



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 2 May 2018

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Presiding Officers	1
Absence of the Speaker.....	1
Bills	1
Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018.....	1
Second Reading Debate	1
Visitors	16
Visitors	16
Bills	16
Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018.....	16
Second Reading Debate	16
Third Reading	30
Community Recognition Statements	30
Wingham Museum War Display	30
Mingyue Lay Temple Buddhist Hall	30
Northern Beaches Women's Shelter	30
Anzac Day Commemorations	30
Joey Promise Challenge Award Recipient Jimmy Barnier.....	31
Newcastle Jets.....	31
Domestic and Family Violence.....	31
Australian Surf Life Saving Championships Medallist Jemma Smith	31
Justices of the Peace Commemorative Ceremony	32
Rotary Club of Campbelltown Sixtieth Anniversary.....	32
Terrigal Boardwalk Plan.....	32
Hidden Treasures Honour Roll Volunteer Nadine Mattiske.....	32
Child and Family Health Centres.....	32
Illawarra Surf Life Saving Volunteers.....	33
Australian Psychological Society Award Recipient Robyn Fowkes	33
Belmont Baseball Club	33
Deniliquin Volunteer Physical Activity Leader Kaye Mccabe.....	33
The Entrance Electorate Anzac Day Services	34
Tribute to Leigh Eaton	34
Port Stephens Electorate Anzac Day Services.....	34
Moorebank Residents' Action Group.....	34
Ruth's Closet Domestic Violence Support Service.....	34
Sing Australia Seventh Anniversary	35
Tanilba Bay Foreshore	35
Emmaus Catholic College Destination Imagination Competitors	35
Australian Surf Life Saving Masters Championship Medallist Laura Thurtell.....	35
Exhibition.....	35
Rotary Club of Grafton Midday Public Relations Award Recipients.....	36

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Port Macquarie Orthodontics Team Black Tie Ball	36
Central Coast Disability Network	36
Hunter School of the Performing Arts Former Student Viswanathan	36
Visitors	37
Visitors	37
Announcements	37
Women in Parliament: Millicent Preston-Stanley	37
Question Time	37
Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for Westconnex, and Minister for Sport	37
Western Sydney Job Growth	38
CBD and South East Light Rail Project	39
Tweed Health Services	40
CBD and South East Light Rail Project	42
Education Reform	43
Goods and Services Tax	44
Charitable Organisations Funding	45
Kangaroo Management Plan	47
State Infrastructure	48
Visitors	49
Visitors	49
Petitions	49
Petitions Received	49
Business of the House	49
St Florian's Day	49
Reordering	49
Motions Accorded Priority	51
Political Donations	51
Consideration	51
Government Policies	52
Consideration	52
Political Donations	53
Priority	53
Bills	58
Farm Debt Mediation Amendment Bill 2018	58
Second Reading Speech	58
Second Reading Debate	60
Matter of Public Importance	61
National Road Safety Week	61
Bills	63
Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Road Safety) Bill 2018	63
Returned	63
Private Members' Statements	63

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Fairfield Electorate Traffic Congestion	63
State Emergency Service Volunteers.....	64
Bathurst Electorate Job Growth	65
Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association 100th Anniversary	66
Gosford Electorate Events	67
Many Electorate Anzac Day Services.....	68
Blue Mountains Electorate Timor Support Groups	68
Regional Autopsy Services	69
Goulburn Correctional Centre.....	70
St John Ambulance Investiture	71
Tweed-Byron Policing	72
National Disability Insurance Scheme.....	72
Wakehurst Electorate Public Schools	74
Visitors.....	74
Visitors.....	74
Private Members' Statements	74
Upper Hunter Electorate Global Heroes of Hope Award Recipients	74
Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour Master Plan	75
Ku-Ring-Gai Electorate Anzac Day Services.....	76
Schools Air Conditioning	77
Illawarra Region Sports Funding	78
Hornsby Electorate Commonwealth Games Award Recipients	79
Cessnock Electorate Traffic Congestion.....	80
Mingyue Lay Temple Buddhist Hall	81
Maitland Electorate Police Numbers	81
Regional Forensic Pathologists.....	82
Reading Recovery program	83

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 2 May 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

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (SYDNEY METRO) BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 10 April 2018.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:13): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. This bill establishes the Sydney Metro Delivery Office as a standalone transport agency and statutory corporation. In reading the Minister's second reading speech, one would be forgiven for thinking that this was all the bill did, but it does so much more than the Minister has revealed in this House, which is why Labor will oppose this bill.

I listened closely to the Minister's second reading speech but I did not hear the real reason for introducing the bill. He noted that the Sydney Metro Delivery Office has been working successfully as part of Transport for NSW since 2011. Why the need for change? There is one agenda, and one agenda only: privatisation. In his second reading speech the Minister did not say that this agency will be a developer, in that land near a station can be turned into any form of development, including residential high-rise or retail. He also did not say that this agency will be able to deliver bus services that may not even be connected to the metro. He did not say that the path he is taking is one that follows almost to the letter the path that the Government took to sell off WestConnex and to create the secretive Sydney Motorway Corporation.

The Minister made many exuberant claims about delivering world-class customer-centred transport, but he did not give one credible reason that the delivery office cannot achieve these aims. The majority of the Minister's second reading speech gives no credible indication as to why this bill is required. I encourage everyone to read the second reading speech, which is basically a long-winded brag about the Minister's fabulous achievements as Minister, with very little detail about the contents of the bill. The Opposition and the community are suspicious, and rightly so, because the Government will do anything it can to sell anything it can get its hands on. It has privatised inner west and Newcastle bus services. Chaos ensued when the Minister embarked on the privatisation of bus services in the Hunter region. In a few months time, the Government will flog off WestConnex with a sale of 51 per cent of the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

Under this Government New South Wales is not "Making It Happen"; it is for sale to the highest bidder. That is what this bill is about. The Minister says that the Sydney Metro will be owned by the New South Wales Government but, as I said, there are worrying parallels between the move in this bill to establish a Sydney Metro statutory corporation with the deceptive and underhand way that the Government has managed the development, and now impending sale, of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. I remind the House that before there was the shady secretive Sydney Motorway Corporation, the Government established the WestConnex Delivery Authority to oversee the construction, financing and management of the motorway. The WestConnex Delivery Authority was a public subsidiary corporation within Roads and Maritime Services. Back then the Minister for Roads trumpeted how the WestConnex Delivery Authority board offers "market leading construction finance and engineering capabilities"—in the same the way that, according to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Andrew Constance, the Sydney Metro will have an "expertise based board".

The WestConnex Authority board of directors reported directly to the Minister for Roads, just as the new Sydney Metro Board will report to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. In considering the bill, it is important to note that the WestConnex Delivery Authority did not last. It currently does not exist, and I will guarantee that the Sydney Metro will not exist. The Minister is seeking the privatisation of all public transport in

this State. The Minister has said that that is his philosophy. Every action he is taking is about privatising public transport.

A year after the Government established the shady and secretive Sydney Motorway Corporation to manage procurement and project delivery functions, it closed the WestConnex Delivery Authority and transferred every single one of the authority's functions to the Sydney Motorway Corporation. Now, as I said, the Government is finalising the sale of 51 per cent of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. It is effectively privatising the Sydney Motorway Corporation and WestConnex. The Sydney Motorway Corporation is a private company. It is constituted under the Corporations Act so it is not subject to the accountability mechanisms of government, and it is not accountable to freedom of information laws. That is concerning. It means that anyone, including me, who tries to conduct a search on WestConnex under the Government Information (Public Access) Act will meet with a blank wall. This Government has created a secretive organisation that is not accountable to this Parliament. However, shortly we will be debating my private member's bill in this Parliament and that bill seeks to return those accountability mechanisms to the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

Even worse, with the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation we are locked into tolling contracts on every stage of the WestConnex until 2060. The Government knows that its privatisation agenda is on the nose. That is why, in his second reading speech, the Minister did not tell the truth about his intention to privatise the Sydney Metro. The Minister will not announce that before the next election, but if the Government is returned to office in March 2019 it will be on the agenda. The Government will do what it has done with the Sydney Motorway Corporation—indeed, with this bill the Government is setting itself up to do exactly that. The Minister has tried to make it appear that the establishment of the Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation is a benign measure and nothing but a necessary step to take the project forward. However, Labor and the community see it for what it is—incremental privatisation. The Government has done it before, it is doing it now and it will do it again.

The Government has already announced that passenger services on the Sydney Metro Northwest will be operated by the private sector. This bill also allows for that. The bill states:

... [the] Sydney Metro may enter into a passenger service contract on behalf of the State for the provision of a metro public passenger service with an accredited operator of a public passenger service or the operator of a public passenger service who is not required to be accredited under this Act.

The bill also contemplates that Sydney Metro may operate other transport services—this was not mentioned in the Minister's second reading speech either, but it is definitely within the detail of the bill. What I find most concerning about this bill is what is not being said by the Minister. Anyone who is listening to this contribution, or reading articles about what this Government is doing with the Sydney Metro, should also read the details of this important bill—it is relatively short—to understand the Government's motivation.

The bill allows for the Sydney Metro to enter into passenger service agreements, including bus services. Why would the Sydney Metro corporation, which this bill seeks to establish, want to operate bus services? The bill states that these bus services do not have to be connected to the operations of the Sydney Metro. This deceitful and appalling inclusion in the bill effectively gives the new Sydney Metro corporation the ability to take over any and all bus services in this State. We all know what Minister Constance is about, because we have seen it with the inner west buses. The Government is seeking to set up a Sydney Metro agency to operate bus services. Bus services have nothing to do with the Sydney Metro, yet in this bill the Minister is ensuring that it will be able to operate bus services—and bus services not connected to the metro. That is what the bill states.

The Minister wants to fatten the pig for market. This is an underhand move by the Government to privatise public bus services—as it has done at Newcastle and in the inner west. If the Government can privatise bus services within the Sydney Metro it will be bigger and better for it to sell off to the private sector. The bill makes it clear that that is what the Government intends to do. Perhaps the Minister could truthfully explain to this House why bus services are being included in a Sydney Metro bill. Why does this agency need to operate bus services not connected to the Sydney Metro? I mentioned the fattening of the pig for market, and I turn now to another concerning aspect of this bill that, again, the Minister chose not to outline within his second reading speech. The Minister left out information on buses because he knows it is extremely controversial—and it gives away his intention with this bill. The Sydney Metro agency will have the ability to acquire, develop, sell or lease land.

Why does this Sydney Metro authority, this Sydney Metro Board, this statutory corporation need the ability to buy or lease land? It needs it because the Minister is fattening the pig for market. If you buy that land and put it within the statutory corporation—hey presto!—you have a big corporation, a big agency, that has bus services and can develop land, and it is in legislation. This means that the Government will try to push this legislation through today because it needs to start work so that, if it wins the next election, it can then sell the Sydney Metro. This new Sydney Metro agency can finance, manage and develop land for residential, retail,

commercial, industrial or mixed-use development. It is just another attempt by this Government to deceive the community.

Why on earth would this agency, purported to deliver Sydney Metro services, want to build high-rise development or a shopping centre? Why did the Minister not tell us that when he walked into this House to deliver his second reading speech? Now we have UrbanGrowth NSW, Landcom, the Department of Planning and Environment and the Greater Sydney Commission, all of which are about land development—and guess what? Now we will have a new authority, a new agency, that can develop land and it is called the Sydney Metro. What a deceitful thing the Minister has done in bringing this bill to this House.

The Government has been incredibly quiet on its plans for development around stations. This is first time that we are finding that the Sydney Metro agency will not only operate passenger metro services but will in fact be a developer of high-rise residential buildings and retail shopping centres. It is yet another concerning and controversial aspect of this bill that the Minister chose not to disclose when he gave his second reading speech in the last sitting week. If he were honest with the community—and we know, time and again, that this Minister is not—he would have laid the facts on the table and said, "This is what we intend to do." But he has hidden that intention and instead given a second reading speech that is full of all of his achievements and how great this infrastructure-spending and infrastructure-building Government is. What a crock that is!

