. This motion deserves priority because this Government understands that cost of living pressures are important, and that these three initiatives are great for the people of Western Sydney and great for the people of New South Wales.

SCHOOL CLASSROOM AIR CONDITIONING

Consideration

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (15:43): In the middle of the heatwave in mid-December last year there were plenty of stories going around of students having their classes outside because the 41 degree temperature outside was cooler than the temperatures inside the classrooms. In February of term one, Penrith had already hit 46 degrees; Bathurst, 37 degrees; Singleton, 41 degrees; and Campbelltown hit similar temperatures. How can students learn in those conditions? How can teachers teach in those conditions? How many students are being kept at home because the school is unsafe? What do Government members think poor learning conditions do to the achievement of educational outcomes? I would like members of this House to think about how they could work in offices that are not air conditioned. Would they be able to do their jobs? Is it a case of air conditioning being good enough for us, but not good enough for schoolchildren? The Government cannot sell that story.

The community will not be taken for a ride. If we accept air conditioning for ourselves, let us also start thinking about air conditioning for schoolchildren. What can be done about poor classroom conditions marks the difference between the Labor Party and the Coalition. This Government would like to spend billions of dollars on stadiums while allowing our children to roast in classrooms. I ask members of this House to think about that. Who would actually want to do such a thing? Who would put stadiums before children? Anyone who would do so must have a warped sense of humour.

A new Labor Government will allocate \$300 million to provide air-conditioned classrooms powered by solar energy right throughout the State. Every new school will have air conditioning when it is built—unlike Wentworth Point Public School, which relies on a polluted breeze coming off the Parramatta River as its cooling option. The response to the Labor Party's proposal has been just as one would expect: Parents love it, kids love it,

the community loves it—anyone with half a brain loves it. The only people who do not love it are Government members. The Treasurer fired back—but he was firing pellets, not bullets. I feel for the Minister for Education because he is a really nice guy, but I am reminded of the words of the great Darryl Kerrigan: "Minister, I have to tell you you're dreamin'."

The Minister for Education said that two-thirds of the State's schools are air conditioned. If that is the advice the Minister is receiving, he needs a new adviser. The advice that I will give the Minister is to get out of his air-conditioned office and head out to schools to see classroom conditions for himself. All Government members should do so. They will see that two-thirds of our schools do not have air conditioning. In response to the many interjections by Government members, I put this challenge to them: Vote for this motion and let us see if the Government will put air conditioners in all schools. [*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Parramatta be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes32
Majority..... 14

AYES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K
Constance, Mr A	Cooke, Ms S	Crouch, Mr A
Davies, Mrs T	Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D
Evans, Mr A	Evans, Mr L	George, Mr T
Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T	Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M	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	Petinos, Ms E	Provest, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A	Rowell, Mr J	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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J	Cotsis, Ms S
Berejiklian, Ms G	Haylen, Ms J
Gibbons, Ms M	Lalich, Mr N
Perrottet, Mr D	Mehan, Mr D

Motion agreed to.**COST OF LIVING****Priority****Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:53):** I move:

That this House supports the Government's FuelCheck, CTP and toll rebate reforms to assist Sydney's motorists. The New South Wales Government is driving down the cost of living for Sydney motorists. That is important because 88 per cent of the residents of Western Sydney rely upon their cars to get to and from work. These three initiatives are very important because the Government understands that the cost of living affects every resident in Western Sydney. I reiterate the benefits of the three initiatives: FuelCheck; the decrease in the price of compulsory third party [CTP] green slips and CTP refunds; and, of course, the toll relief, which the Government has already brought in. The Government is driving down the cost of fuel. This Government introduced the first Australian mobile phone app that allows people to see fuel prices in real time. The National Roads and Motorists' Association said that drivers could save an average of \$500 using the app, which has been downloaded more than 40,000 times since its launch in October. I have the app on my phone, and it shows me in real time all of the available fuel stations in my area. I am then able to choose the most cost-beneficial fuel from a range of competitors.

Fellow motorists know that part of the problem in buying fuel is that there is such a variability in prices between stations. This app gives the power of information back into the hands of consumers. The consumer can choose the station within their area that has the lowest price. Fluctuations in prices of 20¢ to 30¢ a litre can mean a substantial saving. I know that Mr Assistant Speaker is a man who counts his pennies and understands the value of money. Like many motorists in New South Wales, this Government cares about the hip pocket and reducing the cost of living. I know that the member for Kiama is excited about the CTP refunds and driving down the cost of green slips.

Without this reform, green slips in New South Wales were expected to continue to rise to an eye-watering average of \$708 per premium. The reforms have saved motorists \$157 on average. Within the last month, I was able to see those real cost savings on my two green slips. It is fantastic that the Government is able to drive down those costs. As an average resident, it has saved me more than \$300 this year alone. I really appreciate that and I am sure the other families in Western Sydney do too. Families in Parramatta are very impressed with these cost savings. Without these reforms, prices would continue to rise—and that is valuable money coming out of people's pockets.

The Government is also driving down the cost of tolls. The New South Wales Government has announced that drivers will be eligible for free registration if they spend, on average, more than \$25 a week over a 12-month period on tolls. Under the new scheme, which is backdated to 1 July 2017, eligible motorists will save an average of \$410 on their registration costs. This is especially important for Western Sydney residents who use the toll roads. It is important to look after the pockets of people who work hard and need to use toll roads to get to work, whether they are tradies, people who have to drive from Parramatta to Sydney or people from the north-western sector. It is an important step and a welcome initiative, considering that tolls can add up to quite a bit. The Government is committed to decreasing the cost of living with these three important measures, which drive down costs.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:58): I hope that the member for Parramatta was not referring to Mr Assistant Speaker as a scrooge when he made those disparaging comments.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I would hope the member for Swansea is not either.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I do not know you well enough to make any comment. The claim that fuel is cheaper as a result of the Government's scheme is not correct and has been disputed by professionals in the industry. An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] report that was released a year or so ago, a recent extensive Victorian parliamentary inquiry and a large number of industry bodies and experts have all told us the same message. Geoff Trotter, an industry expert with more than 30 years of experience, said:

All they tend to do as far as I can see is to provide a signal for retailers to know exactly what everybody else is selling the fuel for, and they don't have to collude on their price information anymore—they just look up the app.

Since those things have become predominant in the consumer market, they have had no real effect on the reduction on margins or in average lower prices for consumers.

The digital solution is just window dressing.

The parliamentary inquiry into fuel prices in Victoria said:

However, the available evidence suggests that fuel prices have not fallen in jurisdictions that have introduced mandatory fuel price reporting, and in some cases, prices have stabilised at higher levels.

That is why the Labor Party is so concerned. The OECD was concerned that mandatory schemes deliver "perverse outcomes". We should have a parliamentary inquiry to ensure that the Government scheme is delivering better,

not worse, outcomes for motorists. Why would the Government not agree to do that if it is fair dinkum about wanting to reduce prices and help motorists in New South Wales? The compulsory third party [CTP] scheme is another area where the Government is being very cunning. People have found that the Government is rorting them through the CTP scheme. We have learned that the Government is slipping in a sneaky \$10 administration fee. That is what I was told by Service NSW. According to the Government's own figure of four million motorists, that means that the Government will be pocketing approximately \$40 million. That is outrageous. The people of New South Wales do not want to be rorted. It is outrageous that the Government is making people pay 10 bucks to get their money back.

Imagine if our utilities or water provider tried that one on and charged us 10 bucks. But it gets much worse—the fee is not itemised on a person's account. That is deliberately sneaky because then no-one asks questions. If the big banks tried that one on we would ask for a royal commission. The big banks make the Liberal-Nationals Government look like the tooth fairy. It is disgraceful that the Government is charging people ten bucks to get their money back. It is not stated anywhere on the official receipt from Service NSW and it is not listed anywhere on the website. It is a rort and people know it. The Government ought to fess up and give back to every single motorist the ten bucks. If the Government is serious about helping people and lowering the cost of living, it would put that ten bucks back into every pensioner's pocket. It gets a little bit worse though—if it is under 20 bucks, the person does not get anything back. For my mother, who is an aged pensioner, to lose 20 bucks is wrong. That is what this Government is doing. It is being sneaky and it is rorting the people of New South Wales.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:03): I commend the member for Parramatta for moving this priority motion. The people of this great State and the people of Western Sydney, including the people in my electorate of Seven Hills, need and deserve to hear the good news that this Government is reducing cost-of-living pressures. Household budgets today have many competing priorities and the people of New South Wales can spend their money in many ways, including on their children and on what they enjoy doing. Saving money on cost-of-living expenses means money is freed up and households have the choice of spending it on other things, which is well received by people in the electorate of Seven Hills and people right across Western Sydney.

Saving money by using the FuelCheck app, receiving refunds on compulsory third party insurance and easing the burden on householders through the Tolls Relief program increase the pool of money in household budgets. FuelCheck provides real-time information about fuel prices at service stations across New South Wales. It is accessible on any device connected to the internet, including smart phones, tablets, desktop computers and laptops. Motorists using the app can choose the service station closest to them with the lowest fuel price, thus making savings on fuel costs. The member for Swansea in her contribution to this debate suggested that FuelCheck is an opportunity for those in the industry to conspire to come up with similar fuel prices.

I looked at E10 costs on FuelCheck just before I came into the Chamber and noted the following prices per litre: \$1.36, \$1.38, \$1.39, \$1.42, \$1.43, \$1.46, \$1.47, \$1.514 and \$1.519. All those prices are different, which shows that using FuelCheck can provide a savings on fuel for the great people of this State. This Government is driving down the cost of green slips. Without this reform, green slips in New South Wales were expected to continue to be on average \$708 per premium. Reforms have saved Sydney drivers on average \$157. That means \$157 will go back into the budgets of those motorists. We have introduced the Green Slip Price Check, which helps motorists to compare prices and get a great deal on their green slip.

Dr Geoff Lee: Tick.

Mr MARK TAYLOR: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Parramatta because he is correct. I acknowledge the great work of the Minister for Finance, Services and Property, who indicated in response to a question earlier today that more than 6,000 people have responded to a customer satisfaction survey on FuelCheck, and 94.9 per cent gave it a tick. [*Time expired.*]

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:07): This Government is unable to bring a motion to this Chamber that would hide the fact that this Government's policies are nothing more than a hoax. The Government's policies will never justify the massive tolls proposed for the motorists of Western Sydney. These motorists will be paying \$2,000 for the privilege of using a toll road, although this road has been paid for over and over. Labor abolished the toll on the M4 in 2010 when the toll was \$2.75. What is it today? It is \$4.75 and will rise by 4 per cent each year for the next 43 years. This Government signed a contract for the collection of tolls for the next 43 years, which means the current \$2,000 a year toll paid by Western Sydney motorists will increase by 4 per cent each year. The irony is that the Government has tried to justify the collection of the tolls by saying that the funds raised will be used to pay for infrastructure.

I remind members that the M4 infrastructure will be paid off in two years. What will the funds raised in the other 41 years of this contract be used for? These funds will be used to line the pockets of the Government's

corporate mates who have signed a contract to collect thousands of dollars from motorists without justification. By the time the contract expires, we can only imagine how much the toll will have increased. As we know, it is currently \$4.75 and it will rise by 4 per cent each year. This is extraordinary and it is astonishing that the Government continues to promote its policies. Let me tell the Government that the people of New South Wales have worked things out and they will not be conned by this Government's smoke and mirrors. The Government claims that motorists will save \$157 in compulsory third party premiums. The people of New South Wales have worked out that this claim is nothing more than an attempt to justify— [*Time expired.*]

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:10): In reply: I thank the member for Swansea, the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Seven Hills for their contributions to this important debate about three savings measures this Government has introduced for the drivers of New South Wales. These measures will reduce the cost-of-living pressures for the people of New South Wales. The member for Swansea, in her contribution, repeated what she said on the Ben Fordham show. I remind the member of the theory of information asymmetry, which looks at the power of the people to understand prices in a competitive area. This would suggest that FuelCheck takes the power away from the fuel companies and gives it to the people. FuelCheck means that information can be gleaned by road users, the people who buy the fuel, and they can use that information to choose the cheapest fuel outlet near them.

FuelCheck reduces the opaqueness of the power structure in fuel pricing and increases the transparency in information concerning the cost of fuel, which means the good people of New South Wales can find the cheapest fuel in the area that suits their needs. Retailers used to have that knowledge and now FuelCheck gives the information to the mums and dads and the workers of Western Sydney. Indeed, we are the party of the workers. I congratulate the member for Mount Druitt on the emotional appeal in his contribution to this debate. Unfortunately, I have to remind the member that it was Labor that sold off the road corridor from Concord to the city, and now this Government has to put together a financial case to deliver the vital link for the motorists of Western Sydney. If those opposite had not sold off the corridor, it would have been preserved and we would not have to fund its redevelopment.

The member for Seven Hills made the most wise contribution to this debate. He argued clearly because he understands what is important to the good people of Western Sydney. He understands the people of his electorate, as I understand the good people of Parramatta. The member understands that driving down costs is particularly important because it frees up valuable dollars so people can make a choice on what they do with their money and improve their lives. We have talked about three important initiatives, and I note that there are other important issues that are being investigated by this Government. I note the Minister mentioned the sports grants, which are particularly important. Another important initiative is the \$100 voucher on offer under the Active Kids program. I commend the motion to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes28
Majority.....18

AYES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayes, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K
Constance, Mr A	Cooke, Ms S	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	Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, 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
Petinos, Ms E	Piper, Mr G	Provest, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A	Rowell, Mr J	Sidot, 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

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T (teller)
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Parker, Mr J
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
Mihailuk, Ms T
Scully, Mr P
Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T F
Watson, Ms A (teller)

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G
Gibbons, Ms M
Kean, Mr M
Perrottet, Mr D

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

Motion agreed to.*Matter of Public Importance***NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL**

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:20): I speak today about the NSW Seniors Festival. Our population is ageing. By the year 2030, it is expected that more than one in three people in New South Wales will be aged 60 years or over. A robust strategy is therefore vital to ensure that the needs of older people are being met across New South Wales. That is why this Government is delivering on the NSW Ageing Strategy, which was launched in 2016. Through the strategy, the Government is focused on responding to the opportunities and challenges of our ageing population. Our vision is that people in New South Wales experience the benefits of living longer and enjoy opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in their communities. Our NSW Ageing Strategy focuses on five key areas: health and wellbeing; working and retiring; housing choices; getting around; and inclusive communities. The NSW Seniors Festival supports the statewide implementation of this strategy.

The 12-day Seniors Festival, which is celebrating its sixtieth year this year and is currently running across New South Wales, is an opportunity for the New South Wales Government to thank, celebrate and recognise seniors for their valued and ongoing contributions to their families and communities across the State. Last week, in my electorate of North Shore, I hosted a Seniors Forum with the Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Tanya Davies, MP. We were very grateful to have her support. I held the forum last Thursday at the Mosman Art Gallery and invited seniors from across the community. A seniors achievement awards ceremony was also held where seniors in the North Shore electorate were recognised for their outstanding achievement and contribution to our community. It is clear to me that it is predominantly seniors in our community who bear the brunt of the volunteering work that makes our communities so vibrant and thriving.