The Minister needs to give a frank and full account in this House of the Government's plans for development along the metro corridor and of the role of the Sydney Metro agency in this development. The Sydney Metro Northwest is progressing. The Government is talking about how fabulous it is, how it is under budget and how it is going to be delivered on time. Perhaps it is the only project that will actually get finished. The issue is that communities along the Metro Northwest, the CBD metro and the Sydenham to Bankstown metro lines have a right to know that this agency can develop land around any of the stabling yards and stations. They have a right to know that the Minister has not told them and nor he has not told this House.

I have no doubt that the Minister has his Sydney Metro Board already chosen, because there will be a board of Sydney Metro. There has been tension, chaos and conflict between Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and the Sydney Metro over the development of WestConnex—in fact, RMS has had to take the Rozelle Interchange and the Sydney Gateway away from the Sydney Motorway Corporation because it has done such a terrible job of managing that.

We know there is tension between these agencies, yet the Government is going to put a banner over it again: "Subject to ministerial direction." We do not even know what powers the Minister has with respect to giving ministerial direction to the Sydney Motorway Corporation. There are two or three shareholder Ministers and we do not know who gives the ministerial direction. There is a Minister for WestConnex—boy, is he in trouble at the moment!—who does not have an agency for which he is responsible because the Sydney Motorway Corporation is being privatised. How does all this work? How do staff within the agencies feel about this? Their jobs are on the line.

I have no doubt that the Minister is lining up the membership of the board of directors and chair. There are bankers, financiers and retired chief executive officers who have cultivated relationships with members of the Liberal Party because they are seeking paid director gigs. In fact, I would not be surprised if Tony Shepherd pops up again in one of these roles. Tony Shepherd is always defending the Liberal Party, even though he knows that decisions are being made that are not in the best interests of this community. Perhaps the Minister can enlighten us about who will be the directors and the board chair. The bill goes into great detail about the establishment and operation of the board, including the directors and the chair, and members in this place need to know who the directors and the chair will be. The Minister has the opportunity to tell us whom he has lined up.

I note that the Sydney Metro agency will be required to complete a corporate plan but—guess what?—the bill specifically gives the agency a free pass to exclude information that might be commercially sensitive in any plans released for public comment. That means that, for the first time in a bill, an agency will be released from having to comply with the Government Information (Public Access) Act—GIPA Act—rules for corporate plans. That is just ridiculous; it is purely about hiding information. As the shadow Minister with responsibility for transport and roads I regularly make GIPA requests of this Government and I know it is so hard to get information from it. The Government clamps down, time and time again, on information. The Government uses factors such as commercial-in-confidence or Cabinet-in-confidence. The Opposition is in despair over the secrecy and the hidden decisions being made by this Government—and here we go again in this bill.

This Government has a compulsion to hide behind Cabinet-in-confidence and commercial sensitivity in order to avoid releasing information. That should not be the case, but it is. This is what the Government does time and time again, but now there is a specific mention of such measures within the Transport Administration

Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill. If the Government has nothing to hide, why is there a specific measure within this bill? What does this Minister have to hide about this agency?

I have raised a number of concerns that Labor has about this bill—privatisation, the operation of bus services by Sydney Metro, and developing and selling land, including retail developments, high-rise developments, warehouse complexes and industrial land. You name it, this agency will be able to do it. Perhaps the Government wants the agency to deliver police services or health! Perhaps the Government could give the agency responsibility for a hospital or schools!

Mr Mark Coure: We are doing that already.

Ms JODI McKAY: The member opposite tells us that that is already underway.

Mr Mark Coure: We are building hospitals; we are building schools.

Ms JODI McKAY: You may as well throw any government service into this agency, because that is exactly what this Minister wants—a beefed up, fattened agency that can do anything and everything for the Government. This Government does not believe it has the responsibility to deliver public services. This bill is about beginning the privatisation of the Sydney Metro, fattening it up and selling it off to the highest bidder. That is what this Government does with every single public service. I challenge the Minister, in his speech in reply, to be open with the community about what his plans are for this agency. I guarantee that he will say, "This is not about privatisation; that is just Labor scaremongering."

Do not believe him, because that is exactly what this bill is about. It is about establishing this agency 11 months from the election, so that as soon as the election is held and if they win government—which they will not—they will sell it. The Minister needs to tell us his plans for this agency. I also challenge him to tell us why Sydney Metro needs to operate bus services—that one has me utterly confounded. Why does Sydney Metro want to offer bus services that may not even be connected to the metro?

Mr Jihad Dib: That begs the question.

Ms JODI McKAY: I know, it begs the question. Perhaps the Minister can give us that answer, because he certainly did not tell us the truth in his second reading speech. For the reasons I have outlined, Labor will not support this bill. I encourage members to read the detail of this bill because many of them would not have. If they have a metro going through their area, or there is one promised, they need to look at the detail because this will negatively impact their community. High-rise, retail and other developments are coming their way. If they have a public bus service, it will be gone. In fact any public bus service in any electorate—even if it is in the eastern suburbs where the metro is not going—could be sold because that is what this bill allows. For the reasons I have outlined, Labor categorically opposes this bill. I put the Minister on notice, because he knows that I will deliver on this. Make no mistake, we will do everything we can to expose what this Government is about.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:36): I speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. I am particularly pleased to speak in support of this bill because of the tremendous benefits the Sydney Metro will deliver for my own constituents, along with our global city. With the construction of two new metro stations at Victoria Cross in North Sydney and in Crows Nest, this world-class turn-up-and-go service will deliver significant connectivity and mobility benefits for the residents of the north shore. In fact, more than 35 per cent of constituents of the north shore already use public transport to travel to work. My community is strongly in support of investing in public transport to reduce the burdens of private transport on our infrastructure, our amenity and our environment.

The Sydney Metro is the single biggest public transport project currently under construction in Australia and the largest urban rail infrastructure investment in the nation's history. That is something of which people who support public transport should be very proud. I applaud the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the Premier for their vision and commitment to public transport for our community. It is disappointing that those on the other side of the House oppose this project and the immeasurable benefits that those across Sydney—including my own community in North Sydney and Crows Nest, across the north-west of Sydney and deep into Western Sydney—will attain as a result of its construction. The Berejiklian Government, however, is getting on with the job of building for the Sydney of tomorrow.

This is not a transport dream we can only imagine in the future. I am advised by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure that it will not be long before we see the first metro services delivered in the north-west. I saw that the tracks have all been laid for the north-west metro section. Services will start in the first half of 2019 on the \$8.3 billion Sydney Metro Northwest. Sydney Metro will deliver for the first time a mass transit system to the booming Hills region that will grow to twice the size of Canberra in coming decades. The Sydney Metro Northwest project is on time and on budget—which is probably one of the reasons that those opposite are so critical of it—

with major milestones already reached. These include completion of tunnelling 10 months ahead of schedule, final construction of the iconic 270-metre cable-stayed bridge over Windsor Road in November 2017, and the commencement of construction at all stations. Indeed, the first of the metro trains is currently being tested. The first train has been on the test track to test acceleration, braking and operation at different speeds. Members of this House and the community who attended the Sydney Royal Easter Show may have been as excited as I was to step into the carriage of one of the Sydney Metro trains. It was an incredibly exciting experience that the Parliamentary Secretary and his son would have loved as well.

Safety is the No. 1 priority of Sydney Metro and testing is being done in close consultation with the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator. The bill appropriately makes safety the centrepiece of Sydney Metro's operations, with its principal objective being to deliver safe and reliable metro services in an efficient, effective and financially responsible manner. Sydney Metro will be Australia's first fully automated rail system. Its key features will include expert rail controllers to monitor the entire system from a new operations centre; 38 security cameras inside and at the front and back of each train; the ability to see inside from one end of the train to the other; state-of-the-art signalling and communications systems to control the trains, tunnels, tracks, platforms, platform screen doors and the skytrain to ensure a safe and reliable journey for customers; and platform screen doors that will keep people and objects such as prams away from the edge, allowing trains to get in and out of stations much faster.

All these systems will talk to each other and be controlled by expert train controllers in the operations centre. When it starts operating, Sydney Metro will be able to move more than 40,000 people an hour in each direction. In comparison, suburban rail lines can move only about 23,000 people an hour. In my electorate I have been proud to work alongside my community to achieve improvements to the Sydney Metro project. For that I thank the team, including Tim Parker. These improvements include the decision that spoil from tunnelling at the Blues Point site would be removed by a barge, reducing the impact of truck movements on the Blues Point road network, particularly on Blues Point Road.

A new entrance is also being built for the new Victoria Cross metro railway station at 50 McLaren Street following community feedback. This is a hallmark of the Sydney Metro project and the way that the Berejiklian Government delivers infrastructure. We listened to community feedback and incorporated a second station entrance which will boost connectivity for customers in North Sydney. Following our ongoing community consultation, a services building originally proposed for 194-196A Miller Street will be moved to the intersection of McLaren Street and Miller Street in North Sydney. It will include a second lift-only station entrance with an underground walkway to the new metro platforms. That will make it even easier for customers to access Sydney Metro from Mater Hospital, North Sydney Boys High School, a number of schools in the area and from the North Sydney Oval, which is a beacon for many local sporting teams and a place that people across the State visit. It will also benefit customers who use local bus services on Miller Street, delivering a more convenient interchange point.

North Sydney is an important central business district for Sydney and New South Wales. It is set to be even more connected as a part of Sydney Metro—Australia's biggest transport project—with a new fully-accessible station entrance at Victoria Cross station. The Sydney Metro project requires substantial community consultation. From the start, I have been pleased with the work of the project team and the Minister and his office in listening to community feedback to refine the project. It is another example of how the community is playing a large part in shaping this congestion-busting project. The decisions show that the Berejiklian Government is actively listening to the concerns of North Shore residents about the issues that matter to them. I will continue to consult with the North Shore community on the Sydney Metro project to make sure that the views of residents in my electorate are addressed.

In supporting the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018, I note that it is imperative that the expanding Sydney Metro system be overseen by a statutory corporation governed by an expert board. It will provide proper governance and the necessary safeguards to ensure that this significant Government investment in the future of Sydney's transport network is secured for generations to come. It should not just be about planning, constructing and delivering the Sydney Metro network. We need an organisation that is charged with specific responsibility for ensuring that daily transport services continue to meet the ever increasing and changing needs of our growing global city. One thing I hear from my community is that we must ensure that we address the growing pains of Sydney and deliver infrastructure to meet population growth so that we have the amenity, accessibility and connectivity we need. The establishment of Sydney Metro as a standalone statutory corporation with end-to-end accountability provides the most effective framework to successfully deliver on the community's expectations and needs. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (10:44): It must be Groundhog Day—another privatisation by this Government by stealth to take what ultimately should be in the hands of the Government.

Mr Mark Coure: Mate, you guys are the kings of privatisation.

Mr GREG WARREN: I note the interjection. I will come back to you, boy wonder. I will come back to you, mate. The Minister would have us believe that the purpose of the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018 is to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to facilitate the development, implementation and operation of a metro in Sydney by constituting Sydney Metro as a corporation and to provide generally for the corporation's management and functions. The bill also makes consequential amendments to other legislation. But we know, and as the shadow Treasurer stated, this is more about fattening the pig for sale. The Government wants to separate something that is currently part of an existing organisation to establish a Sydney Metro as a standalone statutory corporation rather than a government agency.

In fact, this has gone beyond fattening the pig for sale; it is now the elephant in the room, and the problem for the Government is that everyone knows that. I heard the contributions of those opposite. They are speaking about this legislation with pride, but they should tell the community what bits of land in their electorates will be developed for the financial prosperity of their mates down the big end of town. This policy is not about the needs of commuters. This is about a government with a relentless privatisation agenda that has no boundaries. We know that is the Government's agenda; it is pragmatic about it. On 16 August 2017 the Minister said:

I have a very clear view that, into the future, government will no longer be providing services when it comes to transport—there's no need.

The Minister says there is no need for the Government to provide transport services. I have a newsflash for the Minister, but I will come back to that. The Minister went further and said:

We know that the private sector can deliver transport very effectively.

It probably can, because this Government cannot. A drover's dog could deliver better transport services than this Government. I have a newsflash for the Minister: If the Government cannot do it, get someone who can. We know the Government will not do that. But in March next year we will have a change of government and we will have a Labor Government that can deliver transport services, and has done so with pride over many years.

Mr Kevin Conolly: You're only good at cutting services.

Mr GREG WARREN: I note the interjection of the member for Riverstone. I will come back to you, mate. We know that it sets the foundation for the potential future privatisation of the Sydney Metro.

Mr Mark Coure: Who wrote this for you? You can only function with notes.

Mr GREG WARREN: Settle down, son. I will come back to you, mate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! The member for Campbelltown will address his comments through the Chair.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: The member for Campbelltown is well and truly outside the leave of the bill. I ask you to remind the member to address the provisions in the bill. He should speak to the bill and not make personal attacks on my good friend the member for Riverstone, who is one of the best advocates for public transport in the Government.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! A little bit of latitude is allowed in debate on this bill. I have reminded the member for Campbelltown to address his comments through the Chair.

Mr GREG WARREN: Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. I appreciate your support and the Minister's counsel.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I would not canvass my ruling too far. The member for Campbelltown will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr GREG WARREN: I appreciate your advice and I shall speak to the bill. We know that billions of dollars are being spent to rip up the existing heavy rail between Sydenham and Bankstown to replace it with metro rail—these are the facts—rather than prioritising the Parramatta to central business district [CBD] line through the Sydney Olympic Park section. These are quotes from the Minister and Government.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: I apologise for this, but the member for Campbelltown has misled the House. It is not "billions of dollars" of expenditure to rip up the Sydenham to Bankstown line; it is actually a conversion and it is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. I know that those opposite have been saying "billions of dollars", but it is in the hundreds of millions. It is less than \$1 billion, which means that it is not in the billions of dollars. I know that the member for Campbelltown wants to take that money and put it somewhere else, but he has misled the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I am sure the member for Campbelltown will continue.

Mr GREG WARREN: I thank the Minister for his interjection but I note that the Government does not have a good history of costing projects. What has been costed in the hundreds of millions of dollars has turned into billions of dollars.

Mr Mark Coure: Do not mislead the House now.

Mr GREG WARREN: There is no misrepresentation. We can represent the facts. I am happy to debate at another time—it is outside the scope of the bill—the cost blowouts of Government projects.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The member for Campbelltown will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr GREG WARREN: Given the Minister's interjection, which did make a point outside the scope of the bill, I will make the point that what we have learned from WestConnex and the CBD light rail debacle is that the Government simply cannot manage projects that have blown out into the billions of dollars.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Back to the bill, please.

Mr GREG WARREN: I know that those opposite are clearly very sensitive because we are all over them like a rash, as are the community and frustrated commuters.

Mr Mark Coure: What did you say?

Mr GREG WARREN: We are all over you like a rash, Oatley.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The member for Oatley and member for Campbelltown will address their comments through the chair.

Mr GREG WARREN: I appreciate you calling the member for Oatley to order.

Mr Mark Coure: You don't even have an Opal card.

Mr GREG WARREN: Here we go again.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! I remind the member for Oatley that the member for Campbelltown has the call.

Mr GREG WARREN: I appreciate the support, Mr Temporary Speaker. In his statement on 16 August 2017 the Minister was probably correct when he said that the private sector could probably do things better. But it is not that it can do it better; it is just that the Government cannot. In the private sector if someone does not do their job, they are out of a job, which is precisely where Government members will be in March 2019. They will be thrust onto their rightful place on the Opposition benches. I know that because my colleagues and I are going to make sure of it—we are certain of it.

The Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill is about tearing something out of government control to sell it off. We know that this furthers the Government's obsession with privatisation. I have some counsel for those opposite. The member for Riverstone and the member for Oatley have interjected, but I have a newsflash for them: They should do their jobs, run the network and put people first. They should forget politics and forget privatisation and put the people who they are privileged to serve first. That is not what the bill is about and that is why we on the Opposition benches oppose it. We will not yield to any kind of coercion by the Liberals or the Nationals. The Nationals should hang their heads in shame. They talk about matters going on in the regions and how they do not like the segregation between the policy of the city and that of the bush, but they support an agenda in here that will affect people in the city who are equally as important as those in the bush. I conclude by saying we will not support this bill.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: Mr Temporary Speaker—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I believe the member for Campbelltown has finished his contribution.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (10:54): The Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018 aims to create Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation within the transport cluster rather than have it exist as part of Transport for NSW. The bill will enable the formation of Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation with powers and functions defined separately from those of Transport for NSW. There is a vision being delivered by this Government. By 2024 Sydney will boast 31 Sydney Metro stations and 66 kilometres of metro track. New metro trains will run every four minutes in each direction in a turn-up-and-go commuter service.

To oversee this construction and the subsequent growth in, and potentially around, the metro network the Government needs an organisation with a defined structure, framework and purpose. Whilst there are a variety of models of corporatisation across Australia, the principles of corporatisation tend to be the same and include competitive neutrality, management autonomy and authority, and strict accountability for performance. The principal objectives of statutory corporations include: to operate a successful and efficient business that is mindful of the net worth of the State's investment as well as to exhibit a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which it operates. The statutory model provides the best mechanisms for the New South Wales Government to retain control over the operation and management of Sydney Metro while also recognising its responsibility to be accountable to the public. Accountability measures are obviously important. For example, section 36 of the State Owned Corporations Act states:

- (2) For the purpose of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*:
 - (a) State owned corporations and their subsidiaries are public authorities, and
 - (b) directors, officers and employees of a State owned corporations ... are public officials.

Similarly, the Sydney Metro will be subject to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act—and contrary to what the shadow Minister suggested the Government Information (Public Access) Act also—and they will be required to prepare financial reports in accordance with the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. As a public transport agency under the Transport Administration Act it is also subject to various requirements including to provide safe transport services pursuant to an appropriate safety regulatory regime or framework. An expert board will be appointed to Sydney Metro, with local and global talent having appropriate skills and expertise. They will be required to prepare and deliver annual corporate plans, which will be subject to detailed public consultation before finalisation. Sydney Metro's plans will need to specify each of its commercial and non-commercial activities, the objectives for those activities for the upcoming year, strategies, policies and budgets for achieving those objectives, and targets and criteria for assessing Sydney Metro's performance.

Importantly, Sydney Metro will be required to exercise its function in accordance with its approved plans, which must be made public. The bill also provides for Sydney Metro to be subject to directions issued by Transport for NSW or the Minister. These directions are an important means by which transport agencies are required to align with Transport for NSW and ministerial functions. In addition, Sydney Metro will be required to supply the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure with information relating to its activities where required and otherwise keep the Minister informed about the general conduct of its activities and any significant development in its activities. These are important accountability mechanisms.

In addition, the bill provides that directors of the Sydney Metro board will be subject to governance requirements that will be set out in schedule 2B of the Transport Administration Act, including requirements relating to disclosure and management of pecuniary interests. The primary role of Sydney Metro will be to deliver high-frequency passenger services and revitalise land in the locality around proposed metro stations, depots and stabling yards. In order to carry out that role, Sydney Metro will have the same compulsory acquisition powers as Transport for NSW in relation to acquiring land for those infrastructure requirements.

That means that the Sydney Metro will be able to compulsorily acquire land in accordance with the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act when exercising its statutory functions for necessary transport infrastructure components of the metro. While Sydney Metro can acquire, build and dispose of metro assets, it cannot dispose of the metro system itself, which will continue to be owned by taxpayers through a statutory corporation within the transport cluster. The Opposition's failure to support this bill is largely based on a matter not contained in this bill at all. In his second reading speech the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure said:

Sydney Metro will be subject to the requirements for closure and disposal of railway lines under section 99A of the Transport Administration Act 1988.

Labor is scaremongering. I reiterate the Liberal-Nationals position that while we support the orderly and efficient revitalisation of land in the locality of metro stations, we do not support compulsory acquisition of private property to onsell to developers or to build new housing stock. No property should be compulsorily acquired by Sydney Metro for the purpose of onselling to developers. That position is in contrast to the one canvassed by Labor in the dying year of its Government. Sydney Metro will be able to acquire land with agreement from owners in the general locality of metro stations, depots or stabling yards for the purpose of carrying out, financing, managing or otherwise participating in residential, retail, commercial, industrial, mixed use development, community public open space or recreational purposes, but that land will not be compulsorily acquired by the Government. The Government understands and appreciates that properties surrounding key proposed transport hubs are often people's businesses or homes and will not force them to sell those properties. Any potential sale will be a commercial choice offered in good faith, depending on personal circumstances. Private landowners in those areas can elect to negotiate a sale price and choose whether to sell to the Government.

As mentioned earlier, the previous Labor Government put forward a proposal in its 2010 Metropolitan Transport Plan to create a metropolitan development authority with powers to compulsorily acquire land, rezone it and onsell it to developers. Tony Kelly, the then Minister for Planning, said that that proposal was about responsible management of a resource—urban land—and that it might be justified by great community benefit. Even then Premier Kristina Keneally said such compulsory acquisition might be part of the future, refusing to rule it out. I saw this played out in my own electorate in which a particular lady was very concerned about the potential exercise of what might be a power. If Labor is re-elected to Government I fear it might resurrect its potential proposal of March 2010 to legislate for the compulsory acquisition of family homes in areas like transport hubs. What we should fear is a potential Labor Government that is determined to increase housing density at the expense of private owners.

The Government is building infrastructure for people for the future. We on this side are not just talking about it; we are doing it. The Sydney Metro Northwest and similar rail proposals were promised by those opposite, but they never even started to deliver them. In fact the best they could over 16 years to progress the 12 rail lines that they promised was to deliver half of one rail line—and it was not the Chatswood to Parramatta line; it was shortened to Chatswood to Epping—at twice the cost and double the time that they originally budgeted for. Under the Berejiklian Government the Sydney Metro Northwest is running under budget, it will be open to customers in the first half of 2019 and eventually it will be integrated with the rest of the Sydney Metro system. Sydney Metro patrons will pay their fares using the successful Opal card ticketing system, and fares will be set by the New South Wales Government, as with all public transport fares.

Those opposite hate us talking about how successful the Opal card system has been because it reminds them of the \$100 million they spent on the T-Card system which was totally wasted—just like their enormous waste of half a billion dollars on the Rozelle Metro system. Likewise the Rozelle Metro system never even saw a single track laid; it wasted half a billion dollars. The Sydney Metro provides a stark example of the difference between this Government and the dark days of Labor, both literally and metaphorically. New South Wales is continuing to travel well on a track towards prosperity, innovation and delivery. It is a strong direction that Minister Constance has maintained from the previous Minister for Transport Berejiklian. The biggest danger is derailment from another Labor ghost train. This Government is delivering and will continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales and, in this case, Sydney. We on this side do not just talk about it; we deliver. We will continue to deliver positive outcomes. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:04): I speak in opposition to the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018 and I do so, as my colleagues illustrated earlier, because this bill is purely a vehicle for the establishment of a statutory corporation which can later readily be privatised. This bill is also about property development and facilitating the process by which the statutory corporation will run a property development arm, dressed up as the redevelopment of a rail line. The proposal will make the Sydney to Bankstown corridor a metro line and, in the process, facilitate the redevelopment of the land around it to build 90,000 homes that no-one wants. This is a disgrace. It is being set up—just as WestConnex was—to make sure it cannot be subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act. The bill is all about secrecy and property development—and that is what this Government is about. It is not about public transport.