Along with about 100 people in attendance, I was joined by North Sydney Mayor Jilly Gibson and Mosman Deputy Mayor Roy Bendall. These two people understand the importance of seniors volunteering because of the work that seniors do throughout the North Sydney and Mosman council areas. Each award recipient is incredibly deserving of their recognition, and I commend their contributions to the House. Joy Annand volunteers at Mosman Council's Seniors Centre. Robin Austin volunteers with the police in the North Shore Local Area Command and the Mater Hospital in Crows Nest and was thanked on the day by members of the North Shore police. Dr Helen Bendall organises a Christmas pageant for local primary schools and the blessing of the crib at the Mosman Council Chambers.

Monica Byrne has facilitated monthly meetings to help people from non-English speaking backgrounds to practise their English. Joan Connery and Max Connery, OAM, both have put a lot of energy into promoting the arts as well as taking up the task of cleaning the local beach. Renate Cowan has raised money for the Cerebral

Palsy Alliance, particularly through her baking. Trevor Crosby contributes in an advocacy role, working on focus groups and academic research with a focus on dementia. Paul Ashton Delprat, known as the Prince of Wy from the Principality of Wy, has contributed to the arts and the Mosman community for many years. Peter Edge gives tirelessly to deliver meals to our community. Zita Farrell volunteers at the James Milson Village kiosk. Leigh Fincke collects discarded buckets and spades to create bags for charity, and she provided one of these to the Minister at the forum. I think the Minister was very excited to receive it.

Dorothy Guterres is a founding member of the Waverton Hub and has served as a member of the Waverton Hub Establishment Group. Sue Halbish volunteers at the James Milson Village, including at the kiosk and with religious services. Peter Jones has volunteered for Angel Flight since 2009 and has flown more than 86 missions in that time. Kerrie Lipari is always happy to man the kiosk at James Milson Village, pick up trash or help out with events and activities. Kenneth Lloyd also helps out with events and activities at James Milson Village. Peter Lowry, OAM, helped set up the NSW Land Commission and led community volunteers to restore North Sydney's heritage Independent Theatre.

Margaret Martin runs bingo at the wonderful James Milson Village. Roger McGrath tirelessly volunteers his time to ensure that various jobs and tasks at the village are completed. Lieutenant Colonel John Moore, OAM, RFD, ED, holds roles with the Reserve Forces Day Council and is the Chairman of Rail Trails for NSW. Morag O'Gorman keeps our community safe with her work through the State Emergency Service [SES], and Margaret Rush is a long-serving volunteer at the James Milson Village. Elizabeth Taylor is an advocate for those in need. Susan Wade works closely with the council's historical services and runs events at Sextons Cottage Museum. I also acknowledge those in our community who were not acknowledged on the day, who contribute so much and who enjoy the NSW Seniors Festival. I commend the Minister and the Premier for hosting the sixtieth anniversary of the Seniors Festival.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:25): It is fantastic to recognise the Seniors Festival or, as it was previously known, Seniors Week, as a matter of public importance. I thank the member for North Shore for bringing the matter before the House. This year, 2018, marks 60 years since Seniors Week began as a statewide initiative to support and encourage active, social and healthy lifestyles among our amazing seniors across the State. Each year there are hundreds of diverse events for seniors to participate in, including theatre programs, sports events, education sessions, exercise groups, information technology [IT] programs, lunches, dinners, picnics, music shows, and many, many more.

The most popular event is the Premier's Gala Concert. I am sure every member in this place is familiar with the popularity of the concert. Each year, my office is swamped with eager callers hoping to secure tickets, which I am very happy to dispense. These events are incredibly valuable because they each provide an opportunity for our seniors to be active, engaged and connected—not only among each other, but also within the communities that they have helped to build. Seniors Week also provides an important opportunity for us all to recognise the significant, meaningful and varied contributions our seniors and seniors organisations have made within our local communities. As the acting shadow Minister for Ageing, I recognise the tireless work of the member for Canterbury, Sophie Cotsis, the shadow Minister for Ageing, who has done so much work engaging with seniors and seniors organisations across New South Wales, particularly those in multicultural communities.

Across the board, there is still so much more to be done to assist our seniors to live the lives they want to live by providing services where they are needed and when they are needed. Harnessing the experience and dedication of our seniors builds stronger and safer neighbourhoods. Supporting and facilitating greater participation among our seniors leads to healthier and happier lives across all generations. That is why Seniors Week is so important and why all members of this place support it so strongly. Across the State, events will continue to take place until Sunday 15 April. For anyone who is interested, all remaining events are listed on the Seniors Festival website. If anyone is unable to access the website, their local member of Parliament will no doubt be able to assist them.

I am so fortunate to represent an area that is blessed with many people who have made the decision to retire to Port Stephens. Every day in my community, as in so many communities across New South Wales, seniors give so generously of their time, skills, experience and expertise. They are members of Landcare groups; Meals on Wheels; local sporting clubs; service clubs; Voice, Interests and Education of Women [VIEW] clubs; RSL clubs; University of the Third Age [U3A] organisations; and so many more. Without their contributions, I cannot imagine how our communities would look. They certainly would not be thriving as they are now. I have been particularly impressed by the University of the Third Age club in Myall River and in Port Stephens, which focuses on lifelong learning and bringing people together. I always enjoy meeting with my local U3A members who live by the motto, "Just because you've stopped earning, doesn't mean you should stop learning."

As the member for Port Stephens, I am proud to represent an area that was revealed in the latest census to be the "oldest" in Australia. The beautiful town of Tea Gardens has a median age of 65, compared to the

Australian median age of 38. It is one of the most vibrant, active and creative communities that I know. This year alone, I have joined with them to open a new art gallery and a new bridge clubhouse. Both of these initiatives were entirely brought together by volunteers and seniors in our community. Up until last year, the celebration of Seniors Week was marked in Tea Gardens Hawks Nest with the Grey and Thespian Mardi Gras. This year, it is Greyfest. It has been downgraded slightly, but the community is seriously awesome. They are a great example of a strong and connected community doing creative, exciting, fun things.

Far from being concerned about the ageing population, we should embrace the assets we have, thanking them for their daily contributions that make our communities stronger, and supporting their efforts to live healthier and happier lives. Most importantly, we have an obligation to ensure that the right social structures and community services are in place so that our valuable older people can live their lives with the respect and dignity they deserve. And, just as in my community of Port Stephens, there is always room for a bit of fun. I congratulate and thank all the local senior organisations across New South Wales that have hosted and supported local events for this year's Seniors Festival. Once again, they have contributed to an incredible program of events across the State. I encourage everyone to get involved, with events continuing until this Sunday. I hope all the participants learn from and enjoy the NSW Seniors Festival 2018.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:30): When seniors are active and involved in our communities, everyone benefits. Thanks to their ongoing contributions, our community functions better, is more inclusive, and, put simply, is a better place in which to live. With age comes experience, and having taught us so much, the least that we as individuals and as a Government can do is to promote and support communities that enable their elderly citizens to live happy, active and social lives. Social inclusion is particularly important to older people, and the NSW Seniors Festival plays a vital role in supporting the statewide implementation of the New South Wales ageing strategy.

But that is not all this Government is doing to drive inclusive communities. At the 2015 election, the Liberal-Nationals committed \$2 million to deliver more savings to seniors through the NSW Seniors Card. I am proud to say the Government is delivering on this commitment. Since the election, the Government has announced a partnership with Telstra to give older people access to discounted broadband internet; a renewal of its partnership with AGL Energy, which offers discounts on electricity and gas bills; and a new partnership with Woolworths to give older people a 5 per cent discount on WISH e-gift cards and a 25 per cent discount on mid-week grocery Delivery Saver passes.

There are now more than 1.5 million Seniors Card members in New South Wales. Since 2015, the number of Seniors Card members has increased by 44 per cent and membership continues to grow by around 8,000 seniors per month. The number of new businesses that are part of the Seniors Card program has more than quadrupled and there has been an almost 200 per cent increase in the number of discount offers to members. Additionally, our tech savvy seniors program delivers low-cost digital literacy training to seniors so they can develop the skills and confidence to access information and services online. In total, more than 60,000 places have been provided since 2015. These are all ways in which the Government supports seniors to continue to be active, healthy and socially connected, with access to government transport concessions, and a wide range of community and business discounts.

In my electorate of Cootamundra, the Cowra Art Group and the Junee Shire Council are conducting activities during the festival, which runs from 4 to 15 April. Robin Wright from the Cowra Art Group is encouraging Cootamundra's seniors to be adventurous and to try something new during this time. Seniors in our neck of the woods and across the State will celebrate, learn new skills and develop friendships at local New South Wales festival events this month. All seniors are urged to take advantage of these free and low-cost events and to get physically, culturally and socially active.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:33): In reply: I thank those who have contributed to this matter of public importance. I thank the member for Port Stephens, who spoke about the seniors concerts, the Premier's gala concerts, and the "oldest" community in Australia according to the last census—Tea Gardens, with a median age of 65. I thank in particular the member for Cootamundra, who talked about some of the Government initiatives that we have undertaken, including Tech Savvy Seniors. She spoke about the grants that the Government has provided in her community for the Cowra Art Group and Junee Shire Council to enable them to get involved in the Seniors Festival. Throughout the festival a number of signature events are hosted and presented directly by the Government, including the Premier's Gala Concerts. There was a huge amount of interest from across my community to access these. These four free concerts included performers such as Marcia Hines and Darren Coggan and were hosted by David Campbell. They were sold out in record time this year, with 32,000 seniors attending across the four free concerts.

There were more than 50 exhibition stands at the expo with information, giveaways and promotions. In total, more than 500,000 New South Wales seniors were reached during the festival. I am thrilled with all the

activities that were on offer this year. Councils, businesses and community organisations hosted free and discounted events and are continuing to do so. On the North Shore seniors can attend any one of a number of events—many of which are free to attend—in and around North Sydney in particular and also in Mosman. I was pleased that North Sydney Council in my electorate was awarded a \$2,000 grant from the New South Wales Government for this program. The events they are hosting include health and wellbeing activities such as Pilates classes, physiology workshops, games and cards at the Waverton Hub, a walking trail on public art, and working with wood. This wonderful program of events exists thanks to the tireless efforts of the North Sydney Council Access and Inclusion Coordinator, Camelia Tobia, particularly. The Government contributed \$2,200 towards this program.

If any seniors have missed out on these, they still have an opportunity to attend some upcoming events, including tai chi, a writing workshop, yoga printing in 3D, living well, and other events, including useful tips on energy savings in the home. As I said earlier, I believe that our seniors contribute so much to our community. They go above and beyond in what they provide to us, particularly in a volunteer capacity. The richness and vibrancy of our community relies upon them. I encourage all seniors to get involved in the Seniors Festival to get back a little bit of the investment they put into New South Wales. I encourage them to go online and check out the full range of events for opportunities for themselves.

Private Members' Statements

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:36): I speak today about the Sydney Opera House, our most recognisable landmark along with the Sydney Harbour Bridge. People come from all around the globe to visit Sydney to marvel at the sight of these two iconic structures. Both capture a time in history when this city was growing. Legendary stories have been passed on from one generation to the next regarding the design and construction of the two landmarks. Much has been written, filmed and said about the origins of how the two landmarks came to be, especially the Sydney Opera House. As we know, the Sydney Opera House itself is an engineering marvel. The sails of the Sydney Opera House tell a story of who we are and where we have come from as a city, built on Bennelong Point.

Monday 9 April 2018 marked the 100th birthday of Jørn Utzon, the designer of the Sydney Opera House. Jørn Utzon was born in Copenhagen in Denmark in 1918. Unfortunately, there was little fanfare to mark this significant date. Today I am proud to inform the House that Fairfield constituent Mr Anthony Chidiac has honoured the legacy of Jørn Utzon in the form of a picture book titled *The Priceless Gift: Utzon's Symphony*. The book was written to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Jørn Utzon's birth and was illustrated by Mr Michael Arvithis. The book is dedicated to Anthony Chidiac's family and parents, and it is truly a fitting gesture. The commencement of the book acknowledges the Dreamtime and the traditional owners of the land at Bennelong Point. It highlights how local Aboriginal women gathered fresh oysters and discarded the shells. The book then points out the arrival of convicts and how they regathered the oyster shells and burned them to make cement mortar. The lime made was used to construct Government House nearby.

This is only the beginning of the book, yet it identifies the origins of the site. There is so much more to the book. It is a colourful presentation accompanied by facts that many of us would not know. It is evident that Anthony Chidiac spent a great deal of time carefully researching and developing the book. *The Priceless Gift: Utzon's Symphony* also takes the reader on a journey of ideas and thoughts from when Jørn Utzon was a young boy to when he became a young architect and then to the point where he designed the Sydney Opera House. The book identifies Jørn Utzon's determination and spirit to push the boundaries of design and incorporate the natural harbour setting to inspire his ultimate design of the Sydney Opera House. Anthony Chidiac does Jørn Utzon justice by capturing how his involvement in the design of the Sydney Opera House was truly a labour of love.

One part of the book depicts Jørn Utzon staring over a peeled orange. At this point he was overcoming engineering challenges that had never been encountered before. It was the task of peeling an orange that inspired him—certainly the crowning curves of the orange peel offered Jørn Utzon the simple solution to an engineering problem. Much has been said about the controversy surrounding Jørn Utzon's departure from the Sydney Opera House project. However, without being political Anthony Chidiac was able to present this difficult time in the project's history with a great deal of respect and dignity. What certainly makes the reader feel saddened is the picture of Jørn Utzon sitting in his lounge room miles away watching the grand opening of the Sydney Opera House. Unfortunately he was not able to set his eyes upon or to contemplate his creation in its completion.

One thing the book does well is pay tribute to the man who gave Sydneysiders and the world so much joy and pleasure. The book ends with a colourful depiction of fanfare and symphony with Jørn Utzon looking over the sails of the Sydney Opera House. In the end Jørn Utzon was able to contribute again to the design of a major renovation which was opened in 2009. The book's appendix is also another source of vibrant facts relating

to the Sydney Opera House and Jørn Utzon. It is certainly a good read for anyone hungry for trivia facts. The trivia facts include Jørn Utzon's career and the awards he achieved. One such notable award is Jørn Utzon's Companion of the Order of Australia which he received on 17 May 1985 and the declaration of the Sydney Opera House as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] World Heritage Site on 28 June 2007. After giving so much to Australians and indeed the rest of the world, Jørn Utzon, sadly, passed away peacefully in his sleep in Copenhagen on 29 November 2008, aged 90.

WAKEHURST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (16:42): I reflect on the Wakehurst electorate and the extra benefits that have come to our community as a result of having a Coalition Government. In the time that I have been the member for Wakehurst there were 16 years of Labor Government during which we certainly did get some things coming down to the Northern Beaches, but not a lot. I reflect on the fact that as a result of the Coalition Government my area is doing extremely well. There is now a balance between all parts of Sydney and the regions. All of the regions and all of the city areas in New South Wales are doing well, and my electorate is no exception.

Our new Northern Beaches Hospital is worth hundreds of millions of dollars. We certainly get added value through our public-private partnership. I recently had the pleasure of opening a new community centre in Brookvale worth \$50 million with the member for Manly, James Griffin. We also recently opened the new pedestrian bridge on the Starkey Street and Warringah Road intersection. That is not a huge amount of money but it is \$5 million and it has been completed three months early. The *Manly Daily* is our wonderful local paper that services the Northern Beaches. On 8 June 2015 one of their best reporters, John Morcombe, wrote an article indicating that there was a new bridge being planned and the design was shown. The great pleasure we now have is that that bridge has been opened. I thank the member for Davidson, Jonathan O'Dea, for his attendance with local school students from Our Lady of Good Counsel School and Forestville Public School at the opening of that bridge.

The bridge is another major benefit. About 100 pedestrians an hour cross that intersection, and about 80,000 vehicles pass through it every day. This magnificent new \$5 million bridge features lifts, which each have capacity for 15 passengers and can carry scooters, bicycles and prams; a roof over the bridge span to protect users from the elements; and safety fences and throw screens. It is quite an amazing additional facility. About six months or so ago, with young people from Forest High School, I opened another bridge near Hilmer Street—about three kilometres east of this particular bridge. So two pedestrian bridges—which did not exist under the previous Labor Government—now keep local residents safe and make sure that students can cross the road safely. That was something the Labor Government never bothered to even think about for the northern beaches.

I certainly thank the current Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, as well as the previous Minister, for their great work in acknowledging that the dollars available for roads should be spent right across our State. It does not matter whether one is in the regions or in the city; there should be a fair distribution. Both Ministers have certainly ensured that that has occurred. A lot of money is available for different community groups across our wonderful State. Another example of money coming to my electorate is through the New South Wales sporting grants. I encourage sporting groups across the State to make applications for these grants, because they can make such a difference for the clubs that drive sport.

In my area, the Collaroy Surf Life Saving Club received \$4,941 to purchase nipper boards; the Port Jackson Veterans Cricket Club picked up \$4,500 to purchase uniforms and financial software; Warringah Amateur Swimming Association picked up \$5,000 for a new Dolphin timing system; Dee Why Football Club picked up \$5,000 for new equipment and shade shelters; Manly Warringah footy club picked up \$2,000 for upgrading the coach and referee development programs and another \$20,000 for a training cage at Cromer Park, making a total of \$24,000; and Forest District Rugby Club picked up \$4,950 to purchase uniforms. In short, there is a lot of money out there for communities across the State. I encourage sporting clubs and other community groups to become aware of the money that they can apply for and to make those applications to drive the growth and health of our local communities.

RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (16:47): Few things are more important to country people than the availability and quality of their local health facilities. Country people—such as the proud people of the Northern Tablelands electorate—are resilient. They face down droughts, patiently wait for road upgrades, happily commute hundreds of kilometres to play for and support their sporting teams, give up thousands of hours to local community groups and set up thriving businesses in the face of the constant tyranny of distance, all because they know that there is no better place to live in this State than country New South Wales. But there is one thing that country people do

not and will not ever accept, and that is health services that are sub par or not to the same standards that are expected, demanded and delivered in the cities. They will not lie down and let services be stripped from their communities because they live on the other side of the sandstone curtain. A knee is still a knee, whether it supports its owner in Bondi or in Bingara. The birth of a child is no less profound because the mother happens to come from Armidale, not Alexandria.

On 7 March this year, I was incredibly proud as doctors began to see patients in the brand-new emergency department at Armidale Rural Referral Hospital. Nearly five years ago, during my first year in this place as the member for Northern Tablelands, I remember giving speeches and writing press releases celebrating the arrival of a single new doctor at the Armidale hospital. Five years on, the people of Armidale and the surrounding districts are the proud owners of a brand-new \$60 million redeveloped health facility, including a new and expanded emergency department, a new sterilising unit, and a new and expanded critical care unit—and that is just the beginning. This facility will improve and futureproof local health care services, ensuring our community is well served for decades to come.

But this is not the end of the health story for people in the Northern Tablelands. Last week, I was able to stand outside Inverell District Hospital—the facade of which has not changed since 1935—and announce what the people of Inverell and surrounding districts have waited decades to hear: Their local hospital will be completely overhauled. An entirely new hospital build will start within a matter of months, with the redevelopment now out for tender. They will finally get the health facilities that they are entitled to and deserve. The Inverell hospital has been at the forefront of the minds of Inverell residents since the 1970s, when protests first began about the condition of the facility and the standards of care.

Since then, the fight has been relentless not only to prevent the gouging of services, but also to turn the tide and improve the level of services. The so-called "redevelopment" from 1999 to 2001 turned out to be nothing more than a downgrade with a fresh coat of paint. The community continued to fight for their hospital upgrade, despite bureaucratic resistance—10,000 signatures collected on petitions, 4,500 letters of support delivered to then health Minister Jillian Skinner, and thousands more signatures collected as of last year. The tireless advocacy by local clinicians, Inverell Shire Council, the Inverell Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Operation: Operating Room, and passionate locals such as Bob Bensley has finally sealed the deal.

Inverell District Hospital has \$30 million to build a brand-new facility, including a new operating theatre, a new 38-bed inpatient facility, an entirely new paediatric unit, a maternity unit, a state-of-the-art birthing suite, three more beds in the new emergency department, a brand-new and expanded renal dialysis unit, a resuscitation room that is twice as large as the old one, and a brand-new day surgery unit. The people of the town and district are thrilled, the clinicians are excited and the staff cannot wait. This is no less than what Inverell deserves. The town has boomed for the past five years and now it is getting health facilities for the next few decades.

But what excites me is that the story does not end there. I have called on the Government to fast-track stage two of this project and commit another \$30 million to futureproof the hospital by installing a computerised tomography [CT] scanning facility and extra operating theatres. Stage two will also involve moving all the community allied health facilities into the existing hospital building, which will be gutted and refurbished. This will ensure that the Inverell community can sustain the health needs of a growing population. But this is not all; the health revolution in the Northern Tablelands rolls on. Moree—150 kilometres to the west—is next. If Inverell can have those facilities, I think Moree can too.

NORTH ROCKS CARLINGFORD LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:52): I commend North Rocks Carlingford Little Athletics—a great club in my electorate. As we cheer on our athletes at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, it is a good time to recognise our grassroots clubs and the role they play in building our nation's future sporting heroes. North Rocks Carlingford Little Athletes is proud of its former members who are competing at the Commonwealth Games: Joshua Ralph, who is competing in the 800 metres and men's 4 x 400 metres relay; and Emmanuel Fakiye, who is competing in the men's triple jump. The club is also proud of notable former members Stephanie Price, who represented Australia in the 400 metres hurdles at the 2000 Sydney Olympics; and Heidi See, who has competed at a number of world championships.

I was delighted to attend the recent North Rocks Carlingford Little Athletics Presentation Day. The club has more than 400 athletes, ranging in age from under 5s—the Tiny Tots—to under 17s. While the club encourages its athletes to compete and improve their personal performances, it is also about having fun. I congratulate Rithaja Sankaran, who won the Tony Kish Award for the under-6 to under-10 age group, and Lachlan Schneider, who won the Garry Dennis Award for the under-11 to under-17 age group.

These awards recognised Rithaja's and Lachlan's outstanding performance, participation, effort, attitude and sportsmanship. I also congratulate Tate Mahony, who won the Wally Pamplin Award for achieving the most personal best awards throughout the session. Helping kids to achieve and better their performance is what Little Athletics is all about. I also acknowledge the winners of the Athlete of the Year Awards: Benjamin Woodhouse and Evana Butler in the junior category, Finn Parlevliet and Hayley Reynolds in the intermediate category, and Rajan Ravintran and Samantha Dale in the senior category. These awards recognise outstanding performance at zone, region, State, and multi-event championships.

These are just some of the outstanding athletes and up-and-coming sportsmen and sportswoman who have made this an outstanding season. The club was successful at the 2018 Region 5 Championships, with 101 athletes competing and winning 11 gold, 15 silver, and 15 bronze medals. I congratulate the Junior Girls' Relay team comprising Carys, Chloe, Hayley and Jasmine, who won bronze; the Junior Boys' Relay team comprising Ben, Finn, Lachie and Jacob who won gold; and the Club Captain, Samantha Dale, for breaking the region record in the U17 Long Jump. I also congratulate the club on its success at the 2018 State Track and Field Championships, with 28 athletes competing in 50 events.

North Rocks Carlingford Little Athletics is more than a great sporting club; it has also been recognised for its community focus. Last year, it was awarded the 2017 Community Club of the Year by Sport NSW. The club was recognised for its dedicated special needs group for athletes on the autism spectrum, which is giving kids an opportunity to get involved in track and field athletics. The award also honours the many volunteers who make a valuable contribution to community sport. The club offers a centre that actively encourages parents to get involved. I commend the club's many volunteers and acknowledge the important role they play in ensuring its ongoing success.

I acknowledge the club president, Fergus Tilt; coaching coordinator, Ben Waldron; club coach, Shannon Kavanagh; canteen managers, Phillipa Gately and Cath Schneider; BBQ master chef, Chris Schneider; uniforms manager, Sally Lamprianidis; championship team managers, Annika Tiltand and Carwyn Potbury; photographer, Amanda Primrose; data consultant, Adam Price; chief timekeeper, Adam Boyd; and timekeepers Janet Lawrence, Anita Boyd and Fiona Gathercole; chief starter, Kieron McKeown; and starters Rohan Primrose, Greg Smart, Chris Barker, and Jenny Drury. I congratulate all the athletes, volunteers and parents on a successful season. North Rocks Carlingford Little Athletics is a wonderful organisation. I have attended many of its events and it is always a privilege to see the camaraderie. Club membership is about more than winning medals; it is about personal bests and coming together to support local sportspeople. It is a community sport beacon that provides the glue that holds our wonderful community together.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE INVESTMENT

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:57): It is said that there are lies, damn lies and statistics. Lately the people of Wollongong have heard a claim that does not stack up to the most basic of analysis. On 6 March, in response to a Dorothy Dixer from the member for Kiama, the Treasurer trotted out the claim that, "During the last seven years under the former Labor Government investment in Wollongong was \$223 million whereas under the Liberal-Nationals, it has been \$424 million over seven years." That claim struck me as odd because one need only visit Wollongong—which the Treasurer has not done while in that role—to know that that is not what is happening on the ground. Since then and with considerable glee, the member for Kiama has repeated the claim locally, vocally and publicly. The Premier got on board recently by adopting the numbers without question in correspondence I received this week. I have news for the members who have used these numbers: The facts just do not stack up.

So that the member for Kiama, the Treasurer and now the Premier understand their budget and spending in the electorate of Wollongong, I will provide the House with a few facts. I want to help them because I know they do not want to repeat these claims accidentally and, in the process, to leave Wollongong residents wondering how they can get their fiscal management so wrong. I am sure the last thing they would want to do would be to mislead the good people of Wollongong. I do not dispute the claim that during the last seven years that the Labor Government was in office it invested \$223 million in the electorate of Wollongong. That makes perfect sense because the Illawarra has been well served by Labor governments. However, when I heard the claim that this Government had spent \$424 million in Wollongong, I had to see what had been delivered because we are not getting a new stadium, a new hospital, an improved rail link, or even lifts at Unanderra station. The claim could be credible only if those projects had been delivered.

A line-by-line examination of the budget documents dealing with Wollongong revealed that the following initiatives were incorrectly included in the Government's total: \$16.5 million for the Illawarra Regional Cancer Care Centre, a great centre that was initiated by the Labor Government in conjunction with the Rudd Federal Labor Government; \$122 million for the Wollongong Elective Surgery Unit, another great addition to the Wollongong Hospital that was first funded and then started by the Labor Government; \$16.3 million for the

Western Grandstand at WIN Stadium, a project which the member for Kiama has criticised up hill and down dale, but which he now tries to sneak into the total in his attempt to cover up the Government's neglect of Wollongong; \$2.6 million for the inner harbour development; and almost \$30 million for the outer harbour, again a project conceived, announced, funded and commenced by the Labor Government and opposed by the Liberal Party during the 2007 election campaign.

There is more. The list also includes \$8.7 million for the tug fleet base at Port Kembla, and \$10.5 million for the stabling yard at Wollongong, another project that was allocated funds and commenced by the Labor Government. That is a whopping \$206 million worth of projects conceived under Labor, planned under Labor, allocated funds under Labor, and commenced under Labor that this Government has attempted to claim as its own. For those who have not done the maths, that is 49 per cent or almost half of the amount this Government claims it has spent in the Wollongong electorate over the past seven years. I have a graph that will make it easier for members opposite to understand that \$1 in every \$2 of spending for which the Government has claimed credit in the electorate of Wollongong would not have happened had it not been for a Labor government. I am surprised that the member for Kiama has not tried to claim spending on Unanderra station lifts that he and his Government cancelled as part of their spending, such is the baseless nature of their claims.

I again remind the member for Kiama that he cannot put on the last coat of paint and then claim the whole project as his own. I know this Government is desperately looking for a fig leaf to hide its neglect of the third largest city in the State, but it should do my constituents the favour of not assuming that they will be fooled by an amateurish pea-and-thimble trick. The Government might be willing to ignore us and our needs, but it should not try to treat us as fools. The bottom line is that this analysis removes any shadow of a doubt that only Labor governments are willing to back Wollongong's potential, and only Labor Governments will invest in Wollongong's future. Liberal governments will continue to ignore our needs no matter how much they might pretend otherwise.

Every day in question time members opposite beg the Opposition to thank the Government for spending in Wollongong. However, it is the Government that should be thanking us because without Labor projects nothing would be happening. To paraphrase an old saying: The Government can fool some of the people some of the time, but it cannot fool the people of Wollongong all the time. It was a nice try from the member for Kiama, the Treasurer and more recently the Premier, but once again the Liberals in Wollongong are a day late and many bucks short.

BERRIGAN BANKING FACILITIES

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (17:02): It is with pleasure that I draw the attention of the House to an outstanding community effort to restore banking facilities to a town. The rural township of Berrigan was devastated in July last year when the town lost its last bank branch. Berrigan is a rural community of just under 1,300 people and is located in the southern part of the electorate of Murray. They were faced with the inconvenience of having to drive to the next town to use banking facilities if they did not take some action. In response, the community showed its true fighting spirit and formed a committee charged with attracting another bank to the town. Berrigan Shire Council played a key role in this, as did the committee's chair, former policeman, Rob Clark. Discussions were had and the Coleambally Community Bank, working with the Bendigo Bank, came to the rescue and agreed to open an agency in the town. This all occurred in a short time frame, due to the diligence of the community and the bank.

I will explain a community bank. It is not only another branch of a bigger bank; it is a wholly community shareholder-owned entity with its own board of local directors supported with systems and infrastructure by the Bendigo Bank. A key feature of the community bank model is that contributions go back to the community. In Coleambally—which is my home town—this has seen nearly \$2 million going back into the local community to parents and citizens associations, sporting clubs, education, facilities and charities. It is a fantastic model and I highly recommend it to any town facing the withdrawal of its banking facilities, as we are seeing far too often throughout the State.