The Sydney Metro Northwest, which will be part of this, is currently being built. It is 33 kilometres long, which will be a very long trip to do standing up—and most of the passengers will be standing up. If passengers are travelling further into the city, they will be standing up for up to 40 kilometres. It will not be a very comfortable trip. To think this rail line will inspire people in their thousands to use public transport to justify the huge increase in development yield around the metro system is a furphy. This is a vehicle for property development, pure and simple. It is clear that this Government is committed to the privatisation of public transport. That is evident in Newcastle and in the inner west with the buses.

We were told the need for privatisation of the buses in the inner west was because the performance was lacklustre, but in fact there are many parts of Sydney where the buses are far less popular with patrons than in the inner west. There are private buses in my area, and people do not like them either. The on-time running for the buses that use Parramatta Road has deteriorated enormously since the Government put the toll on the M4 and filled Parramatta Road with a lot more cars. Dozens and dozens of bus stops have been ripped out on the Parramatta to Hurstville route so that the buses can try to meet their timetable—it is not about meeting passengers where they want to get on or off the bus; it is about the timetable. It serves the timetable, not the passengers. The bill's proposal for the Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation will not serve passengers either; it is about serving property developers and their interests in building tens of thousands of units across Sydney.

The independent board of Sydney Metro will be required to report annually and prepare a corporate plan, which will be subject to consultation, but I do not think people spend a lot of time reading corporate plans. The information people want to know will be hidden by the Government through the process of setting this up. The

Government is trying to hide any information anyone wants to know—as with the Sydney Motorway Corporation—by ensuring most of the activities are considered commercial-in-confidence and beyond the scope of the Government Information (Public Access) Act. This bill is a disgrace. It is setting Sydney Metro up to be a separate part of the network which can be more easily sold off in its entirety. The Sydney Metro itself is being run with driverless trains. This Government is obsessed with reducing staff at every possible step before privatisation, reducing the ongoing liabilities to purchasers to pay a fair wage to people for the work they do. In this case it is through having trains without drivers on them.

There are some benefits to the metro regarding the number of services they can run, which will be good. There will also be services where people are required to stand and services with few overheads in terms of staffing. That is how the Government will sell it off. It has been clear from the outset that the Sydney Metro is the first step towards the privatisation of the Sydney rail network. It will slowly break up the network, bit by bit, for privatisation. I have concerns that in my area the west metro will be treated the same way and be subject to the same threat of privatisation. But I am not concerned that it will happen while this Government is in power because it is not planned to be built for decades. Labor will build it sooner and it will remain in public ownership. Government plans are focused on freeing land for development, identifying routes and corridors for up-zonings and maybe getting improvements in public transport down the track—but it will be public transport operated by the private sector for profit, not for passengers.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (11:10): I support the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. I note from the outset the disappointing insistence by those opposite on fearmongering and blatantly lying in this Chamber. The constant mantra from Labor is: "Attack, attack, attack." It has no interest in delivering things that benefit the people of New South Wales and place improvements into the system that deliver public transport outcomes. As I am talking about the fact that they stand for nothing and have no substance and do not intend to deliver for the people, they walk out of the Chamber. I note that they walk out while this important debate about public transport is occurring in the Chamber. Let me speak about the substance of the bill.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: I ask the member to withdraw the comment. It is common practice in this place that, following delivery of a speech, a member will leave. To infer a member is walking out because they do not want to listen is unfair. If the member wishes to make such comments, the expectation is that she will be here to listen to every single speech delivered. Through the Chair I ask that she withdraw the statement. Members from both sides of the House understand that people do walk in and out of the Chamber for different reasons.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: To the point of order: Not as the comments are being made about them. I will not be withdrawing the comment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The member for Miranda does not withdraw the comment. There is no point of order. The member for Miranda will continue her contribution.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: The purpose of the bill is to amend the Transport Administration Act of 1988—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times and they will have a chance to contribute to the debate.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: —to establish the Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation to facilitate the development, implementation and operation of Sydney Metro. As the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure noted in his second reading speech, Sydney Metro's principal objectives will be to deliver safe and reliable metro passenger services in an efficient, effective and financially responsible manner and to facilitate the revitalisation of local communities in the locality of metro stations. This second objective will enable Sydney Metro to play a critical role in place making for the precincts that will be serviced by Sydney Metro. To assist in exercising its functions Sydney Metro will be empowered to assist relevant planning and transport authorities in preparing strategic plans and precinct plans for local communities in and around metro stations.

We all know the benefit of integrating transport and land use planning. It makes good sense, but it does not mean it is something that always happens. To find an example of that, one only needs to look at those on the other side of the House and their failure to provide adequate transport to match housing growth in areas such as the north-west and the bungled attempt at converting Sydney Olympic Park into a vibrant community. Giving Sydney Metro a role in place making will ensure that the necessary planning is done at the early stages to create active and vibrant local communities in and around metro stations. An integrated approach to planning will ensure that transport services are delivered in a timely way and in a manner which supports the revitalisation of local communities, recognising that transport is the key to providing people access to work, social, cultural, community and recreational opportunities.

Further, along with the Greater Sydney Commission, Sydney Metro will work in close cooperation with other government agencies including the Department of Planning and Environment, the Ministry of Health,

Landcom, UrbanGrowth and the Barangaroo Delivery Authority. All of those agencies have specialist expertise, local knowledge and understanding to bring to the planning and delivery of metro precincts across the metropolitan area. Each metro station offers its own unique blend of opportunities and constraints, requiring a tailored approach in each precinct that truly responds to the specific needs of each individual community.

Sydney Metro will also work closely with councils to ensure that plans prepared for precincts in and around metro stations align, where applicable, with a council's vision for its local area as set out in its local environmental plan and development control plan. As the agency responsible for delivering active and vibrant precincts in the locality of the metro, Sydney Metro can help bring all the relevant stakeholders to the table, ensuring a coordinated approach. Councils, businesses, industry, government agencies and community representatives alike will have a single point of contact within government.

To enable Sydney Metro to undertake an effective place making role, the bill empowers it to carry out, finance, manage or otherwise participate in residential, retail, commercial, industrial, mixed use, open space and recreational projects. Importantly, Sydney Metro will still be subject to relevant planning controls and will be required to obtain all the necessary planning approvals before projects can proceed. Appropriately, the community will have an opportunity to have a say about proposed projects before they are considered for approval. Place making is nothing new for Sydney Metro. I note Sydney Metro has played an important role in the revitalisation of precincts that will be serviced by Sydney Metro Northwest.

That role is well illustrated by the place making undertaken by Sydney Metro for the growing Norwest Business Park and Norwest Marketown, making sure they remain fully and easily accessible whilst the metro is being delivered. By working closely with the Department of Planning and Environment, the Hills Shire Council and Roads and Maritime Services, Sydney Metro has been at the centre of providing better roads, expanded bikeways and new infrastructure such as an underground pedestrian link from the new Norwest station in Baulkham Hills to the nearby shopping centre. This coordinating place maker approach is the most effective and efficient way to deliver a seamless daily journey for customers now and into the future. By building on its detailed knowledge and understanding of the local community's needs and aspirations, Sydney Metro continues to bring life to this vital and growing precinct.

Sydney Metro will play a similar place making role in revitalising precincts to be serviced by the recently announced Sydney Metro West project, such as Westmead. I am advised that Sydney Metro is currently undertaking detailed technical assessments for a new underground metro station at Westmead. Having a fast, efficient, reliable public transport link between Westmead and Parramatta is essential to support this vital health and education super precinct as it continues to grow and lead best-practice medical and education related industries. I am advised that by 2036 the number of full-time staff working across Westmead will increase to more than 30,000 and the number of students will grow beyond 10,000.

The bill will give Sydney Metro the clear direction to continue to engage with NSW Health, NSW Education, Westmead Hospital, the University of Sydney, Western Sydney University, and the Children's Medical Research Institute to ensure the Government delivers a truly integrated outcome at Westmead. Sydney Metro will assist in achieving the benefits of integrated transport and land use planning through the ongoing cooperative and whole-of-government approach underpinning the Greater Sydney Commission Greater Sydney Region Plan and District Plans and the Future Transport Strategy 2056. Sydney Metro will be complemented by a range of other transport solutions and investments underway, as detailed in the Future Transport Strategy.

Sydney Metro will deliver on every outcome identified in the Future Transport Strategy, including customer focus, successful places, growing the economy, safety and performance, accessible services and sustainability. This bill will mean planning for the metro network and the local communities it will serve can be done in a truly coordinated way for the first time. Sydney Metro will be the driver in delivering truly livable communities as well as world-class transport services. With all of this in mind, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:19): The Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018 establishes Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation to deliver the metro project and develop land around metro stations, depots and stabling yards. The metro is an important public transport project that runs through my electorate. It will add much-needed heavy rail capacity at a time when investment in sustainable transport is essential. But I share the concerns of the Opposition that the changes to Sydney Metro are about privatising metro planning. Like its push to quickly sell the Sydney Motorway Corporation to privatise WestConnex, the Government is making decisions so that it maximises private profit regardless of the health, environmental, neighbourhood and financial impacts on affected communities. Privatising Sydney Metro could see private companies profiting from metro transport decisions.

Of great concern are changes in the bill which will allow Sydney Metro to become a developer. While I acknowledge that building infrastructure will involve a change of land use and new developments, the past example of metro-associated development in my electorate prioritised private profit over good planning outcomes. Macquarie Bank was granted approval to build two massive towers above Martin Place station after it lodged an unsolicited proposal with the Government. Despite the metro station being a major public infrastructure project and being declared State significant, the Government failed to undertake a public tender process to ensure the best community benefits were achieved.

Appallingly, the two towers will exceed the floor space ratio requirements set out in the local environment plan by 49 per cent. There will be more shadowing in the public domain including the areas adjacent to the MLC Centre where large numbers of people congregate. Parts of Martin Place will be so windy that they will no longer be comfortable to sit in. New shadows will also be cast on Hyde Park. The obvious benefactor of the development is Macquarie Bank, which will occupy most of the floor space of the two towers and lease out the rest.

The City of Sydney and the Royal Institute of Architects opposed the development, as did I. One of the buildings will be on land that Transport for NSW acquired through compulsory acquisition, which included a State heritage listed 1930s apartment building at 7 Elizabeth Street which also provided rare inner city low-cost housing. The building next door is owned by Macquarie Bank and is used for bicycle parking and lockers but it was not acquired. The community has no confidence in the process that was undertaken. There is significant suspicion that Macquarie Bank was informed that the buildings would be seized and knocked down before owners and occupiers were told.

Indeed, some constituents believe that Macquarie Bank was involved in decisions to determine what land would be acquired. After compulsory acquisitions were made public, Macquarie Bank's unsolicited above-station development proposal progressed rapidly, which suggests that the plans had long been established, but it is not clear when they were first presented to government. I have even heard reports that one employee of Macquarie Bank and their partner each purchased a property at 7 Elizabeth Street one year before the compulsory acquisition was made public and gained a significant profit from the final sale, which raises concerns of potential insider trading. I raised this concern at the time with the Government.

The process did not result in the best outcome for the site and left many feeling cheated. We know that development will occur above the Pitt Street metro station and around other metro infrastructure outside my electorate. More land is likely to be acquired amid a Supreme Court ruling, which was handed down yesterday, that found that the State Government did not lawfully acquire land in Rozelle for WestConnex. The Pitt Street station is close to Hyde Park and residential towers, and is within the thriving commercial and retail central business district. What will happen to this sensitive inner city environment? Given the example of Macquarie Bank, there are likely to be massive high-rise developments around stations and metro infrastructure which will have no transparency, accountability, sustainability, design excellence or adherence to good planning principles, particularly if Sydney Metro is privatised.