Consequently, it was my great honour to attend the official opening of the Berrigan agency of the Coleambally Community Bank on 15 January. The bank operates from the Berrigan Shire Council chambers and is manned by council staff, with the support of the team at the Coleambally Community Bank. The Berrigan branch is one of 14 Bendigo supported community banks and other outlets in the Murray electorate. Coleambally branch was one of the first to open in New South Wales in 1999, and Hay was the most recent, opening in September 2017. I understand the Berrigan branch had 50 accounts within a month—testament to the fact that the community was right to pursue its belief that the town could not do without a bank.

I warmly congratulate the Berrigan community and Berrigan Shire Council. This is a great illustration of the Australian concept of mateship—both at a local level with townsfolk working together to help each other out and at a bigger level, where the community bank from one small town helps out another small town. I applaud

Berrigan's determination to ensure the town has access to the essential services that many of us take for granted. Congratulations also to the Bendigo Bank on its commitment to rural Australia and to work with towns to create community banks that work with the towns to provide services and give back to the community.

TUMUT PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENTS

TUMUT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (17:06): I commend two fantastic schools—Tumut Public School and Tumut High School—and their students for achievements that have put Tumut on the map. First, a team from Tumut Public School competed in Tournament of Minds in 2017. They were the New South Wales finalists, having achieved first place. Lucy Coulton, Emma-Cate Larter, Briar Lawson, Brie McDonald, Cindy Roche, Chelsea Rushton, Hannah Smithson and their facilitator, Roslyn Castle, then went to Adelaide to participate in the Australasian Pacific final. I could not be more proud of the school, and the students who put their best foot forward on behalf of their school, and importantly, the community. They had to raise \$10,000 for themselves and some parents to travel to Adelaide.

I acknowledge and thank the Premier and the Minister for Education for the \$6,000 contribution from the Liberal-Nationals Government that enabled the team to participate in the challenge. Although the team was not successful in winning, it had the opportunity to participate. The small town of Tumut, approximately 7,000 people, had its students participate in Tournament of Minds, which was a lifetime experience for the students, made possible by the generosity of parents, community groups, supporters and the contribution of this Government. The students wrote to me and to all of the sponsors to thank them. This is an outstanding school, with outstanding teachers, led by a principal who has worked very hard for the benefit of her students and the greater good of the community.

I then received correspondence from Tumut High School and, lo and behold, Tumut High School participated in the F1 in Schools as team Iota at the Australian national final against the 18 other best teams in Australia. The Tumut High School team came second and won four categorical awards—best managed enterprise, best graphic design, best team marketing and best newcomers. The results qualified the team to represent Australia at the F1 in Schools world final to be held in Singapore in September 2018. That placed Tumut High School in the top 5 per cent of more than 20 million students who compete in the competition worldwide. Iota is the first team to compete in the competition from the Riverina, and Tumut High School. The F1 in Schools STEM Challenge is the largest STEM challenge in the world. The world final will see the team compete against 50 of the best teams across the globe.

I thank everyone who is working very hard to raise funds for the team to fly to Singapore. They need to raise approximately \$45,000. They have written to me for assistance and I will do everything in my power to help them. I encourage the community, the people of Tumut and the regions to dig deep to buy raffle tickets to help this team get to Singapore so they, too, can represent Tumut and Tumut High School. Public education is a great education. Teachers, principals and administrators are doing a fantastic job. If ever there were an example of how well public education is performing, Tumut Public School and Tumut High School are at the pinnacle, having students participating in both of these challenges, representing the town of Tumut and the electorate of Wagga Wagga. I am so proud of them.

NEWCASTLE TO SYDNEY TRAIN SERVICE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:11): Unfortunately, I have to talk about the state of the rail service between Newcastle and the city, but mainly from my electorate of Wyong through to the city. On 30 September the Government will begin the closure of the Epping to Chatswood line to convert it for the Sydney Metro rail. The Wyong community has not been consulted on the effect of its closure on the use of the T1 line, the main northern line. For commuters from the Central Coast, this is the second major change this year that will likely lead to further overcrowding on already packed train services. On peak train services many commuters are left standing from Wyong, through to Gosford and Woy Woy all the way to Sydney—and that is when services are not late or cancelled.

An Auditor-General's report released in 2017 revealed that services on the Central Coast and Newcastle train line have been getting worse for years. There is a risk they will not be able to cope beyond 2019 because "investments will not be made soon enough to handle future patronage levels." For as long as regional commuters can remember, the Intercity Trains Network has been the poor cousin of the suburban train network. We knew that when the two were broken apart by the current Government it would result in our section of the line being neglected once again. It is timely that the member for Gosford has entered the Chamber, because this also affects her commuters.

It is a bit of a kick in the teeth for our constituents, because although they have made the decision to be more environmentally friendly and leave their cars at home, train services are becoming less and less reliable. It is a common adage that the train trip to Sydney takes longer now than it did when the line first opened. Although that may sound funny, it is an indictment that there has been no major infrastructure spending on that main northern line. It is very frustrating because last year when the Government was asked to guarantee that the direct services from Wyong down the North Shore line would not stop once the North West Rail Link opened, the Government got stuck into us. But we are still told by everyone who is in rail—from train drivers, to guards, to timetable planning, et cetera—that that will be the case: the Government will stop those main trains travelling from Wyong down the North Shore line.

The reason is that when the rail comes in from the north-west there will be massive issues. There are not enough lines—only two lines go over the Harbour Bridge—to put the additional capacity in place without cutting something else. We ask the Government to be honest with Central Coast commuters and tell them what will happen in September, when the Government closes the Epping to Chatswood line. We ask the Government to address the current issues. I was contacted by a local commuter the other day. His train was cancelled. The next train to arrive was a four-carriage service. It was full as soon as it got to Wyong. He sent me photos of people packed into the train like cattle packed into a cattle car. They were sitting on the steps or standing for an hour and a half. This type of thing is happening on a regular basis. Services are being cancelled day after day and trains are late. These things have been happening since the new timetable was introduced. The commuter said:

1.5 hrs I have to stand on the train with my pregnant wife while getting body slammed against the train door over and over again.

That is how full the train was. I could not believe the photo. It reminded me of the Japanese train system, where people are pushed into the train carriages. No-one else could have fitted in. This is simply not good enough for people who have to use the service every day. I might add, however, that it is a bit of an indictment of some of the people on the train that they did not let the pregnant lady sit down. I have to acknowledge that that may be a comment on our society. The fact is that when we have cancellations and overcrowding all commuters are disadvantaged.

2018 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:16): We cannot ignore the spirit and heart that our athletes are showing the world while they compete at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, which are currently underway on the Gold Coast. As a former competitive swimmer, I have a small insight into the dedication and commitment required to compete at an elite level and I congratulate them heartily—first, on their selection; and, secondly, on their achievements. These Games, I hope, are serving to inspire the hearts and minds of scores of other young children with big dreams. This Government is committed to offering a helping hand. That could be with something as small as the new Active Kids program—where a \$100-voucher might mean the difference between the participation and non-participation of a child in sports; or it could be something huge—such as the investment in sporting infrastructure in regional New South Wales through the Regional Growth Fund, which has committed \$884,588 for an amenities upgrade and reconstruction of playing surfaces for Junee Regional Sporting and Recreation Hub—otherwise known as the Laurie Daley Oval.

And, by golly, there are some lucky kids in Grenfell who have dipped their toes in the water of their new aquatic centre. The Deputy Premier and I refrained from dipping our toes in when we had the pleasure of opening this small oasis in the centre of Grenfell in January. The Government contributed \$950,000 to the project, which features a new six-lane, 50-metre heated swimming pool and a range of facilities that will benefit everyone, from toddlers learning to swim to senior citizens enjoying water aerobics. People living in regional areas know how a new facility such as this can make a huge difference to a regional town.

Before the Commonwealth Games concludes, I congratulate people from my electorate who played a small but not insignificant part in ensuring the Queen's baton meandered through Australia. It was especially fitting that Commonwealth Games medallist Norman Harrison carried the Queen's baton down East Street, Narrandera. Several other locals honoured for their contribution to the community included Lilly Hewitt, Bruce Waters, Jack Langley, Keith Shannon, Rosemary Orr, Sharyn Rowlands, Gerard Daly, Simon Lee and Rachel Hyde. Seventeen local and visiting residents of the Bland Shire had the honour to carry the baton on its journey through West Wyalong.

Nicole Caldwell started from McCann Park, and was followed by Benjamin Egge, Matthew Davies, Peter Wood, Isabella Mason, Inge Higgins, Margaret Leslie, Patricia Wells, Shirley Clay, Tony Carr, Andrew Tough, Justine Henley, Gail Platz, Rick Firman and Moira Parkes. Cootamundra electorate residents Paul Cameron and Les Sheather were invited to participate in the relay at Forbes. The emotion and Aussie spirit we are sharing through these Games had its genesis not only in the dreams of our athletes but also on the streets, roads and highways that led that flame to Queensland. Congratulations to all who helped make this dream happen.

CENTRAL COAST ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:20): Members of the Central Coast community respectfully press pause on their daily lives each Anzac Day. We stop to reflect upon the sacrifice our veterans have made to keep our country safe. Indeed, the Anzac spirit is well and truly embedded deep within our local area. There were thousands of locals who, a century ago, enlisted at enlistment stations in Davistown, Terrigal, Matcham, Erina and Kincumber—all in my electorate of Terrigal. This Anzac spirit continues to live on, which is evidenced by the participation of young people in the Anzac commemoration events.

There are many veterans living in my electorate, and it is always an honour and privilege to meet and speak with them. One such person is Kincumber resident Geoffrey Bushnell. I first met Geoff at his 101st birthday party at his home in Kincumber last year, and was fascinated to hear the story of his military service to our country. Geoff served our country in World War II, joining the Army as a qualified fitter and turner in 1940. He was transported from Sydney to the Middle East, where he worked in field workshops and recovery sections. He rose through the ranks to corporal, sergeant, and staff sergeant. After this, Geoff transferred to join the Australian Water Transport Royal Australian Engineers [RAE] Australian Imperial Force [AIF] and sailed to New Guinea in 1942. He remained here until the end of the war, and certainly played a part in protecting Australia from invasion. His life of service is an inspiration to us all, and I was delighted to hold a dinner in his honour at Parliament House in February this year.

I also wish to draw the House's attention to Leasha Craig, who is a founder of the Central Coast Art Studios Cooperative. A few weeks ago I was delighted to join Leasha and hundreds of people at Davistown RSL to launch her new book, *Australian Spirit*. Leasha's book is a four-year community collaboration which commemorates the Anzac and World War I centenaries, as part of the statewide Australian Spirit Project. It honours the services of all returned service personnel and all who continue to serve today. The collaboration involved in producing this book has been very broad—encompassing RSL sub branches, associated clubs, the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association, artists, poets, photographers and videographers. Congratulations to Leasha for years of work in coordinating this project, which has played a valuable role in our local community in commemorating the spirit of our veterans this Anzac Day.

As I have already said, Anzac Day is an opportunity for us all to pause and remember the great sacrifices that have been made by so many, including many hundreds—even thousands—from the Central Coast. It is an opportunity to reflect on all wars and conflicts which have occurred across various decades. Indeed, the year of 2018 also marks many other important milestones in Australian history. In 2018 we remember the forty-fifth anniversary of the formal end of Australian military hostilities in the Vietnam War; the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, where a ceasefire was agreed to after two years of negotiation; the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic as part of World War II, and of course the 100th anniversary of World War I. These events are sad and sobering, but nonetheless it is very important to remember and commemorate these key moments in our nation's history.

I encourage all my constituents to participate in one of the nine services being held across the Terrigal electorate this Anzac Day. They include the 5.15 a.m. dawn service at Terrigal Beach, Copacabana's dawn service at 5.30 a.m. on the Village Green, the dawn service at the Avoca surf club at 5.45 a.m., the dawn service at the Davistown RSL at 6.00 a.m., the memorial service at the Matcham-Holgate Hall at 10.00 a.m., the memorial service at the Breakers Country Club in Wamberal at 11.00 a.m., a memorial service at 11.00 a.m. at the Empire Bay War Memorial at Kendall and Sorrento roads, the Hardys Bay RSL memorial service at 11.00 a.m., and the truly breathtaking sunset service at 5.00 p.m. at MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club. The Anzac spirit is well and truly alive on the Central Coast. I look forward to joining thousands of Central Coast people, particularly those in the Terrigal electorate, in the community recognition of Anzac Day. Lest we forget.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I welcome a special guest to the gallery, Lynda Newnam, who is a tireless advocate for the La Perouse community. Once or twice in the past I have been to the Yarra Bay Sailing Club 16 footers. It is a lovely area. Keep up your great work for the community.

Private Members' Statements

TRIBUTE TO ERNIE FRIEDLANDER, OAM

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (17:25): Today I bring to the attention of the House the story and the tireless work of Ernie Friedlander, OAM, who is not only an advocate for harmony and multiculturalism but also a friend to many members of this House. Ernie was born in 1935 in Vienna, Austria, but was forced out

in 1938 as a result of the Anschluss and settled in Hungary, his father's birthplace. Of his family, only Ernie and his mother survived the Holocaust. That was thanks to the kindness and humanity of a German soldier, who looked the other way while they escaped during transportation to a concentration camp.

Three weeks later, Ernie and his mother were once again captured and taken to a ghetto. However, the delay in their capture meant that they were in captivity for only seven more weeks before being liberated by the Russians. In December 1950, Ernie arrived in Australia at the age of 15 and started work in a knitting factory while attending night school to learn English. He then continued his studies by doing a night course in textiles and machinery for another two years. He married in 1962 and has three children and four grandchildren.

Since coming to Australia, Ernie has worked tirelessly to show just how grateful he is for the opportunities Australia has presented to him. In 1999, he was instrumental in the founding of the B'nai B'rith's Courage to Care program in New South Wales that travels across the State to educate Australians about racism, bigotry and bullying, to promote respect for diversity, and to inspire upstanding behaviour. Central to this program are the stories of those who have been recognised with the Righteous Among Nations honour and local heroes who have shown a commitment to putting others before oneself. A few years later, Ernie founded Moving Forward Together, which is a social initiative by various community groups that are committed to creating a better understanding among all sectors of the community of a vision of living in harmony.

Just last year Moving Forward Together received the Stepan Kerkyasharian Harmony Award Medal at the Premier's Harmony Dinner. Through a series of community-wide programs, such as the Harmony Walks and the poster and songwriting competitions, Moving Forward Together has created a platform for communicating the positive benefits of harmony, humanity, unity and cooperation, and has been minimising parochialism with the aim of creating a safer future for all our society. In 2012, I was proud to walk alongside Ernie at the first ever Harmony Walk in Coogee. I was very happy to have secured from then Premier Barry O'Farrell \$20,000 in seed funding to make that first Harmony Walk a reality. Since then, Harmony Walks have taken place in Blacktown, the central business district, Lakemba and Campbelltown, where, with the assistance of the National Rugby League, it was held before a Tigers home game.