The bill gives Sydney Metro an objective to maximise the net worth of the State's investment in the metro, which essentially means maximising the value of land. Sydney Metro will essentially operate as a developer, making its decisions purely to get the most out of metro land at the expense of community outcomes—much the same as UrbanGrowth. Community concern about State Government development decisions benefiting special interests such as WestConnex, Packer's casino at Barangaroo and the knockdown of Allianz Stadium is rising, but the Government seems to have an ideological view on giving private developers carte blanche to land and services. I am concerned about deals, promises and guarantees that the Government will make in sales contracts for Sydney Metro that will result in poor transport and development outcomes maximising the profits of potential buyers and therefore increasing the purchase price of Sydney Metro. Much is at risk. I oppose the bill.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (11:24): I am pleased to support the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. I note that the bill amends the Transport Administration Act 1988 to create Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation within the transport cluster. Establishing Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation overseen by an expert decision-making board is a demonstration of the Government's commitment to delivering a world-class metro system that will meet the needs of the community now and in the future. Sydney Metro will remain fully integrated within the transport cluster and will become an operating agency similar to Sydney Trains and Roads and Maritime Services. Those opposite may say that this bill is about privatising the rail network, but that is not true.

The community can rest assured that taxpayers will remain the owners of Sydney Metro. While it will be able to acquire, build and dispose of metro assets, it will not be able to dispose of the metro system itself. Sydney Metro will also be subject to the requirements for closure and disposal of railway lines under section 99A

of the Transport Administration Act 1988. Sydney Metro will be accountable for metro projects, services and assets through all stages of project development, delivery, operations and urban revitalisation. This will drive continuous improvement and efficient service operations and deliver customer-focused services that meet the needs of the community for generations to come.

Government will retain responsibility not only for continuing to build and expand the Sydney Metro systems but also for controlling the way in which services are delivered on the network. As the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure has noted, Sydney Metro and its contractors will be subject to the Rail Safety National Law. This will ensure that passenger safety remains the number one priority. Fares for the Sydney Metro will continue to be set and controlled by the Government in the same way as the rest of Sydney's public transport fares. Importantly, the Opal card ticketing system will also apply to Sydney Metro, fully integrating it within the existing transport network. It will form an integral and central part of our overall transport network with seamless links to other transport modes including trains, buses, ferries and other active transport modes. Sydney Metro will transform people's experience of the transport network in Sydney.

For too many years under the Labor Government transport and infrastructure was not seen as a priority, particularly in south-west Sydney. I am proud to be part of a government that recognises that this is a priority and is continuing to deliver on these types of initiatives. The Sydney Metro is an important and vital piece of transport infrastructure that will benefit customers moving thousands of people every hour during peak periods between the north-west and south-west of Sydney. This new transport system will allow for seamless interchanges with Sydney Trains, New South Wales trains, buses and light rail and will be an independent and dedicated line, which means it will not be subject to network delays.

I know the residents in my electorate are thrilled about the prospect of the Sydney Metro one day being extended between Bankstown and Liverpool, especially those who utilise Holsworthy station. This Government recently built 462 additional car parking spaces at Holsworthy station, which is more than the 100 that were originally announced because we knew that the extra spaces were needed and we were able to deliver them. It has assisted with the parking issues. This station is so popular that the car spaces are already being utilised. Therefore, if the metro is extended to Liverpool, residents using this station would be excited to see the potential decrease in parking pressure and also would be excited about having a choice of stations from which they can commute to the city.

I stress again that the comprehensive governance and accountability arrangements set out in the bill will ensure that the Sydney Metro remains under the ownership and control of government while benefiting from board expertise and oversight. Sydney Metro will revolutionise the way Sydneysiders get around our global city. Metro means a new generation of world-class, fast, safe and reliable trains that easily connect customers to where they want to go. The bill is about moving one step closer to ensuring that Sydney realises a world-class metro network for generations to come. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (11:29): The Opposition opposes the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018 because it leaves a lot of unanswered questions about the administration of transport in New South Wales. My colleagues and the member for Sydney mentioned the important issue of its potential privatisation. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure outlined in his second reading speech some provisions in the bill that, if Government members looked at more closely, they would hesitate to allow go through their caucus and into this Parliament.

Mr Damien Tudehope: We don't have caucus; we have a party room.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Yes, you always cross the floor. You are the only bloke who has done it in 10 years. It is quite a well-worn path.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! The member for Kogarah will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister stated:

The bill further contains provisions to assist Sydney Metro with its place-making functions. Sydney Metro will be authorised to carry out, finance, manage and otherwise participate in residential, retail, commercial, industrial, mixed-use development ... This will ensure the Sydney metro system is fully integrated into, and forms part of, local communities ...

That is an Orwellian way of saying that Sydney Metro will dump high-rise developments in communities. Even more extreme are the Minister's further comments:

As with all major infrastructure projects, compulsory acquisition remains a necessary part of development. Appropriately, Sydney Metro will have the same compulsory acquisition powers as Transport for NSW ...

I assume that Government members prize their ability to march into a Minister's office and demand changes to policy, legislation or the actions and activities of government. It is a prized and deeply held benefit of being a Government backbencher. But they will be giving away that right to a public board that is legally independent of the Minister. In other words, the Minister cannot direct the board to carry out or not carry out certain activities. A huge benefit of being a Government backbencher is that they can say to their community that they will stand up and fight against a new development and compulsory acquisition. But in the future the board will make that determination because the Minister is giving an independent board the power of eminent domain—that is, the power to grab private land on behalf of the Sydney Metro corporation.

Mr Damien Tudehope: They are not giving it away.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: A backbencher's ability to do anything about it will be gone.

Mr Damien Tudehope: Where are the planning controls?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Epping mentions planning controls. State Rail—and I assume Sydney Metro—takes unsolicited bids that are well in excess of planning controls all the time. The member for Epping should not rest on his laurels because his Government regularly jumps in front of planning controls. The Opposition is concerned that the power of eminent domain is being given to an independent board, and the power of this body to pursue what I assume will be aggressive development throughout the Sydney Basin will negate the ability of Government backbenchers to speak to a Minister and say that a project is wrong for his or her community. If I were a Government backbencher I would not give away that power. We do not know who will be the transport Minister in years to come or who will serve on the independent board. That is a key part of the bill that the Minister must explore in his reply to the debate.

I have always been suspicious of the Transport Asset Holding Entity, which was established in a Government bill to deal with an issue in the 2015-16 budget. The Transport Asset Holding Entity corporatised part of the rail network to effectively take transport spending off the books. It meant that rather than transport spending being recorded as a liability in the budget it was newly termed an "equity injection", which, for all intents and purposes, was a spend by the Government on transport services. The Government took billions of dollars off the budget and put it into its own corporation, which had a material effect on the budget result. According to the forward estimates in the 2015-16 State budget, the Government's bottom line was \$700 million in the 2015-16 budget, \$700 million in the 2016-17 budget and \$800 million in the 2017-18 budget.

But by putting transport spending off the books and into the Transport Asset Holding Entity, those sums increased to \$2.5 billion, \$3.1 billion and \$2.5 billion. I suspect that this is another attempt to push transport spending off the New South Wales recurrent budget and into its own entity in order to positively affect the budget result. But we know we cannot print money and that ultimately this spend will affect transport services and service spending in health and in all other areas, even though it has been pushed into its own corporation.

Mr Damien Tudehope: Is it privatisation or transport budget requirements? Which one is it?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Let us have it all; I will throw as much at this as I can. To answer the member's question, there are many things wrong with this bill. The Government has set up a corporation. It is taking the Sydney Metro spend off the recurrent budget and putting it into its own corporation, which will have a positive effect on the budget result. Ultimately, it is cynical behaviour similar to what the Government did with the Transport Asset Holding Entity, which increased the budget position on budget day by \$1.5 billion. Even though this had a huge material impact on the New South Wales budgets in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, it has never been mentioned again in any budget paper.

It increased the budget position by \$1.5 billion, but I have never heard or read about the Transport Asset Holding Equity in any budget paper since then—even though it is a big part of why the Government has had large surpluses on its books. The Opposition is concerned that the real budget surpluses should have included the transport spend but they did not. The Opposition is also deeply concerned about newspaper stories relating to the purported privatisation of the Illawarra line. But we will keep that in our back pocket until we get closer to the election. I do not want to talk too much about that now; it can just sit in the background.

Mr Mark Coure: I am ready for that one.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Indeed. I have heard stories about how the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] was concerned about the board arrangements for the Transport Asset Holding Entity because corporations law requires an independent board to determine the strategies and business cases for future spending. That is normally in the domain of the transport Minister. It is incredibly important for a transport Minister to determine where money will be spent—to take a cynical view, it may be spent in marginal seats or it may be spent to realise the Minister's broader vision for transport in New South Wales. In any event, my understanding is that the

Government pursued the Transport Asset Holding Entity and proposed to implement an independent board but it wanted to maintain control over that board, which put the Government in breach of the Corporations Act.

My understanding is that the Australian Bureau of Statistics is responsible for authorising whether the Government is ultimately able to book its surplus increase in the budget. In other words, if the Government does not obtain support from the national authority to allow a corporatisation—because the ABS does not believe it is a ridgy-didge corporation—it cannot book the \$1.5 billion in its surplus. Outside bodies were concerned that the Transport Asset Holding Entity did not have an independent board. I do not know how the Minister has been able to get around that problem, but it raises big issues—and not just for Government backbenchers, who are giving far too much authority and power to an independent board. Ultimately—and I may be being cynical—I suspect that this is just another attempt to put—

Mr Damien Tudehope: What about NBN Co?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I have 23 seconds remaining of my contribution and I cannot talk about NBN. I suspect that this legislation is a cynical attempt to take the spending on transport off the budget bottom line and put it into a transport corporation, thereby positively affecting the underlying budget surplus—if it is in surplus—when the budget is handed down in a couple of weeks.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:39): I am very pleased to speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. I note that the bill amends the Transport Administration Act 1988 to create Sydney Metro as a statutory corporation with responsibility for not only delivering a world-class metro system for Sydney but also revitalising communities in the locality that the Sydney Metro will serve. Members on this side of the House want Sydney to remain one of the most livable cities in the world. Livability is about residents having easy access to their workplace, schools, shopping, and medical and other support services, along with recreational, social and cultural activities. Fast, reliable and safe modes of public transport unlock access to these essential parts of our lives and make Sydney a great place to live—and the envy of the world.

As the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure noted when introducing the bill, Sydney Metro is the key to this Government's vision for Sydney's future. Since 2015 the Greater Sydney Commission has been working hard to develop a vision for Sydney made up of three 30-minute cities. This position, as set out in the Greater Sydney Region Plan, will ensure that we meet the challenges of Sydney's growing population, which is expected to increase to more than seven million people by 2046. The 30-minute city vision needs to be underpinned by a world-class transport system to ensure that people can get to the places they need to be, when they need to be there.

Mr Stephen Kamper: You've got to do that.

Mr MARK COURE: We are getting to it, mate. The Sydney Metro is an essential component in achieving this goal, complemented by the other transport initiatives set out in the recently released Future Transport Strategy 2056. By helping to create attractive, vibrant and livable local communities around metro stations, Sydney Metro will ensure that the \$20 billion investment this Government has made in the Sydney Metro system to date results in the maximum social, economic and environmental benefits for all Sydneysiders for generations to come. I note that the benefits of the Government's approach to integrated transport and land use planning were recognised in the recently published Deloitte Access Economics report in its Shaping Future Cities series, "ImagineSydney: Live". Members on this side of the House want to ensure that Sydney remains one of the most livable cities in the world. As I said, livability is about easy access to workplaces, schools and homes as well as to medical and many other support services. That is what this bill is about.