Moving Forward Together also runs very successful statewide Harmony Day poster and songwriting competitions that receive up to 6,000 entries from school students each year. This year the theme of the competitions is Growing Together In Harmony. It aims to highlight the Moving Forward Together core principles of multiculturalism, harmony and equal opportunity. Entries in this year's competitions closed last Friday, 6 April. The winners will be announced in June. I could go on for hours about Ernie and his tireless advocacy and the success that he has made of his life in this country as well as the contribution he has made to the success of the lives of many other people. Earlier, the member for Terrigal referred to Anzac Day commemorations that will be held this month. We always celebrate and honour those who had the courage to play a part in wars and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. But this is what they were fighting for—the freedom that is exemplified by the manner in which Ernie has conducted himself since gaining his freedom after World War II.

SCHOOL CLASSROOM AIR CONDITIONING

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:30): One thing about representing a community in Western Sydney is being constantly reminded of our often extreme weather. When it is hot, it is very hot and when it is cold, it can be quite cold. On a day in January this year Penrith was the hottest place on earth, reaching a temperature of more than 47 degrees—which is not unusual for Western Sydney. However, what is unusual is that we expect our students in public schools to learn in classrooms without air conditioning. Anyone who has a child will know how impossible that is. In the lead-up to the 2015 election I campaigned very strongly for air conditioning to be installed in many schools in my electorate, such as Ropes Crossing and Bennett Road public schools. We were successful at those schools but there are many more still without air conditioning.

Since being elected, I have learnt of the extreme efforts made by some school communities to raise funds for air conditioning in classrooms. I hear about those efforts almost every day. That is an indication of the importance that parents and educators place on creating comfortable learning environments for students—as they should. But it should not be up to the generosity of parents and citizens associations and local communities to ensure that that is done. In my electorate I was able to fund the air conditioning of the Willmot Public School through a Londonderry Community Building Partnership grant. I consider that to be one of my proudest achievements to date. Recently I visited a school in a neighbouring electorate, the Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School, which is in the electorate of the Minister for Western Sydney. Many classrooms in that school do not have air conditioning. The students and staff call the hot days "sweat days"—they have names for hot days because there are so many of them in Emu Plains. They do what they can to try to learn in those conditions, but it is very difficult.

Unfortunately, the Government's policy of providing full air cooling to schools with mean maximum January temperatures of 33 degrees Celsius or above means that many schools fall through the cracks. In some cases, schools have been denied access to air cooling when the mean temperature is half a degree off the temperature that would trigger that policy. That is ridiculous. There is abundant research and literature to show that our children learn better in comfortable and temperate learning environments. Universities understand that and private schools understand it; but, unfortunately, we still see far too many public school classrooms without air conditioning in New South Wales.

At the end of the day, it is not possible to provide every school in the State with air conditioning through grants and the generosity of volunteerism. It requires action from government. It will not surprise anyone to learn that my community and I were very pleased when the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, announced recently that a Labor Government will take back \$300 million from the multibillion-dollar Sydney stadium splurge—and we know it is a splurge and a waste of taxpayers' money when our children are learning in hot boxes—to provide air conditioning for the State's public schools. This policy will also ensure that all new schools will be air-conditioned—something this Government has been unable to commit to.

Today Government members again voted against a motion that would have ensured Parliament supports the air-conditioning of classrooms in New South Wales. The difference this would make to the education of children in Western Sydney cannot be underestimated. While Government members can heckle all they like, the people of New South Wales will vote with their feet on this issue. It is brave of any Government member representing a Western Sydney electorate not to understand how important this issue is for the communities of Western Sydney.

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE SENIORS FESTIVAL

CO.AS.IT.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:35): Last Thursday kicked off the start of the NSW Seniors Festival, and in the Drummoyne electorate many exciting events took place. In 2018 the festival is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary. It is the largest festival for seniors in the Southern Hemisphere, reaching up to half a million seniors each year. It is wonderful that this event continues to grow each year, and it is a testament to the Government's work in making our society more inclusive. I make special mention of Co.As.It. and the support it offers to the community. Last week, Co.As.It. held three seniors concerts—two on Thursday at Club Burwood and one on Friday night at Club Marconi. I had the pleasure of representing the Premier and officially opening the seniors concert last Thursday morning.

There were three wonderful acts: comedian James Liotta, and two musicians; Neapolitan singer Arturo Toscani; and Five Dock's sensational vocalist Cosima De Vito. I watched the fantastic performances and it was great to see the room light up with laughter from the crowd and some of the guests dancing to the tunes at the side of the stage. It was nice to see a grassroots event be so successful. Cosima first captured our attention on the first season of *Australian Idol*. At the beginning of this year, she and her husband, Gus—a Five Dock boy—welcomed a little girl and I congratulate them on the birth of their first child. The seniors concert was Cosima's first performance since she gave birth, and she was brilliant. She captured the audience's attention like no other. I thank Cosima, James and Arturo for giving back to their community by performing at the three seniors concerts. The joy at the event captured the essence of the Seniors Festival. It is about celebrating life and engaging with the community and those who are over the age of 60.

The NSW Seniors Festival is a statewide initiative to acknowledge our seniors, but I make special mention of the Italian seniors in my electorate. As a proud first-generation Italian, I recognise the sacrifices faced by migrants such as my mother and father, who came to Australia and made a life for themselves by putting in long hours and working hard. Co.As.It is a fantastic organisation that provides support for the growing number of ageing Italian migrants and promotes the Italian culture in our society. I commend the organisation for continuing to preserve Italian heritage by upholding Italian values and traditions. This is achieved through providing adult and child language classes, servicing the aged-care sector and providing support for Italian families.

I pay tribute to Co.As.It General Manager Thomas Camporeale, President Lorenzo Fazzini and members of the board. Most importantly, I recognise the hardworking staff. Without their work on the ground actively supporting the community, and their organisational skills to coordinate events such as the seniors concert, Co.As.It would not be such a dynamic and successful not-for-profit organisation. I highlight that 2018 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Co.As.It. This year, as a community, we celebrate its enormous contribution for half a century. It is a remarkable achievement and I am proud that it actively serves the constituents of the Drummoyne electorate. It has done a terrific job for 50 years and I wish the organisation all the very best for its next 50 years and beyond.

Co.As.It is a respected and professional organisation because throughout its long tenure it has actively responded to the changing needs of the community. It has grown with the number of Italian migrants and has adapted its services to ensure that the community is at the heart of every decision. As the peak organisation and service provider for the Italian community in New South Wales, Co.As.It has an important obligation to its community. Events such as the seniors concerts foster community spirit, celebrate seniors and encourage greater assimilation of Italians in our society.

Once again, I reiterate my special thanks to Co.As.It for holding successful events as part of the NSW Seniors Festival. I encourage seniors across the State to get in touch with their local member to find out what is happening in their electorate throughout the duration of the festival. I commend all participating community groups and providers for their contribution to the success of the festival, which runs until 15 April. Finally, I commend the New South Wales Government and Premier Berejiklian for recognising the important role that seniors play in our society.

BENGALLA WARBIRDS OVER SCONE

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:39): Just over two weeks ago, in beautiful weather, my home town of Scone in the Upper Hunter played host to a much-loved and magnificent local community event: Warbirds Over Scone. On 25 March, I had the pleasure of attending the Bengalla Warbirds Over Scone with Upper Hunter Mayor Wayne Bedgood. The show was staged over Scone at Scone Airport. To describe the aircraft show as a success is an understatement, as it attracted more than 6,000 spectators. Warbirds Over Scone is a large-scale air show that celebrates classic and vintage aircrafts. It allows spectators and the community at large to experience firsthand our awe-inspiring aviation history, from both peace and war times.

Warbirds over Scone was initially held in the late 1990s by Pay's Air Charter, a locally based charter company that owns a fleet of restored vintage aircraft. The event was very much the brainchild of the late Col Pay of Scone. The event proved to be highly successful, and attracted 5,000 attendees on average in the years it was staged, in 1998, 2001 and 2003. This year, due to local interest, Warbirds Over Scone was formally revived as a grassroots, community-based partnership between Vintage Fighter Restorations, Scone Aero Club, Pay's Air Service, Paul Bennet Airshows and Upper Hunter Shire Council.

Naming rights sponsorship for the event was provided by the local Upper Hunter Bengalla Mining Company from its community development fund, making the 2018 event "Bengalla Warbirds Over Scone". I pay tribute to the steering committee, which was comprised of Pay's Air Service and Vintage Fighter Restorations managing director Ross Pay; Scone Aero Club president Matthew Clark; Paul Bennet Airshows owner Paul Bennet and operations manager Glenn Graham; Upper Hunter Shire Council airport manager Joanne McLoughlin; and Upper Hunter Shire Council adviser Angela Magnan, who served as steering committee chair and event coordinator and project manager.

It is a mark of the public's interest in historical aircrafts that the day attracted the aforementioned 6,000 visitors. There were 4,299 tickets issued for the event, of which an amazing 3,235 were purchased on the day, with huge queues of people keen to get in to the show. More than 1,000 tickets were sold online prior to the event. These ticket numbers do not include children aged under four, who were eligible for free entry. The number of children who attended numbered more than 800. There were also vendors, volunteers, contractors, pilots and crew, the event team and "roadside" spectators—bringing the estimated audience to more than 6,000 people.

People came from a wide range of places, including the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australian. We also had an overseas visitor. The family friendly day included vintage aircraft; Paul Bennet Airshows; aerobatic flying; skydiving displays; hangar tours; food stalls; musical entertainment by the Royal Australian Navy Band; children's activities such as laser tag, face painting and jumping castles; and many other attractions that added to the fun. Additional events were held throughout the weekend, including adventure flights and skydiving. There was a flyover by a fighter jet from the Royal Australian Air Force. As well as seeing the numerous aircraft on display, show attendees could get up close and inspect awesome and iconic planes such as the Hawker Hurricane and the truly magnificent Spitfire. If only those craft could speak, what amazing times they would tell us of. The Upper Hunter electorate is blessed with many wonderful events, and we have received positive feedback from visitors including Monsoon Shabu, who wrote:

Excellent came all the way from Tassie to see the show.

Peter Ongley wrote:

A fabulous day of flying, especially as the weather conditions made things increasingly difficult. Very disappointed that the aircraft I had travelled over 800km to specifically see flying were grounded due to the cross winds but then again that is the nature of aviation.

John Greenwood wrote:

Just wanted to register my enjoyment of the event.

I drove my motorhome up from Gosford and stayed overnight in the designated RV space at the Scone TAFE.

It blew me away that you had considered the difficulty in walking from the TAFE to the entrance to the event...and provided a bus!!...to me that was hugely considerate.

The organizing of an event such as yours, I imagine is huge...and you did it well...covering all bases...your attention to safety from car parking to the flyers distance from the spectators was evident.

Warbirds Over Scone was truly a magnificent event.

NEW SOUTH WALES POLICING

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:45): In the mid-1800s, this House legislated to amalgamate all the various colonial police forces into one. From that moment on, the ranks of the Police Force were almost always the only representatives of the Government present throughout the expanse of this State beyond Sydney, requiring officers to perform a wide variety of duties beyond what we accept today as police work. I recall when regionally based police performed driving tests and issued driver's permits and licences before the establishment of country-based motor vehicle registries. During the early years of my recent career as a police officer, I recall country police officers being required to don gowns and gloves to physically assist pathologists to perform post-mortem examinations in the mortuaries of hospitals based in regional New South Wales. Gradually, the NSW Police Force has abandoned traditional practices of performing duties beyond the scope of its mandate, which it previously undertook out of sheer convenience for the Government and the State. However, some such duties still linger and should be addressed immediately.

Policing in the twenty-first century is complex and, for the NSW Police Force to continue serving our community as the pre-eminent investigative and protection body for this State, its limited resources must be directed to its core responsibility: to police. The Australian Productivity Commission's recent report identified that New South Wales has the lowest expenditure on policing services per person and the next-to-worst police to population ratio of all States. In light of this, it has become necessary to increase expenditure on our State's policing services and to expand the NSW Police Force to cater for our rapidly increasing population. The time has now arrived to focus the limited resources of the NSW Police Force on protecting the community through both the prevention of crime and the detection of crime. A raft of other government agencies and services now exist to respond to the needs of our community beyond that.

When a crime is detected, it is the responsibility of New South Wales police to investigate and, where an offender is detected, charge the offender or young person with the appropriate offence and have the accused person placed before the court. When a court remands, makes an order or sentences the accused or young person to a correctional facility, the responsibility to deliver them to their jailer must now rest with either Corrective Services or Juvenile Justice. The limited resources of the NSW Police Force, especially in regional areas, must not continue being diverted to managing and transporting prisoners. Prisoner management and transport requires significant resources, and the inappropriate allocation of police resources to prisoner management and transport has robbed from the communities of this State valuable assets that could be better directed to keeping those communities safe.

Over the past week alone, the limited officer staff at Parkes Police Station were stretched when police resources were required to be allocated to transport prisoners from the Parkes Court House to the prison cells at Dubbo. I am advised that Parkes police diverted a total of 22 police personnel hours and police vehicle travel of 840 kilometres to transport five prisoners. Alarming, figures recently collated from custody records and prisoner transfer notes maintained by the Parkes Police Station for the financial year ending 30 June 2017 show that the former Lachlan Local Area Command transported 215 prisoners, which required allocation from limited police resources of two police officers for each prisoner transfer, amounting to 1,466 personnel hours. Lachlan Local Area Command's prisoner transfers equated to 122 twelve-hour shifts, incurring the expense of \$21,000 in overtime and police caged vehicles being driven 55,670 kilometres—which cost \$6,000 in fuel alone. Vehicle maintenance has not yet been calculated; however, it would not be insignificant.

The cost to the NSW Police Force to transport those prisoners from a court determining their incarceration is unnecessary and no longer appropriate. The transport of prisoners from a court to a correctional facility is the responsibility of Corrective Services and Juvenile Justice. The cost to the community of the Parkes district is immeasurable and, with police officers absent, critical police resources are being stretched to respond adequately to the needs of a growing population. The management and transport of prisoners has become burdensome on police services that are required to focus on police-specific duties. Prisoner management and transport currently requires trained staff with access to dedicated resources and adequate funding to undertake this essential task. The time has arrived for the NSW Police Force to finally abandon prisoner transport from courts to

correctional facilities, and for that responsibility to be appropriately placed squarely on the shoulders of Justice NSW.

NEW SOUTH WALES JEWISH COMMUNITY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:50): The New South Wales Jewish community has a long and fascinating history since European settlement, with at least eight Jewish petty criminals arriving with the First Fleet in 1788. Prior to the end of the nineteenth century, most New South Wales Jews were either English-speaking convicts or migrants or their relatives, and were essentially indistinguishable from others in the colony. After 1828, free English Jewish settlers began to arrive in New South Wales, and the Great Synagogue in Elizabeth Street was consecrated in 1878. During the nineteenth century, many New South Wales Jews lived in country areas, including Goulburn, Maitland and Grafton, and later Newcastle and Broken Hill. During this time there were many prominent Jews—in fact, in 1917 the Legislative Assembly had to close on Yom Kippur because both the Speaker and Deputy-Speaker were Jewish.

The Jewish refugees who fled the Nazis in Central Europe towards the end of World War II and settled in New South Wales brought about fundamental changes to the Sydney Jewry, including the formation of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies in 1945, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, the Temple Emanuel and Moriah College. Jews from Russia, South Africa, Israel and Hungary followed in the 1950s, and the Jewish community now has 20 orthodox synagogues, two progressive synagogues and five Jewish day schools, including Masada College, which is in my electorate of Davidson. Many Jews have made important contributions to New South Wales, and indeed to Australia. There are 40,000 Jews living in Sydney—two-thirds in the eastern suburbs and most of the remainder between Chatswood and St Ives. In the 2016 Census the Davidson electorate comprised 4.5 per cent people of Jewish faith, who constituted 9.7 per cent of the population in St Ives.

I continue to demonstrate my support to my Jewish constituents through involvement in a range of occasions celebrating their commitment to faith, family and community. These include Yom HaShoah, which is the Holocaust Memorial Day; Jewish Independence Day; Jewish Passover; and Chanukah, which we mark annually, along with a Menorah, in this Parliament as well as locally on the St Ives Village Green. This evening I will be commemorating the Jewish Holocaust at Masada College in St Ives, and representing the Government and the Minister for Multiculturalism, who is in the Chamber. Masada began as a Jewish kindergarten, and later a primary school, housed in the Jewish Synagogue in Lindfield. When it became apparent that a high school was also needed, the college established a campus in St Ives in 1983. In recent years, Masada College left its Lindfield site and consolidated on the St Ives campus. It always dismays me that special security measures are needed for the school.

Chabad House strives for peace and goodness through providing numerous services, especially to the Jewish community, throughout the North Shore. These services include a wide range of high-quality educational, outreach, crisis and welfare programs for men, women and children of all ages. Chabad House in St Ives recently received a \$20,000 Community Building Partnership grant from the State Government to help convert its kitchen facilities into a commercial kitchen to foster community and assist those less fortunate through providing relevant services. I commend its work under Rabbi Nachum Schapiro and Rebbetzin Fruma Schapiro.

In 2012 I travelled to Israel at my own cost on an excellent educational program that was kindly facilitated and organised by the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, along with the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps from the New South Wales Parliament and a group of members of the Victorian Parliament. I have a very positive working relationship with the Jewish Board of Deputies and commend the great work undertaken by that organisation, especially its Chief Executive Officer, Vic Alhadeff. Many other Jewish organisations and individuals similarly contribute substantially to our society. I have attended many Jewish celebrations and occasions over my years as a parliamentarian and I always feel warmly welcomed, despite not being Jewish. Many of the values of the Jewish people are shared by the Christian tradition to which I belong. I recognise the strong, caring and vibrant Jewish community in Davidson and New South Wales and look forward to a continuing warm and supportive relationship.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:55): The Blue Mountains electorate is often misunderstood by residents of Sydney, bureaucrats and other politicians in this place. It is easy to think of the Blue Mountains as a single community or a contained physical entity. However, stretching over 60 kilometres along a narrow ridgeline, my electorate is the same width as Sydney itself. My electorate is serviced by a train line and a highway, and life for many people in the Blue Mountains revolves around one or both of these key pieces of infrastructure. We have two big towns, Katoomba and Springwood, which have shopping, retail and dining businesses and bustling town centres. The majority of Blue Mountains residents live in the dozens of smaller villages and towns scattered along the highway, of which some are well-known tourist destinations in their own right, like Wentworth Falls and Leura, while others are towns with no shops at all, like Linden and Bullaburra.

The highway has been upgraded over many years, most recently by the duplication and separation of lanes running east and west, which was initiated by Labor between 2007 and 2011. However, earlier sections of the dual carriageway at places like Faulconbridge, Wentworth Falls and Springwood were built to safety standards that have long since been superseded and did not give due consideration for cyclists, pedestrians or emergency services vehicles attending breakdowns or road accidents. It is not uncommon to see pedestrians walking alongside the highway late at night using the road shoulder as a footpath because of the lack of properly formed footpaths and pedestrian links between the villages and towns across the Blue Mountains. This puts the lives of those road users at risk.

I have been agitating for a new upgrade to the highway between Bellevue Road and Martin Place at Faulconbridge. This section of road is a patchwork of broken bitumen with a bad camber that is dangerous in the wet and has no centre barrier and no road shoulders to enable cyclists to stay out of the main traffic. As the highway turns uphill through a left-hand turn, the space between the Armco barrier and the main traffic lane reduces to a matter of centimetres. This treacherous section of road follows the railway corridor and has a significant amount of room—up to 15 metres in parts—to allow a widening of the highway. But a bureaucratic malaise within the State Government so far has prevented RailCorp from allowing the Roads and Maritime Services to widen the highway to provide adequate space for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists to coexist safely.

In Blackheath and Mount Victoria, residents are being driven spare by so-called safety upgrades of the highway that are being implemented by the Liberal Government in spite of the popularly endorsed 2010 plan by Labor to bypass Mount Victoria altogether and take trucks off the road and out of these quiet, picturesque and historic villages. Instead, residents have seen the nature strips and buffer zones between their front fences and the highway obliterated. Mature and sturdy trees that provided a noise barrier and peace of mind for many people who lived on the highway's edge have been ripped out.

One of my constituents, Jacinta Tobin, has watched her historic miner's cottage deteriorate and subside as a consequence of construction works and excavation for highway safety upgrades that were done within six feet of her front door. She is now seeking fair and proper compensation from the Government after her home was rendered unliveable by those works. In 2008 Labor set in train a route development consultation process that would eventually lead to a proposal to bypass Mount Victoria altogether by using new roads and a short section of tunnel under the Darling Causeway and Butlers Creek. This would provide a new route to Lithgow and take trucks and the bulk of commuter traffic off the precarious Victoria Pass.

In a blow to the hopes of businesses, industry and residents in the Central West towns of Lithgow, Bathurst and Orange, who would have benefitted from this crucial road upgrade, this project was shelved by the Liberals in the early years of their first term of office while the National Party sat quietly and said nothing. The Blue Mountains and the Central West desperately need an activist government that will build better, safer, more efficient roads in our regional areas. This means building new roads where necessary and the improvement of old roads where possible to ensure motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and emergency services workers are safe and the flow of traffic is quick and efficient. However, we must also ensure the sanity of local residents living near these major roads is front of mind in the planning and implementation stages.

NSW WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2018

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (18:00): It is no secret that New South Wales has the lowest unemployment figures in this country. It is pleasing to see that women are at the forefront of a jobs boom sweeping across regional New South Wales and that jobs have continued to boom across Western Sydney. While just under 500,000 new jobs have been created in New South Wales since 2011, 117,400 new positions have been created in Western Sydney since the 2015 election. Our Liberal-Nationals State Government has done more for women in the workplace than any previous New South Wales government, and we are incredibly proud of that.

The Minister for Women, Tanya Davies, hosted the seventh annual NSW Women of the Year Awards, at which Professor Hala Zreiqat was awarded the NSW Premier's Woman of the Year Award for her extraordinary contributions to regenerative medicine and translational orthopaedic research. Hala is Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Sydney and is described as a trailblazer in championing opportunities for women. Her biography states she was the first female president of the Australian and New Zealand Orthopaedic Research Society. She has been a senior research fellow of the National Health and Medical Research Council for the past 10 years and she was the first person in New South Wales to receive a prestigious Radcliffe Fellowship from Harvard University. I congratulate Hala and the other award winners for 2018 as they are all worthy recipients. I congratulate also the Minister for running such a fantastic awards program which recognises women.

In my daily role as Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services, I meet some of the most incredible women. One of those is Professor Nadia Badawi, AM, who is an internationally recognised

neonatologist with extensive experience working in the field of cerebral palsy and newborn brain conditions. Professor Badawi is the Macquarie Foundation chair of cerebral palsy at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, medical director and co-head of the Grace Centre for Newborn Intensive Care at the Children's Hospital at Westmead, and a clinical professor of paediatrics and child health. In 2011 she was selected by the National Health and Medical Research Council as one of Australia's leading researchers who is changing the world and in 2012 she was selected as one of Australia's most influential female voices. Her research and discoveries are making huge strides towards the prevention and cure of cerebral palsy, which will have impacts not only in New South Wales and Australia but also across the world.

From a local perspective, there are some amazing women in my electorate of Castle Hill—pioneers such as Sue Ismiel who created the global hair removal product Nad's and she did so in the kitchen of her local home. Sue recently featured on SmartCompany's list of Australia's top 30 female entrepreneurs, where it was revealed her company, Sue Ismiel and Daughters, now turns over \$42 million each year. Our area has a high proportion of females in leadership positions and senior management roles and as local business owners. In fact, the Sydney Hills Chamber of Commerce stated recently that 30 per cent of its membership are women. I sing the praises of entrepreneurial stars such as Mrs Linda Gunek of *Sydney Hills*, who publishes a most amazing luxury lifestyle magazine that captures all that is great about living in the Hills. Linda, who is a resident of Kellyville, was recently awarded Most Outstanding North West Woman for 2018.

Furthermore, we have superstars such as Rouse Hill resident Sara Belling, who is the general manager [GM] of The Fiddler at Rouse Hill and possibly the youngest lady to be GM of a hotel. Sara revolutionised this historic local venue, and it is now patronised by local families every day. For many years, women have held high positions in our local government. The Hills shire has had no less than five female mayors, including our current mayor, Dr Michelle Byrne, who is the first popularly elected mayor for the area. Evelyn Lester is our wonderful Hills State Emergency Service local commander.

Our community has thrived through the work and dedication of women. This year I was pleased to present the 2018 Local Woman of the Year award to Mrs Anne-Maree Kinley of Castle Hill—an exceptionally worthy recipient—for her tireless commitment to bringing positive change to Castle Hill through her dedication of more than 21 years to local schools and the community. This year the Castle Hill 2018 Seniors Festival Local Achievement Award was presented to Evelyn Caulfield for her many years of dedication to the Girl Guides, her local church and the community.

Each of these women is very different, of various ages and backgrounds, yet they have pushed the envelope and forged past gender stereotypes. They are mothers, daughters and aunts. They are mentors and guides, employees and employers. They are the thread that keeps the fabric of our local community together and has helped the Hills become a modern, thriving electorate. I acknowledge all of the wonderful women and the work they do not only in business and in the areas I have referred to but across New South Wales and Australia. I particularly acknowledge the New South Wales Government's recognition of the contribution of women through the NSW Women of the Year Awards.

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL ASQUITH

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:05): Today I pay tribute to an outstanding school in my electorate, St Patrick's Catholic School Asquith, which has been providing educational excellence for the past 60 years. St Pat's, as it is affectionately known, has an amazing staff, strong leadership and happy students. For more than 60 years it has built a reputation that is second to none and is held in high regard across the community. When I visit the school I am always met by students who are happy, smiling and quick to tell me about how they love their school. Whether they are academic or they love their sports, there is something for everyone at St Pat's. This is testament to the hardworking staff who go above and beyond for every student who attends the school.

First opened on 28 January 1958 by the Sisters of Mercy, the school had 28 students—eleven in kindergarten and 17 in a combined first and second grade class. The first sisters, Sister Mary Antoinette and Sister Marie Bernadette, lived at the convent at Waitara. The classes were held in the old church, which is now used as the hall, and the children sat on church pews. For the first few weeks they managed without desks, blackboards or any equipment. The sacristy, which is now the school tuckshop, was used as a storeroom, a canteen and the sisters' lunch room. As the school was being held in the church, the sisters were required to pack away all the equipment on Friday afternoon and unpack each Monday morning. Parents would assist the sisters with this work each week.

The bond between the school and the parent body has always been strong at St Pat's. By January 1959 the foundation stone was laid on the land adjoining the church and the school was born. By this time the school had grown to 150 students. It was opened and blessed by Cardinal Gilroy. The Sisters of Mercy withdrew from

the school in 1987 but the tradition and values they introduced are still very much at the school today. I was pleased to see a number of the Sisters of Mercy back at the school to help celebrate the sixtieth anniversary. The school, which is much larger now, is led by Principal Bernard Cumming. He is the kind of principal everyone wants to have at their school. The students respect him, he leads an amazing staff and he provides an education environment that is second to none. He is supported by Assistant Principal Kylie Huggins, along with a 20-plus teaching staff who are dedicated to providing the best educational experience for the children in the school.

One staff member who needs mentioning is Christine McNamara—known to the students as Mrs Mac. She started teaching at St Pat's 51 years ago. After four years she left the school to teach elsewhere and have a family. However, she came back in 1984 and has been there ever since. She has touched the lives of many students. I thank Mrs Mac for her hard work and dedication to the school and the broader community and each of the students she has taught. It is teachers like her that make St Pat's the great school that it is. Leading the school is the parish priest Father Shaju, Parish Administrator of the Ku-ring-gai Chase Catholic Parish, and assistant priest Father Shiju. St Pat's is one of two schools under the Ku-ring-gai Chase Catholic Parish. As a Catholic primary school, the priests' support of and relationship with the school are vital. I thank them for what they do at the school and for the students, helping to keep their faith in Jesus alive.

One aspect that is very evident at the school is the strong sense of community and the hardworking parent body. From the beginning of the school when parents would assist the Sisters of Mercy to today when the parents and friends association runs a number of events throughout the school, the bond between parents and school is strong. For the last two years Karen Price and Melissa Turnell have done an outstanding job leading the parents and friends association. Erica Mulvany has taken over this year, and I am sure she will continue the hard work of the parenting body. From fetes to photo days and running the canteen, the parents are always there to help raise funds for the school and to provide that important link between home and school life. I thank all the parents past and present who have supported the school and built it into the proud institution we know and love today.

I am pleased to meet the St Pat's school leaders every year when they visit me in Parliament. I look forward to meeting the current leadership team of Joshua Day, Ally Griffiths, Alex Pezzuto and Madeleine Ward when they visit Parliament later this year. I also am proud to award the Matt Kean Leadership Award to one student each year. Last year Thomas Cosgrove was the winner of the award, and it was thoroughly deserved. When I attended the sixtieth anniversary celebrations at St Patrick's, it was wonderful to see how many lives have been touched by the school. Congratulations to Karen Pezzuto who organised the amazing event and Doris Russell who prepared the amazing display in the school hall. I thank Doris for the great work she did putting it all together. Congratulations to St Patrick's on its wonderful achievement. May there be 60 more years of students, teachers and parents who are able to enjoy a quality Catholic education in our community.

TWEED ELECTORATE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:10): A week ago today the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, Mr Brad Hazzard, visited the Tweed electorate where he made two magnificent announcements. The first one was the site location of the new, \$534 million state-of-the-art health facility at Cudgen. Its location on Cudgen Road opposite Kingscliff TAFE provides an opportunity to develop a health and education precinct. This is great news. Selecting the right site for the new Tweed Valley Hospital is vital to ensuring the hospital will service the health needs of the community now and into the future.