People are understandably interested in what future growth will mean for Sydney. They want to make sure that living standards are maintained, and that their children have the same opportunities that they have enjoyed. This requires us to take a different approach to planning for growth and for us to have a better understanding of what makes our city truly livable. The challenges of managing a growing population across Sydney and a growing economy must be met by proper and truly integrated planning and investment in our city's future. By taking an integrated approach that responds to the specific needs of each local area, we can create truly vibrant and sustainable communities that contribute to people's long-term health and wellbeing.

It is possible for urban density to be done well—in fact, urban density must be done well if we are to create a livable future for Sydney. I am aware that the Committee for Sydney and UrbanGrowth NSW have been doing great work in this area, looking at best-practice examples to inform future planning. From this work, we can see how early and genuine engagement with communities, along with the many wonderful designs and integrated transport services, can deliver more job opportunities in and around town centres, improved amenities and access to schools and other educational facilities.

Mr Stephen Kamper: You haven't answered the question.

Mr MARK COURE: You have not been listening. Integrated transport services will also deliver other essential services as well as recreational and open spaces within walking distance of homes, which are vital. It is possible to plan for growth in ways that will benefit the whole community and improve the livability of our city as a whole. This is the approach that Sydney Metro is taking, and will continue to take, in its place-making role. We do not need to look far in our region to see global cities that have not planned well for growth, cities that are overcrowded and congested and where productivity has stalled. We are not going to let that happen in Sydney, and that is why the Minister has brought forward this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Visitors

VISITORS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the Speaker's gallery the High Commissioner of India in Australia, Dr A.M. Gondane, and the Consul General of the Consulate General of India, Sydney, Mr B. Vanlalvawna. It is great to see these staunch supporters of our community in Parliament today.

Bills

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (SYDNEY METRO) BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:45): I felt compelled to contribute to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. As other Labor contributors to this debate have said, we will not support the bill for a number of reasons. This Government has a credibility problem. The main issue with credibility is that it takes a long time to build, but it can be lost very quickly.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I note the interjection of the Minister for Health; it is interesting that I am talking about the Government, but those opposite are talking about Labor. Mr Assistant Speaker, I ask you to call Government members to order—remember the walking automatic teller machines. As I said, this Government has no credibility. Instead, it sells a really good picture, and we have just heard—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! There have been a fair number of interjections from Opposition members.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I have not heard any, Mr Assistant Speaker. Credibility, as we know, is important, and this Government has none. Instead, those opposite issue glossy brochures. The previous contribution to this debate by the member for Oatley and Parliamentary Secretary for Transport was straight from level 8. The speech was written for the member and he delivered it without passion. It contained all the feel-good lines that people want to hear: "We're going to build social infrastructure and it's going to be great." I cannot travel from my electorate to that of the member for Oatley in 30 minutes. When those opposite do not like what they hear, they interject because they do not want to hear the truth. They cannot handle the truth.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: I have read the objects of the bill and I am having great difficulty understanding what the member for Lakemba is addressing in his contribution to the debate. Mr Assistant Speaker, I ask you to bring the member back to the leave of the bill.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba will draw his remarks back to the substance of the bill before the House. I remind members of Standing Order 52. Members with the call have the right to be heard in silence.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Mr Assistant Speaker, I thank you for your impartiality. In their introductory comments about the bill, those opposite told us that it will make the transport system much better. The bill proposes setting up a statutory body for the Sydney Metro. Experience tells us about the other statutory bodies that this Government has set up, but we do not want to talk about WestConnex and so forth. However, establishing statutory bodies brings up a lot of issues. The biggest problem, as has been referred to by other speakers in this debate, is that it is possible to hide information. So Opposition members will make freedom of information requests asking for specific information, but those requests will be denied. It is not only Opposition members who will be denied access to information; the general public have a right to know where money is being spent and what is being planned. However, none of that information has been made available by this Government, which is a major concern.

We have been told that there is no possibility of privatisation. I am sorry, but we do not believe this statement. Only last week we heard talk about privatisation; privatisations are happening all the time. A good example is the great Department of Education Building on Bridge Street in the heart of the city. It was sold to a private entity for \$35 million, and the staff held a farewell party. This Government is obsessed with selling everything; it has no desire to actually run things. I do not know why the Government has no faith in the public system. If there is an issue with the way that public services are delivered, surely the Government will try to improve those services. It will ensure that they delivered in the best way possible—whether they are health, education or transport services. You do not simply say, "It's no good so we are going to sell it" or "It's no good so we are going to get somebody else to do it." Government must have faith in the workers; it must have faith in the community and in people's ability to make things happen.

If there are efficiency issues then you resolve them; you do not simply dispose of the entity. You work on those efficiency issues. Everyone in this Chamber knows that at the end of the day the Government must accept responsibility for service delivery so that when something goes wrong someone is accountable. A business or private entity can simply walk away. Where is the responsibility? Where is the social service provision that we keep hearing about? That is my concern, which is echoed by a number of people. We hear about wonderful things such as customer-focused, streamlined services, improved services and nice environments. They are good words and phrases. Why can we not do that with our public services? Why can we not make Transport for NSW like that? Why does the Government have to build a metro and then get someone else to run it?

It is pretty clear that this is not about public transport. This is about development; it is about making sure that as many people as possible are crammed into one particular area. When the developers run the State—and that is happening now—the people lose out. Services are removed and the people end up suffering. The member for Oatley talked about improved services and mentioned schools. I will certainly fight as hard as I can for our schools—just as I know the Minister for Health, who is at the table, always fights for our hospitals and does his best. They are essential community services. However, when the Sydenham to Bankstown part of the metro was planned and the brochures were released there was no mention of one school or one hospital upgrade. The park is a linear park—in other words, kids cannot kick a football in them. They cannot play a game of football there unless they kick in a straight line.

Social services are not shopping centres, shopping precincts or shops under buildings. Social services are things like childcare centres, community centres, schools, hospitals and all those things that make up the fabric of our society—a place where people belong. Otherwise, people end up going home, closing the door and not interacting socially. We do not want a society where everybody locks themselves in. We want to grow communities where people feel they belong and to which they can make a genuine contribution. I am all for ensuring that we do things, but let us do them right. That is not happening at the moment. It goes back to my point about credibility. When you say that you are going to do something, get it done and get it done properly.

As we heard in debate, the bill allows for potential compulsory acquisitions. Compulsory acquisitions are not always the solution. Yesterday in this Chamber we heard about the issues that the Government is dealing with in terms of compulsory acquisitions along the Castlereagh Corridor. We saw what happened with WestConnex—I refer, for example, to yesterday's Supreme Court judgement. People were removed from their homes in suburbs such as Haberfield and St Peters—areas where development is taking place. If people have to move then treat them fairly. I have faith in all governments; I would rather trust a government than a private entity to do the right thing. I trust governments—of whatever political persuasion—to watch out for the people.

They are my concerns. There is the potential for a privatisation model. It might not happen but, in light of the Government's track record and its credibility problem, it probably will. I think most punters will agree that there is a strong potential for it to happen. A private entity could potentially run the buses. There is a privatisation issue with bus services in region 5, which covers part of my electorate—it extends into Summer Hill and a bit of Newtown. Why? The buses are not running so well. So fix the problem; start looking for other solutions. The answer is not simply to sell or get rid of things, claiming that somebody else can do it better. Government has a responsibility to do it better and to provide the infrastructure required to make that happen. You do not simply kick the can down the road and wait for somebody else to deal with it.

I return to my biggest concern that this is a ruse; it is about development and nothing else. I have said on many occasions that density done well is not a problem. But density done well involves proper consultation. It is not about making an announcement, consulting afterwards and then doing a backflip because people do not like it. Consultation should happen at the start of the process; plans must tick all the boxes and meet all social requirements. Let us look at what is happening now and learn from it. That is most important. If we are genuine about revolutionising the way that people move around Sydney, let us also be genuine about making Sydney the best place to live. At the moment it is a very difficult place to live. With all the construction that is taking place, people cannot get from point A to point B.

Plans will not work unless they interact with each other. People are over the claim that it is about improving livability. It is about plonking more people into different places and establishing a statutory body that cannot be questioned or held to account—it simply does what it wants. The people of this State deserve better; they need to know what is going on. When governments start hiding behind statutory bodies, they are denying responsibility. I think the Government intends to do that in this instance because it does not want to be held accountable. It comes back to the issue of credibility, and this Government has none.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (11:55): I address the hypocrisy that is drifting across from the other side of the House. Opposition members have outlined the problems that they perceive with the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. Starting in 1996, the Labor Party promised to deliver the metro time after time but it never did. The member for Lakemba talked about the obligation to deliver for communities, and I agree with him. The fact is that Labor allowed the expansion of Sydney through the suburbs of Castle Hill, Glenhaven and Rouse Hill without providing even a plan for public transport, let alone delivering it.

For 30 years the families of north-west Sydney have been deprived of any planning structure to deliver amenity for them. Each day they are consigned to a commute of more than an hour. Those opposite talk about the amenity for families and communities that they would deliver. But Labor put people in cars for an hour a day to get to and from work. This Government has solved that problem because we are delivering this metro, which will provide a service every four minutes for the people of north-west Sydney. When we talk about ensuring that governments deliver amenity for the communities of Sydney—

Mr Jihad Dib: Are there seats on the metro? Are they standing for an hour?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: On a train service that runs every four minutes, every person who wants a seat should get a seat. Because a service will run every four minutes if there is not a seat on one train, people who need a seat can wait for the next one. We deliver amenity—

Mr David Harris: Is that a commitment?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: We deliver train stations. Let me ask those opposite about hypocrisy. The shadow Minister for transport said that there would be a problem if Tony Shepherd were appointed to one of the boards. Is there a problem with Tony Shepherd being appointed to a board?

Mr David Harris: Are you announcing something?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: She was the one who suggested it. How is that different from all the Labor cronies and union hacks who have been appointed to boards for generations by the lot opposite? Consider the energy corporations that Labor set up with the purpose of appointing their mates to boards, time after time, and ensuring better opportunities for their union buddies. It reeks of hypocrisy for those opposite to complain that this Government is setting up a corporation for the efficient running of the Sydney Metro. We on this side of the House have spent generations watching those opposite establish corporations for the appointment of their mates time and again. A real example of that was what Kristina Keneally tried to do with the appointment of some union buddies to Country Energy before she was booted out of this place. Those opposite should not say this bill is all about privatisation. They had form in office—namely, they only set up corporations to appoint their mates to them.

The Sydney Metro Northwest, which will deliver for the people of my electorate the public transport service they have been deprived of for the best part of 30 years, is necessary for the efficient running of this State. One would have thought those opposite would support the opportunity to contract with an entity that has as its object the efficient running of a metro system. Customers will not have to ring RailCorp; they will have an entity responsible for the delivery of those services. Those opposite are attempting to denigrate this bill. They are trying to run a scare campaign by using terms such as the "elephant in the room" and "fattening the pig". This bill is about a corporation being responsible to the Parliament for running a railway system. They do not accept it is proposed that the metro will run not only from Rouse Hill to Chatswood but also from Chatswood to the city, from the city to Bankstown, from Bankstown to—

Mr Clayton Barr: You have to build a tunnel.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Haven't you looked? We are building a tunnel, mate.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: An extra line into the city under the harbour is part of the Government's plan.

Mr Clayton Barr: Geologists will not approve it.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Will you deliver it?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Cessnock of Standing Order 52.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Wyong. Is that an acknowledgement that you will not build the metro?

Mr David Harris: No. I said we might be promised a tunnel.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Is that an acknowledgement that you will not complete the metro? Effectively what you are proposing—

Mr David Harris: You are in government.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Effectively what you are proposing is to betray the people of Sydney. I note that the Leader of the Opposition is refusing to commit to the city to Bankstown line—

Mr Greg Warren: Correct.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Correct? In fact, what he is saying is that the Sydney metro will not be delivered for the people of Bankstown—

Mr Greg Warren: That is right. We are going to tear up your failures and get it done right.

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

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: This Government has delivered more hospitals, more schools and more jobs in this State. In conclusion, I will talk about jobs.

Mr Jihad Dib: Tell us about the schools and the hospitals again.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I am happy to talk about schools and hospitals because this Government has delivered more schools and more hospitals for the people of New South Wales—

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: You asked me to.

Mr Jihad Dib: I know. I just want to clarify that point.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: There is an inadvertent—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Does the member wish to refer to a particular standing order?

Mr Jihad Dib: I do.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: What is the standing order?

Mr Jihad Dib: It is inadvertently misleading the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: This Government has done more to deliver infrastructure for the people of this State than any previous government by a factor of two. The member for Kogarah referred to the Transport Asset Holding Entity. I was surprised by that. I have had no eyes on that entity, but I probably should have, given the issues he raised. Those opposite should talk to their strategy committee. If they say this is a budget strategy to reduce the bottom line in government expenditure then I invite them to ask the Treasurer that question.

Mr Chris Minns: Surely we can deal with it without the speech. Can't you deal with it?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Minister Perrottet has been the Treasurer in this Parliament for the last 12 or 18 months—

Mr Clayton Barr: Fifteen months.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: —and you guys have not asked him one question.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Yes, we have.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: No, you have not.

Mr Stephen Kamper: We spoke about it in debate on the bill.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Those opposite have not asked him one question and I invite them to do so. I support the bill.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. I remind all members of Standing Order 52. If members continue to interject they will be placed on a call to order, or removed from the Chamber.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (12:06): I oppose the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. The member for Epping said that he knew nothing about the Transport Asset Holding Entity, and that surprised me. Shortly after the departure of former Premier Baird the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entitles) Bill 2017 was debated. In fact, that might have spooked him—perhaps it was the final straw that made him take off. I clearly remember Minister Constance getting up on four or five occasions in that debate to stop my contribution because he could not handle the truth. In this debate the member for Kogarah was clear—namely, the Transport Asset Holding Entity was set up to inflate the budget bottom line by about \$5 billion over the four years.

Today I am trying to ascertain a case where the Government can clearly prosecute the requirement for a separate statutory corporation. I do not understand why that is necessary. Perhaps the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is up to his old trick of sending the member for Oatley into this place to use his buzz words such as sustainability, livability, best practice, and not tell us why the Government is calling for a separate entity to run the Sydney Metro. Why not run it within the Government? Obviously a covert plan is unfolding, and clearly part of that plan is to inflate future bottom lines.

When the Government says that \$800 million in recurring costs has to be borne by that company, it is calling it an investment rather than a cost, and it does not come off the bottom line. The Government will continue to do that for as long as it can. That is one of the main reasons for having a separate entity. There is also the removal of transparency and the ability to deal with property without having to deal with the community such as it would if it were in government hands. Government members should understand what the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is up to. It is outrageous for the member for Epping to say that he has never heard about the Transport Asset Holding Entity. All Government members should be briefed on that and understand that they are inflating the budget bottom line. But no. The member for Oatley has just taken off because he does not want to face the music. He does not want to hear it. He just wants to use buzzwords and run away. Where is the Minister? The Minister is not here to face the music either. He has been through this before. When I spoke on legislation to introduce the Transport Asset Holding Entity I said that that type of conduct in the corporate world in America put directors in jail for capitalising costs. Those opposite must be held to account for this. If they want to proceed with this, they should not capitalise the cost. Keep the budget where it should be with the real numbers.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (12:10): I support the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. I commend a few people for the Sydney Metro itself. First, I commend the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure for bringing in this amendment bill. I also commend the previous Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian—now the Premier of New South Wales—for having the tenacity and resilience to stand up against great opposition to our Government delivering this project from 2011.

I commend former Premier Barry O'Farrell, who, prior to my entering this Chamber in 2007, asked me at my first party room meeting to state one of the reasons I had come to Parliament. I said that it was primarily to deliver infrastructure on behalf of one of the fastest-growing areas in Australia, which is my electorate of Castle Hill in the north-west sector, and, importantly, to ensure that that infrastructure delivery included a rail line. As an opposition, I felt that we needed to work diligently over the next four years to determine how we would fund and deliver such a project. I am very proud to say that neither Barry O'Farrell nor I were deterred from the promise I made in 2011 and reported on the front page of the *Rouse Hill Times*: in government we would deliver this project. I commend and thank all of those people because Sydney Metro is Australia's biggest public transport project. In fact, it is the biggest urban rail infrastructure investment in the nation's history.

I acknowledge the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure at the table. Primarily the Sydney Metro has exposed one of the greatest lies ever perpetrated by the Labor Party in this country. When the Labor Party was in Government it continually promised to build the Metro Northwest to Rouse Hill, where the final stages of the project are underway. Those opposite promised it as far back as 1995 and then again in 1999, 2003 and 2007. Ironically, the Labor Party promised it just before an election and then, again ironically, it would disappear mysteriously when the Labor Party was elected to government, leaving the many hundreds of thousands of people moving out to the north-west sector with a complete lack of suitable public transport. It was once suggested that the north-west sector would have a population the size of Canberra. Each and every day up to 30,000 people have to catch buses from this area to the city, North Sydney and the Macquarie Centre.

This Government has introduced many thousands of new bus services to provide for the many commuters. However, the Government will significantly improve the public transport commute for those people with the delivery of the Sydney Metro, and particularly the Metro Northwest, when it opens next year. The significant \$20 billion of investment will see services in Sydney's north-west start in 2019, and services extending under Sydney Harbour and through the central business district [CBD] to Bankstown in 2024. By 2024 the Sydney Metro system will have a combined 31 metro stations and 66 kilometres of new metro rail. The New South Wales Government is also working on the Sydney Metro West project—a new underground metro railway connecting the CBDs of Parramatta and Sydney to communities along the way.

Contrast that with the failed project announced by the previous Labor Government for what was known as the Rozelle Metro. This was not only another broken promise, another failed rail project, but a commitment of \$500 million for that rail project, for which we received not even one railway sleeper. This was consistent with the broken promises of the Labor Party to deliver an electronic tag before the Sydney Olympics in 2000. As we know, it failed to deliver that right up to 2011, when it was in debt to the tune of \$160 million for the failed T-Card project. As the Premier correctly stated yesterday, we delivered the Opal card within approximately 18 months of coming to Government. Even after 16 years, the failed Labor Government could not deliver a single rail ticket—let alone an electronic ticketing system.

The Sydney Metro is Australia's first fully automated railway with Australian-first technology such as platform screen doors, which keep people, objects and prams away from the edge, allowing trains to get in and out of stations much faster. When Sydney Metro services start, there will be a train every four minutes in peak, which is a total of 15 trains an hour. Sydney Metro will have the ultimate capacity of a train every two minutes in each direction under the Sydney CBD. The metro will be able to move more people across the harbour in the busiest hour of the peak than the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Harbour Tunnel combined. It is expected that by 2036 more than 160 million passengers will use the Sydney Metro every year.

As the Minister for Disability Services, I am extremely pleased to see the key focus on disability access at metro stations. A delegation of French people who met with me a month ago—I note the visit of French President Macron today—noted that access for people with disabilities in Sydney was exceptional when compared to France. They said that everywhere they moved they could see accessibility lifts, et cetera, for people in wheelchairs, aged people and all people who need special access provisions. I was chuffed by that and note, importantly, that that will continue to be improved with the implementation of Sydney Metro.

Customers are at the centre of Sydney Metro's stations, which are being designed to be an easy part of daily journeys. As a brand new railway system, Sydney Metro is being designed to be fully accessible to enable customers to access the system as independently as possible, giving equal opportunity to every person across this great State. One of the key benefits of the new system is that it will be much more accessible for those who are less mobile. The modern stations will be fully accessible for people with a disability, prams and children, including level access between platforms and trains. The T3 Bankstown Line is being upgraded to metro along the 13½ kilometres between Sydenham and Bankstown—something that the Labor Party has publicly announced it will scrap if it were ever re-elected to Government—with all stations to be fully accessible with lifts and level access between platforms and trains.

Sydney Metro City & Southwest will be fully segregated from the existing Sydney Trains railway between Sydenham and Bankstown. The T3 Line west beyond Bankstown will continue to be operated by Sydney Trains, serving stations between Liverpool, Lidcombe and Bankstown. The Bankstown Line is more than 120 years old. Improved access will be a key feature of all 11 upgraded stations, with new station concourse and station entrance locations allowing for easier access, including new stairs and new or relocated lifts to access the station and station platforms. Currently Dulwich Hill, Hurlstone Park, Canterbury, Wiley Park and Punchbowl stations do not have lifts, while at many stations customers have to step up into trains due to large gaps between the trains and the platforms, making travel in a wheelchair or with a pram difficult. This is something that was never addressed appropriately by the former Labor Government.

A key feature of Sydney's new metro train is the two multipurpose areas for prams, luggage and bicycles, as well as wheelchair spaces and separate priority seating for those with reduced mobility. In late 2015 almost 300 people officially reviewed a life-size model for the metro train located in Rouse Hill in the north-west area of Sydney, including mobility- and vision-impaired groups, elderly customers, school-age students, mothers with prams and emergency services personnel. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive: These groups were impressed with the accessibility of the new metro trains, their layout, and how easily wheelchair and priority seating could be found.

In addition to these improved features, station seating and way-finding signage will be upgraded, and security will be increased through closed-circuit television and enhanced lighting. Sydney Metro will be a game changer for this State. It is clear that the Berejiklian Government has a detailed vision and plan for the future.

A standalone Sydney Metro is a central element of our plan for Sydney's future. I commend our Government for its focus on transport and I certainly commend the Government for its focus on accessibility for people with disability. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:20): I reaffirm that the New South Wales Labor Opposition will oppose the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. There has been much talk today about whether the Sydney Metro will become a privatised entity. The Government's position yesterday, today and possibly tomorrow is that it has no plans to privatise it. But a few short years ago I was in this Chamber when the Government, under the then Minister for Local Government Don Page and the then Premier Barry O'Farrell, told the community at large, "We have no plans to force council amalgamations." I was in this Chamber when the then Premier Barry O'Farrell said, "We have no plans to privatise ports" and "We have no plans to privatise poles and wires." I was in this Chamber when, during the privatisation of the Botany and Port Kembla assets, then Treasurer Baird said, "We have no plan to privatise the port of Newcastle."

I was in this Chamber when various transport Ministers have said, "We have no plans to privatise public transport" before privatising public transport in the Hunter at large and now the buses in the south-west suburbs. So when I sit in this Chamber and I hear the Government talk about having no plans to privatise, it carries no weight because the reality is that tomorrow is a new day and there will be a new plan. That is why we on this side of the Chamber have been calling out the Government on its plan in this legislation. This legislation sets up quite perfectly and succinctly, as demonstrated by WestConnex, a plan for future privatisation. But not only that, there is an extra reach in this bill. I refer the House to all the functions of the Sydney Metro that can be found at new section 38B (3), which provides, *inter alia*:

Sydney Metro may:

- (b) operate other transport services, including bus services, whether or not in connection with its metro passenger services.
- (c) build, modify, hold, manage, maintain, finance and establish transport assets vested in or owned by it, or to be vested in or owned by it, and
- (d) acquire, build, modify, hold, manage, maintain, finance and establish metro assets vested in or owned by it, or to be vested in or owned by it, and
- (e) dispose of metro assets vested in or owned by it ...