The 23-hectare site, with 16 hectares of land above the probable maximum flood level, is close to the M1 Pacific Motorway and there are planned upgrades to Tweed Coast Road and other local roads. About 70 per cent of the Tweed local government area will be able to access the new hospital in under 30 minutes, with average peak period travel times equivalent to the existing Tweed Hospital. The site is on a north-facing ridge, which maximises its access to nature, the light and the panoramic views to the mountains and coast, creating an amazing healing environment for cancer patients. The hospital design will utilise the slope of the land to maximise the amenity and views while efficiently delivering services.

The site sits on the urban side of Cudgen Road directly opposite Kingscliff TAFE and between the existing residential areas of Kingscliff and Cudgen. It has mixed zoning, including residential and agricultural and a nature reserve. Development of this site will not fragment the Cudgen Plateau and the site's large size will allow for future hospital expansion and health and education developments without encroaching on surrounding areas. The agricultural area of the site represents approximately one-tenth of 1 per cent, or 0.13 per cent, of the total State significant farmland mapped for the New South Wales Far North Coast. The evaluation of sites was informed by due diligence investigations undertaken by expert, independent advisers across a broad range of disciplines and overseen by an independent probity auditor. Consultation with representatives of key stakeholder groups was undertaken in late 2017. The preferred site was identified at the conclusion of this extensive process.

With our growing population, our new hospital will deliver a bonanza of hundreds of construction and health service jobs and the best possible health care well into the future. This state-of-the-art facility will allow us to care for more than double the current number of patients and will increase from 210 beds to 450 once fully operational. There will be full cancer and cardiac treatment facilities, catheterisation laboratories and a raft of other health delivery facilities that are not currently available. Following this announcement, we attended Pottsville where the Minister announced the site selection and purchase of the new \$5.9 million Pottsville ambulance station. Work on the site is soon to get underway.

With our growing population, it is vital that we ensure we can deliver lifesaving care in our community when it is needed. The site at 1128 Pottsville Road will include parking for up to four ambulances, new offices and staff parking and, most importantly, the location means a quick response when minutes can make a difference between life and death. In 2015, the Government announced that a new ambulance station would be underway within the next term of Government. Wednesday's announcement means that the Liberal-Nationals Government is fulfilling its promise to the community. The new station will complement the \$3.7 million Pottsville HealthOne facility, which is already delivering topnotch health care to our community.

I was very pleased that the Minister was there. Even considering the site of the new hospital, there are some people in the community who believe it will be the death of farmland. I am deeply committed to the protection of that farmland. But at the end of the day a brand-new hospital with 450 beds will ultimately benefit all the people in the Tweed, and I stand behind that decision. Health Infrastructure used an independent probity officer throughout the whole process. We are looking forward to starting the project as soon as possible. Tweed Hospital does an excellent job. The medical staff council has some of the finest members in Australia, if not the world. We have some of the shortest waiting lists for elective surgery, and 87 per cent of people are seen within the triage time required. Well done to the doctors who have lobbied for this for many years and have had many meetings. It took this Government to deliver a half-a-billion dollar hospital and also a \$6 million ambulance station for the benefit of the good people of the Tweed. Once again, I am 100 per cent committed to the people of the Tweed.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for Tweed and congratulate him on the half-a-billion dollar hospital upgrade.

BASSAM MAALIKI AND UBELONG

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (18:15): I bring to the attention of the House the work of Bassam Maaliki, an impressive young man from my electorate. I will share his story and his amazing work with his organisation, UBELONG. Bassam is a 15-year-old student from Homebush Boys High School who, despite dealing with schoolwork and teenage life, has accomplished a great deal. His resume includes that he is YMCA NSW Youth Parliament member for Strathfield, a Save the Children Youth Ambassador, a finalist for the 2017 Human Rights Medal, a NSW Youth Collective Ambassador, a NSW Multicultural Youth Ambassador for Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network [MYAN], and the NSW Youth Member at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. Most recently, he was the recipient of the Youth Medal at the New South Wales Premier's Harmony Dinner. It is safe to say that Bassam is one of the most impressive 15-year-olds.

What is most amazing about Bassam, however, is his passion, empathy and determination in the service of others. It is these qualities that led him to create UBELONG, an organisation dedicated to ensuring that all refugees and migrants—no matter their background or ethnicity or wherever they live—feel a sense of belonging in Australia. The message of UBELONG is materialised in the form of a key, that symbolises the "key to belong". The key is worn to represent our shared commitment to diversity, inclusion and respect. It is a key to unlock society's barriers and restrictions, and to feel, in a real way, that sense of belonging. Through the sale of these keys, he has raised more than \$10,000 with funds going directly to organisations committed to helping and supporting refugees in Australia.

When discussing with Bassam why he chose to pursue this particular cause, he states beautifully yet simply, "Just because refugees have changed houses, it doesn't mean they're without a home". If everyone showed that compassion and empathy that beams from Bassam, I know that this world would be a significantly more welcoming more unified place. However, as Bassam knows all too well, the road to inclusion and respect is often blocked by those who seek to divide and isolate our community. Bassam is proud of his Lebanese heritage and Muslim faith. I should mention that Strathfield is one of the most diverse multicultural and multi-faith electorates in New South Wales, a fact that I celebrate.

Despite this, Bassam has faced bullying and torment. He has been told to, "go back to where he belongs", even though he was born here. He has had his Facebook account hacked because of his work with UBELONG. What is disappointing is that this type of torment and bullying is all too commonplace. Public figures such as Pauline Hanson use racism and bigotry to divide our communities. It would be all too easy for young people such

as Bassam from different backgrounds and religious beliefs to feel discouraged about speaking up and celebrating their diversity. But let me tell you how Bassam responds. In his words, "We must respond with kindness, we must respond with love and, above all, we must respond with respect."

I was at the Homebush Boys High School assembly about two years ago, and on my seat on the stage was the key that Bassam uses, this amazing key—hand-painted and cut out. I thought, "What is this for?" So I did what I thought I should do: I pinned it on my lapel. Afterwards I emailed Bassam, and said, "I want you to come in and I want you to talk with me about why you do this. What has motivated you? What does this mean?" He came in and I asked him to make a video, which I then put on my Facebook page. In that video, he explains so well why he is so proud of his Lebanese heritage and his Muslim faith, and the fact that, given everything he had gone through, he had two options: He could either retaliate and hit back or he could respond with love, compassion and respect, and he chose that path.

In the first speech I gave as the member for Strathfield, I advocated in this place for the greater inclusion of young people in the democratic process. I have witnessed first-hand the enthusiasm and the drive of young people in my electorate, and in New South Wales, who want to speak up for others. Bassam is an example of why I have such hope in our young people. He not only sets an example for those who want to participate in important issues, but he fights for those who do not have a voice. The message posed by Bassam and UBELONG is simple: "Where I am, you belong". I commend the work of Bassam and UBELONG to the House.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE ROAD UPGRADES

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:20): The people of Port Stephens have been let down by this Government and its misplaced priorities. In recent weeks the Premier has launched her 20-year infrastructure plan, but I must ask the Premier, "What is the point of planning the next 20 years if you cannot even deliver the projects you promised at the last election?" The people of Port Stephens have every right to feel cheated, after the recent confirmation that the promised upgrade to Nelson Bay Road has been deferred until at least 2021. Nelson Bay Road is one of the most important roads in Port Stephens. This State road connects the Tomaree Peninsula, the Tilligerry Peninsula, and the Newcastle Airport to the broader Hunter region. At least half the residents in my electorate must travel on this road to get to or from Newcastle and to the rest of the Hunter. This is also the road that brings the many tourists to our region, tripling the population in peak times and supporting the many amazing tourism businesses of Port Stephens.

I cannot underscore enough the importance of this road to the economic and social wellbeing of Port Stephens. Despite its importance, there are sections of the road that are still single lane and causing significant congestion during peak times, as well as posing a risk of traffic accidents blocking the only entrance and exit for the area. A number of sections of the road have been duplicated so far. Stages 1 and 2 were completed under Labor governments led by Bob Carr and Morris Iemma. Stage 3 was completed under the O'Farrell Government.

Given the importance of this road, significant attention was paid when then Premier Mike Baird came to Port Stephens and promised just under \$70 million for what he called the "full duplication" of the road. This commitment was made on the eve of the 2015 election, only a short time after Labor had promised a similar commitment for the next section of duplication. After the election Mike Baird continued as Premier, and this election commitment was published in the New South Wales Government's 2015 to 2019 election commitment document. This commitment was so special it was the third project listed in the transport section. That document is still available on the Treasury website.

With its prominent placement in the list of election commitments, I was always curious as to why the project was not a line item in the budget. Why were my questions each year about the time frame for the delivery of this project ignored? I had just put this down to the usual arrogance of this Government, but freedom of information documents now tell a deeper story. At some point after the 2015 election, a decision was made that the almost \$70 million that had been promised would not be spent in this term of Government. Instead, it would be put on hold until at least 2021. This meant the road works would not be completed until 2025. Only \$200,000, or less than 1 per cent of the promised money, has been spent so far on this project. What has that money been spent on? It has been spent on a plan for the design of road works that may or may not start in the years to come.

The deferral was so significant that RMS rejected the proposal to begin further planning works, as there was no commitment to commence construction until 2021. This information has come from the Government's own documents. What the freedom of information documents do not reveal is who ordered this road project to be deferred. Any decision involving that amount of money would surely need to go to the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC], so the chair of the ERC at that time, then Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian, would surely have had to approve this election backflip—this broken promise.

This Premier can find billions of dollars for stadiums in Sydney but cannot deliver the infrastructure that this Government promised to a whole community at the last election. The word around Port Stephens is that local Liberals were so angry at losing the electorate in 2015 that they would prefer the residents to suffer through years of inaction, rather than deliver this project while a Labor member is in the seat. How must it feel to be a Liberal voter in Port Stephens—there are quite a few of them, I must say—and to know that even if they look past the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] investigations, the sale of the Mambo Wetlands, the transport mess in Newcastle and the sale of public assets and still voted Liberal, the Government would ignore the promises it made?

It has been fascinating to watch the spokesperson for the Hunter, Mr Scot MacDonald, try to defend this decision on Nelson Bay Road and claim that it is not a broken election promise. He has been peddling the line that the road works are still planned to commence in 2021, so it is not a backflip. I say to Mr MacDonald that no-one believes him. We can judge this Government on its record: breaking its promise on Nelson Bay Road, selling off Mambo Wetlands, and ignoring Williamstown contamination. I invite the Premier to come to Port Stephens and explain to residents why she was happy to see this commitment delayed— [*Time expired.*]

CRONULLA SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (18:26): Today I had the pleasure of hosting the 2018 NSW Seniors Cronulla Local Achievement Awards. I met with seven nominees for the Cronulla Senior of the Year, who all contribute to their local community. Each nominee had a unique background, but they were all recommended by those who recognised their outstanding service to others. I was delighted to announce that Robert Lovell has been awarded the 2018 Cronulla Senior of the Year for his outstanding commitment to the Kurnell Public School community. Robert has been involved in countless events to support the school. He has run garage sales and stalls, helping to fundraise for the school. He has helped the school source beneficial goods and resources, which recently included a replacement commercial fridge for the canteen run by the parents and community association.

Robert has helped the school with a variety of other activities, including driving minibuses, mowing lawns, marking out tracks for sports carnivals, reporting lighting and security issues, and organising to have the oval pumped out when flooded. Kurnell Public School principal Ms Jo Graham said, "Robert's never-ending, undying commitment to support our school is nothing less than spectacular." I should also note Robert's outstanding achievements in other areas: he is a life member of the North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club and a former president of the Kurnell Community Sport and Recreation Club.

I also congratulate each of the other finalists for the Cronulla Senior of the Year Award. June Allen was nominated for her volunteer work at Burraneer Bay Public School parents and citizens association. June has volunteered at Burraneer Bay Public school for the past 12 years and has performed a variety of duties at least once a week. She currently assists weekly at the school canteen. She has supported the reading development of students by assisting with reading groups. June has also volunteered her time on special school occasions, including the Spring Fair and Mother's Day stalls. She volunteers in the school holidays to help clean out the canteen. Most importantly, I am told that every time she volunteers it is always with a smile.

Another finalist, Helen Douglas, is an early childhood teacher who has worked at Engadine Preschool Kindergarten for 20 years. Helen has voluntarily taken the role of education leader at the preschool for many years and has approached this role with enthusiasm and passion. The education leader takes time to learn about the latest teaching information so that the enrolled children receive great education. Helen shares her knowledge about early childhood education with not only her colleagues, but also the families in our community. As well, Helen has been the convenor of the Sutherland Shire community-based preschools educational leaders group. This has helped preschools in our area, many of which achieved an "Exceeding" rating under the National Quality Standards. Helen's nominator said of her, "She has a strong commitment to not-for-profit organisations and building a strong community of learners with the families of the preschool as well as the many colleagues she has worked with over the years."

Ron Hoffmans was nominated for his ongoing work with community radio station 2SSR 99.7 FM. 2SSR has operated in the shire for more than 25 years, with a dedicated team of presenters broadcasting a variety of programs. Ron presents his live radio show, Midday Classics and the Sutherland Shire Symphony Orchestra Hour, every Wednesday from 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. At 97, Ron is the oldest presenter at 2SSR and is likely the oldest active radio presenter in Australia. He has been part of the team contributing to 2SSR since the station started broadcasting in 1992 and is also a strong supporter of our Sutherland Shire Symphony Orchestra.

Bruce Lucas was also nominated as a finalist for Cronulla Senior of the Year. Bruce's work in the local community has spanned decades and he has been involved in a variety of roles. He has served as a long-term teacher in high schools around the shire and has helped lead Woollooware High School, where he served as deputy

principal. Bruce has been a longstanding member at St Philip's Anglican Church in Caringbah, where his volunteering has been appreciated by congregation members. He is also known for 50 years of coaching Australian Football League [AFL] in the Sutherland Shire and St George Area. Bruce is still involved in AFL in the local area and played in the competition until last year.

Another finalist, Sue Shoebridge, is currently the treasurer of 3Bridges Community Early Years Support, which provides invaluable volunteer help to support new mothers. She is a member of the committee, which meets monthly to advise on strategic direction, and has served for 10 years as treasurer, with her accountancy skills valued by the committee. Sue also volunteers as a cook and caters for the new volunteer training program and monthly volunteer service training. She is known for her creative fundraising ideas. Sue's nominator Lina Willmott said, "Sue always looks for other ways she can support our service, the co-ordinators, volunteers and the client families. She has a heart for the local community, especially vulnerable families in the Shire."

Colin Tasker was nominated for his ongoing support of Port Hacking Open Sailing Club. The club was formed in 1945 and Colin is currently the longest-serving club commodore in the club's history, having served as commodore since 2005. The club aims to help introduce youth of today to the great sport of sailing. Hundreds of children and families now experience sailing on their local waters. Colin has supported the sailing club's affiliation with Sutherland Police Citizens Youth Club, helping many young people and adults benefit from sailing. "Learn to sail" courses are now run at the club with the assistance of many club volunteers, and this helps the club to continue its role in engaging young people in sailing. The club has continued to improve its facilities with Colin as commodore and has funded the upgrades through raffles, increasing local business support and applying for government grants. I congratulate all the finalists. In particular, I congratulate the winner of the Cronulla Senior of the Year. I thank the nominators and everyone involved for their service to our community.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:31): Since the announcement of the Sydney stadium rebuilds in November last year, I have been surprised at the level and breadth of concern and frustration across my community. Many important things have affected my electorate in the seven years since I became a member of Parliament, such as issues relating to workers compensation, council mergers, greyhound racing, removal of mental health nursing staff, decisions to downgrade some services, and decisions relating to the expansion of Cessnock Correctional Centre and the community's concerns about becoming known as a jail town. As local members, we have a fairly good idea about which way people vote on any given day. We compete against each other to be voted into this place, but once we are voted in we represent everybody in our communities no matter how they vote.

In November and December last year, as all members do, I attended many end-of-year functions and events. School presentation days feature prominently in that time period, but there are also many other Christmas parties and celebrations held by different organisations. Whether I was at a business chamber, the Country Women's Association, vignerons and the agricultural community, small sporting groups or any other organisations that I have the great privilege to represent, the issue of stadiums kept coming up. I support and endorse Labor's policy to put schools and hospitals before stadiums. So many modest requests are made of us instead of the Sydney stadium rebuild.

In my electorate, schools in new development areas are overdue to be built; growing areas with no local high school; intersections on busy roads in front of schools; bus bays that need to be moved off busy roads and around to the back of schools; and hospital facilities that are more than 100 years old. I do not want people to lose sight of that: the two hospitals in the Cessnock area are more than 100 years old. They are still operating as best as they can with their aged facilities. There are many issues. However, people want paths and the local council would love to build a major, modern regional swimming pool. These are modest projects that could be funded in lieu of stadiums. I will read onto the record an email I received yesterday from a woman who was injured in my local area and who waited a considerable time for an ambulance. The email states:

Hello Clayton

I would like to draw your attention to an incident last Tuesday evening.

My husband and I were walking our dogs along Northcott street near Brandis street Aberdare.

Being the section of road that does not have a footpath, we were walking on the side of the road. As a car approached I went to move to the side of road where the gravel is.

Being dimly lit and not seeing that it was not a continual transition from the road to the gravel I have taken a very nasty hard fall.

My husband called an ambulance while I laid on the road.

Thankfully the lady in the car stopped and offered assistance by parking her car near by.

A follow up call was made to the ambulance and I cannot explain the amount of pain I was in.

I was unable to move and neighbours came and parked their cars around me for protection from cars coming and not being able to see me.

A third call was made by my husband although I believe other calls had also been made for an ambulance 45 minutes later just as the fire brigade arrived the ambulance finally arrived.

45 minutes on the side of the road in a city in town and I could not get an ambulance.

To follow on, I was taken to Maitland hospital... not Cessnock... where I stayed until Saturday afternoon I have bruised ribs, broken arm and broken ankle.

I am hoping while you are at parliament you might mention my absolute disgust disappointment and anger I have with the Premier.

45 minutes in agony waiting for an ambulance and our local hospital not being equipped to take me. But... we can use billions to rebuild sports stadiums.

I am shaking my head in disbelief.

I could not have made a more eloquent contribution about the controversy involving the stadium strategy. This retired woman fell and needed an ambulance and a hospital that could treat her, but neither was readily available. While that is happening, we are arguing about spending billions of dollars on stadiums.

NEWPORT BEACH SHOPPING VILLAGE

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (18:36): I draw the attention of the House to progress and the changing nature of our suburban shopping villages. In May 1987, for his book *The Newport Story*, Pittwater historian Guy Jennings conducted an audit of the Newport Beach shopping village. The shopfronts listed typified a small suburban village in Australia at that time—butchers, banks, coffee shops, takeaways, hairdressers, a newsagent, a video shop, a grocery store, a post office, and numerous other little shops and restaurants. Twenty years later in 2007, as the newly elected member for Pittwater, I walked the same route that Guy walked to see what in Newport had changed and what had stayed the same.

At that time, without a supermarket, Newport Beach shopping village was struggling. The number of shops in Newport had declined by more than 10 per cent, despite an increase in the number of households. The number of everyday banks, butchers and fruit shops had decreased while there was an increase in the number of beauticians, hairdressers and restaurants. It has been a little more than 10 years since then, and it is an appropriate moment once again to crunch the numbers after a recent stroll along the Newport Beach shopping front.

Since 2007, Newport fortunately once again has a supermarket, which is a step towards restoring the vibrancy of the village. This has allowed local residents to do their supermarket shopping without needing to drive to Mona Vale or Avalon. However, other changes have also occurred. The last bank has gone, the fruit shop has closed down, and where the cobbler once was there is now an empty shopfront. The number of retail shops has been supplanted by quick-turnover consumable and service outlets. For example, pet shops have been replaced by pet grooming salons. The number of beauticians, hairdressers and eating establishments continues to increase while homeware stores increasingly diversify into selling consumables such as perishable wholefoods. As with many shopping villages throughout the State, this distribution is simply indicative of our consumerist, service-driven modern society.

It is also interesting to note the evolution of eateries at Newport Beach shopping village. Cuisine in Newport has enriched significantly since 1987, with restaurants now catering to every palate and boasting a diverse range of multicultural flavours. Guy Jennings divided the other food vendors into categories, such as cake shops, pie shops, delicatessens and coffee shops. However, in 2018 these definitions are increasingly blurred—coffee shops are king and everyone wants to sell the best cup. That 1980s-style coffee shop we all remember, where nanna may have gone once a week to have a jam scone, has been replaced by modern, hipster cafes selling organic quinoa and smashed avocado on a wooden board. Members should not worry because jam scones are still available.

This metamorphosis is reflective of our societal pendulum gradually shifting away from sugar and processed foods. It is inspiring to see firsthand how local cafes and businesses are leading change in reducing single-use plastics such as shopping bags, takeaway food containers and drinking straws to protect our natural environment. Of course, in Newport that includes the local beach. Overall, the number of quality modern cafes and restaurants, the reopening of a supermarket, and streetscape beautification in recent years has helped to reinvigorate the Newport Beach shopping village.

A growing number of global businesses has established in a more commercial environment with businesses such as Naked Wines—the brainchild of Luke Jencks—and Morgans Stockbroking taking advantage of a smart work hub created by Simon and Karen Bond. The hub is providing opportunities for much faster upload

and download speeds than those offered by the National Broadband Network. Having such a service in a little centre in Newport is encouraging local businesses and individuals to utilise the area.

How else can we help Newport to thrive? There are at least 15 empty shopfronts along the shopping strip. Of course, the Government can assist by providing convenient public transport and supporting small businesses. Council plays a major role through master planning and community amenity. The Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce also continues to advocate for local businesses. It is also up to each of us as fellow citizens to ensure the long-term health and vitality of our local shopping villages. We can try the coffee at a local cafe, we can go to different restaurants each week, and we can shop locally for new clothes. Through these small, simple acts, we can support this key part of our local community.

I occasionally come across digitised early-1900s Australian newspapers that give a glimpse into fledgling towns of long ago. There are sometimes notices of events held and actions taken by the local community progress association of the time. What strikes me is that across small towns in modern New South Wales the word "progress" has vanished from the names of many community organisations. Why is that? At some time in the twentieth century "progress" became a dangerous word in communities fearing overdevelopment. I understand that, but progress does not mean giving a free ticket to physical growth and density, nor should it. It means progress in how we grow and in doing things better. It is about progress in the way we view the world and each other. We need to be open minded about the benefits of genuine human progress.

BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:42): I take this opportunity to welcome the announcement made last Friday that if elected next March the Labor Party will not proceed with the Sydenham to Bankstown metro. Since the initial draft strategy was released in October 2015, I have consistently opposed any plans to convert the existing T3 Bankstown line into a metro. The new Labor government will ditch the Government's wasteful conversion of the existing 13-kilometre section of rail track into a metro line between Sydenham and Bankstown. The corridor is already well serviced by the existing T3 line and is currently operating under capacity. Of course, the conversion into a metro line would also create major disruption.

The Labor Party has already committed to ditching the Berejiklian Government's proposal to rezone the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor and to shoehorn an extra 100,000 people into high-rise towers without any accompanying social infrastructure. The Sydenham to Bankstown metro is an excuse for the Berejiklian Government to dump units into Bankstown without providing quality public transport. The Government plans to accommodate 100,000 more people through the construction of 36,000 units along the corridor. That is a huge number of units and they will undoubtedly place a great burden on existing services and infrastructure in the Bankstown region. In November 2015 I made the following observations in a submission to the Minister for Planning in response to the draft Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Strategy. I stated:

An urban Renewal Corridor Strategy needs to be thoroughly planned out with every area of contention being accounted for and addressed. Bankstown residents need to be assured that the Government will provide funding for the widening of roads, construction of new schools, health care facilities, car parks and recreational centres. Currently, this Government has not provided any assurances that funding for such crucial infrastructure will be available to support the requirements of high density living. The Government needs to assess the impacts that the draft strategy will have on existing infrastructure and services before implementing a plan. An examination of the State's budget for the electorate of Bankstown over the past five years is a great indicator of the type of support—or the lack thereof—that this Government has given to meeting the needs of Bankstown. At the time, more than 1,400 submissions were received, including submissions from the Director of the Department of Education, which noted that the proposed population increase would place significant pressures on the department to meet its obligations under the Education Act 1990.

In 2017 I submitted a further submission to the Revised Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy. I raised concerns regarding existing road and public infrastructure not being capable of servicing the proposed population increase and that our hospitals and schools are at capacity. The revised strategy was glaringly silent on revealing how the Government intended to upgrade other critical social infrastructure within the identified corridor between Bankstown and Sydenham, in particular regarding health, education and sport and recreational facilities. More than 1,000 submissions to the revised strategy are available on the website of the Department of Planning and Environment. I encourage the Government, including the current Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, to read those submissions. I refer to a number of submissions, including one from Bronwyn, in which she states, "I am distressed by many aspects of this project and ask for it to be stopped." Belinda states in her submission:

I do not see any substantial public benefit but only losses to the public in this project.

I am not persuaded that a metro system is needed. The current rail lines could be upgraded to satisfy future transport needs.

Closing the line for a year is unacceptable for commuters on that line.

The financial link between the metro and the high rise corridor development is not acceptable. Developers have far too much influence.

As the local member of Parliament I have also received many other letters, including one from Ray Godkin, OAM, which states:

The crazy development in the Canterbury railway precinct is absolutely outlandish to say the least. In my travels I used to look in horror at the crazy development of apartments in the Moscow areas. We are now emulating them. What are all the children supposed to do for recreation—not a tree or a park in sight.

Mrs Wendy Ward commented:

The traffic in Bankstown is chock-a-block almost every day and to find parking in car parks is almost impossible.

Since the Government removed the Liverpool via Regents Park line, the community of Bankstown has experienced additional stress. The Bankstown electorate is delighted that Labor made a firm commitment not to proceed with the Sydenham to Bankstown metro. I acknowledge that many residents from the East Hills electorate have expressed concern about the Sydenham to Bankstown metro. It is critical for the Premier and the Government to understand that the metro is not supported in Bankstown. There is no need for a metro. There is a wonderful heavy rail line which should be supported by upgrading train stations with easy access lifts. This Sydenham to Bankstown metro proposal is ludicrous and it should go back to where it belongs—on the scrap heap.

HAWKS NEST BRIDGE CLUB

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:47): When dreams become reality, it is a special day indeed. Recently I had the enormous honour of sharing in such a special day with my community when I officially opened the new clubhouse of Hawks Nest Bridge Club. This purpose-built facility is a beautiful community space for the residents of Hawks Nest, but just as remarkable is the story of how this building came into being. Every group needs a home but the Hawks Nest Bridge Club struggled to find a permanent space to call its own. The group was established many years ago when members of the Hawks Nest Golf Club were looking for another social activity to add to the golf club's repertoire. The bridge club began on 1 May 1995 with 40 members and it was a quick success. The club was so successful that in coming years it outgrew its space at the golf club. The club's move to the Tea Gardens RSL was initially successful but renovations at the RSL resulted in another move. The club found a home at the Grange retirement village, but it was not a permanent home. With many club members not being Grange residents, there were always concerns about the future.

This uncertainty resulted in the club embarking on a long journey and raising more than \$350,000 for the construction of its new clubhouse. After many years and an enormous amount of hard work it now has a place to call home. The journey from a dream to construction was possible only due to the tenacious and coordinated approach of the bridge club as well as the generosity of members and the community. The club raised more than \$200,000 through donations, loans from members and fundraisers. I was pleased to support this project with a Community Building Partnership grant in 2015. The grant provided seed funding for the project, which has been leveraged by this dedicated group and every last drop has been used.

Through its efforts the club was able to demonstrate its commitment to seeing through the project and it negotiated a long-term lease on council-owned land for this new community space. While the building is officially temporary and can be deconstructed, there is no desire to see it moved anywhere anytime soon. With a total bill of \$368,000, with more than half coming from private sources and the rest a mix of State, local and Federal grants, as well as a 25-year loan from the Australian Bridge Federation, it was remarkable to see the dedication involved in bringing such a clubhouse to fruition.

I was honoured to be a part of the opening event. I was joined by the club's patron and former New South Wales Governor Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, as well as the mayor of Mid-Coast Council, Australian Bridge Federation President Bruce Neill, and other State and Federal members of Parliament. Early in the process bridge club members described the game of bridge as the "social media" of their generation. I think that speaks volumes for what the game does for the community. As the acting shadow Minister for Ageing, it confirmed for me the importance of clubs and associations such as the bridge club. While the game provides cognitive stimulation for players, the social element is just as important. Many close friendships in this group have been formed over many years through the shared enjoyment of playing bridge.

Warding off isolation is an important part of ageing well, and clubs which provide social enjoyment and stimulating activity are important in supporting older communities. This is important also in Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest, which in the 2016 census was recognised as the oldest community in Australia. Had the census measured community spirit, the area might well have topped that list. I acknowledge current President Glen Conroy, Secretary Leslie Falla and Treasurer Charlie Shuetrim, together with past President Trish Gratwick, who made the initial grant application, met with me and kept me updated throughout the process. I acknowledge also founding club members Adrian Ryan, Beth Williams, Rex Dale, Dawn Dale, Shirley Pearson, Jean Ryan and Pauline Cole. Special mention goes to Chez Rands, who is not only a talented artist but also an amazing architect and a member of the bridge club who has been invaluable to the club throughout this process.

The project is a terrific example of a community working together to deliver a new community asset which will benefit so many people. The club has a membership of more than 100 and it meets regularly throughout the week. The clubhouse has been designed to support other community groups and an audiovisual system has been installed for use by the local U3A Club. Every homeowner knows the sense of confidence that having one's own home provides and that is just as true for organisations. The Hawks Nest Bridge Club has found its home. I was delighted to share in the special occasion of the clubhouse opening. I wish the club and all its members every success in the future.

Bills

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Returned

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

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:53
until Thursday 12 April 2018 at 10:00.**