The section then goes on to say:

Sydney Metro may:

- (a) acquire any land, and
- (b) develop, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any of its land ...

Those are all key indicators of what the broader plan is, which is for this new entity called Sydney Metro to be quite a powerful entity. It will have the ability to acquire land, to take out finance, to devise its own plans, to decide what it is going to keep and what it is going to dispose of, and to do so without any transparency or parliamentary examination and without the Minister having the ability to instruct the activities. It is an enormous leap of faith for any government of any persuasion in any era to hand over such complete and absolute power and authority to a single entity and, given the track record of this Government, the argument put by the New South Wales Labor Opposition is that this is about handing over this incredible power to what will soon become a private entity.

In the lead-up to the budget, the Treasurer has already indicated that the Government will be looking to privatise further assets, which will be necessary because of the problems the Government has with the exploding costs of providing the infrastructure that it has thus far promised. I refer to the tunnel that will allegedly be built, to which the Government has allegedly committed, that has allegedly been promised and put into future budgets and future funds. It is my understanding, having read the budgets, that there is no money in them for the tunnel; that the money for the tunnel has not been allocated and set aside out of either Rebuilding NSW or Restart NSW.

In addition, the geological reports that are coming back to the Government say that the surface of the harbour where they are seeking to put the tunnel infrastructure is not suitable and stable enough for the tunnel, which fundamentally means that there is a massive black hole in the plan worth perhaps five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 or more billion dollars—and that is the connection point between the North West rail line on one side of the harbour and the metro line on the southern side of the harbour. The problem is that ultimately if you cannot line up your dominoes, if you cannot connect the two services by a tunnel—and forget about political reasons; I am talking about geological reasons, the science of physics—if you cannot deliver that, you have two largely stranded assets that will not deliver as intended. The Government should sort that out.

If we go down the privatisation path, what is at stake? How did the Government fund the North West Metro? The cost of the North West Metro was originally put to the House as being somewhere in the vicinity of \$8 billion when the Government was first elected in 2011. Sometime later that cost increased to \$8.8 billion. In the years since then we have not really spoken about how much it is supposed to have cost. The reality is, though, that the way in which it was funded was through these efficiency dividends in the budget, which is, by any other means, a cut to a future budget or to a budget as we go forward. Each of the government departments was told that the Government knew it needed an increase in its budget of x per cent; that the Government was not going to give them all they need—it was going to shave 1.5 per cent off that every year for six years, which amounts to 9 per cent.

Then we had the recent announcement that that cut will be escalated to 2.5 per cent, which will amount to 15 per cent over the next three years. It appears that the Government is making a 15 per cent budget cut to fund the North West rail line, which means it is an incredibly valuable asset for everybody in the State. I note a number of regional members are sitting in the Chamber—the member for Cootamundra, the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Tamworth—and, of course, I represent Cessnock. In all of our areas we have seen these efficiency dividends lead to the doors of government offices closing and cutting the number of public servants in our areas, taking real money out of our economies and impacting massively on our now failing economies because those solid, good-paying genuine jobs have been ripped away from our regions to fund the North West rail line, which will, potentially, be privatised. It is an asset that belongs to all of us. Yet, with this Government, as with all the other public assets, it might be up for sale.

I turn briefly to the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE], which turned up in the 2015 budget papers. As the member for Kogarah and the member for Rockdale said, it was essentially an experiment in getting something off the books and it is an experiment that has largely failed. Last year the Treasurer introduced a transport amendment bill to adjust the structure of the transport asset holding entity in the hope that it would be more suitable and adequate to the accounting standards imposed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In August 2016 an important document was released by Treasury about the credit rating of our State-owned entities in their various forms. The last three lines on the last page state that:

Target Credit Rating: stand-alone credit rating of Baa2/BBB Moody's/Standard & Poor's)—

—will be the new targeted credit rating. That means that our public assets are no longer expected to operate as a triple-A credit rated private entity in the future; they are expected to operate as a triple-B credit-rated entity. *[Extension of time]*

In credit rating terms that means that all of our State-owned corporations have been given a target credit rating that is one step short of being a junk entity, which is highly speculative. This instruction has come from Treasury regarding all of our State-owned entities. It includes the TAHE and adjustments made to the TAHE, and it will include the Sydney Metro entity, if it is set up. I have two questions for the Minister. First, is he going to build and fund the tunnel that is supposed to join them? Secondly, is his instruction to any corporate structure that might be known as Sydney Metro going to operate at a triple-A credit rating or a triple-B credit rating? This is important because, if the entity stays in public hands, the rate of interest charged against any debt taken on by that entity will depend on the credit rating of the entity.

Back in 2016 Treasury made sure that the rate of interest charged on the debt held by all the different entities was at the maximum rate, and Joe and Jane Citizen—everyone in New South Wales—are paying the cost of that debt. The need to understand the impact of the TAHE, whether it becomes a State-owned entity or a privatised entity, amounts to two fundamental things: first, the standard and rating it will be maintained at, and second, whether it will be on or off the books of the budget. As Opposition members have already said, the creation of the TAHE allowed the Government to quietly slip more than \$5 billion off the books. It is accounting trickery that is now being questioned and investigated, even though the Treasurer has tried to strengthen the status of the TAHE, and any future government will have a real problem reconciling that figure. The Opposition has enormous concerns about the possibility of privatisation and the incredible powers being bestowed upon this new entity proposed under the bill. As Labor supports the people of New South Wales—not the private corporates, of which a shameful example is being played out in the banking royal commission—the Opposition will oppose every stage of the bill.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:33): On behalf of The Greens, I speak on the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018. The bill was introduced by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, a Liberal Minister who seems intent on outsourcing his entire portfolio and responsibilities to other Ministers or private corporations. Or perhaps Liberal Premier Berejiklian is keen to remove the Minister's responsibilities, even though it would be easier to change Ministers if she was not happy with the work he was doing, rather than bring legislation to the House to slowly privatise and outsource every element of the transport system.

In this Chamber there is the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, who is responsible for all the integrated transport systems, but there is also the Minister for WestConnex, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and various other Ministers involved in other aspects of the transport process. We now have the transport Minister outsourcing the actual delivery of transport to private companies to offload his responsibilities even further. The Greens believe we need a world-class public transport system but, when we look at the details around who is paying for what, it is interesting that the Sydney Metro bill is using public money not to create more jobs for public bus drivers, train drivers or metro drivers but instead to create more private chief executive officer [CEO] wages, noting that the Sydney Motorway Corporation CEO was paid more than \$1 million in salary. Public money is being used to pay more private company board directors to be able to oversee the Sydney Metro system. Goldman Sachs was paid \$16.5 million of public money to oversee the sale process of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. Not a single road or piece of infrastructure has been built, yet that company has been paid \$16.5 million to oversee the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

People should not be under the illusion that the Coalition is the best party to be in government because serious questions have already been asked about the way the Sydney Metro project is being delivered. I commend the Sydenham to Bankstown Alliance, which has worked hard to scrutinise the Government's work on the project. I refer to two areas that have been affected by the metro in my electorate of Newtown—namely, Erskineville and St Peters, whose residents and commuters are concerned about privatisation. The irony is that the new metro will pretty much run under an existing train line but those residents will not be able to access the new metro and potentially will see a loss of services on the train line as a result of the delivery of the new metro. Hundreds of residents are concerned about this. Through my office they urge the Minister to visit Erskineville and St Peters stations to see the congestion on those stations. Already too many people cram onto the trains at those stations in peak periods. The daily commute has significantly increased as a result of the amount of housing and development in the area. One resident said:

I cannot understand the logic in a new train system which does not fit the existing infrastructure! The state planning system is illogical and not inclusive for people! NSW govt hopeless!!

They suggested that if these folk had any vision they would build mass transit capacity rather than putting billions of dollars into and delivering WestConnex. We contacted the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure about the risks to cuts to services in Erskineville and St Peters and, while he said that the stations would stay open, he did not give a commitment that the number of services would not be cut. I urge the Minister in reply to reassure the residents who use Erskineville and St Peters stations with respect to their concerns about the risk of cuts to services on those lines. He might also inform them when an easy access lift will be installed so that people who need that facility can actually get down to the platform to catch a train. It is not enough for the Minister to say that other services will pick up those passengers, because when trains arrive at Erskineville and St Peters stations people are squashed in like sardines and it is unsafe for commuters to embark.

The Sydney Metro has raised concerns in other areas of the community. Residents of Lord Street and the south end of King Street have already been subjected to a number of issues around the delivery of WestConnex. In June 2017 we contacted the Minister, because this is how it now works. As transport Minister he has outsourced all responsibilities, so it was actually our office that set up the first consultation and briefing for residents affected by the Sydney Metro on Lord Street because they had all received letters but had not received any information or consultation about it. In June 2017 we contacted the Minister and said, "What is happening here? People are living next to a train line and having the substratum of their properties acquired so the Government can build a new metro line underneath." In February this year our office became aware that the Government had not done the paperwork correctly on the acquisition of the substratum land. This is serious, and it is having a real impact on people's lives.

The acquisition of a large number of properties in Lord Street, Newtown, last year had serious financial impacts on residents, and as of April this year the issue has still not been resolved. People might think that this is a matter of the Minister not handling this matter well, but the community I represent knows that the answer is not to privatise our transport system. This bill will create a Sydney Metro Board of three to seven directors who will be appointed by the Minister. There is no requirement for them to have expertise in transport. Our concern is that the board could be stacked with property developers. It is unclear how much the board members will be paid. However, it is clear that this bill is part of the Liberal-Nationals Government's agenda to privatise and sell off all of our public assets.

The bill will establish the Sydney Metro corporation as a corporation and a New South Wales Government agency under the Transport Administration Act. While this bill will allow the Sydney Metro to be owned by the New South Wales Government and be part of the Government's transport cluster, it will give much broader powers to Sydney Metro, especially in relation to land acquisitions and residential and commercial developments. The Sydney Metro bill will establish a private company to be able to run our so-called public metro

system but it will also provide for Sydney Metro to have broad land acquisition development powers—which is a serious concern given the number of compulsory acquisition bungles to date. In her contribution to this debate, Labor's shadow Minister for Transport made the point that, in setting up private corporations, there is a lack of public accountability and scrutiny in relation to the Government Information (Public Access) Act and a limited ability to see information. I recognise that the Liberal Party is like no other when it comes to a privatisation agenda, but I call on the Labor Opposition to make a commitment to bring our public transport system back into public hands.

The Greens are committed to the idea—a radical notion, some might say—that a public transport system should be something that is controlled and operated by the public in the public interest. Call it radical! Our concern is that the Sydney Metro may facilitate and carry out the orderly and efficient development of land in the locality of metro stations, depots, stabling yards and proposed metro stations, depots and training yards. Under the remit of transport infrastructure we are seeing the ability for a private corporation that is not subject to any accountability to acquire land and engage in and deliver property development. If anyone is going to benefit from the uplift that would occur as a result of building new transport infrastructure, it should be the people of New South Wales. Surely the people should get that benefit, not private developers, but yet again the Liberal-Nationals Government is seeking to provide a new corporation with a broad agenda that is in the private interest, not the public interest. We must keep public transport in public hands. The Greens oppose this bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:43): I make a contribution to the debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Sydney Metro) Bill 2018 from a Central Coast perspective, because there is great concern about what this project will do to services on the Central Coast. Some of those concerns have been documented in the media. The first concern that the community on the Central Coast has is that New South Wales already has two entities that operate trains: NSW Trains and Sydney Trains. It was plain from the time those entities were set up that NSW Trains is the poor cousin. In terms of maintenance and investment, NSW Trains loses out big time compared with Sydney Trains. Now the Government is proposing to set up a third entity to run railways in New South Wales called the Sydney Metro.

It is plain to the people of the Central Coast that we are in second place regarding railway needs for public transport, and the establishment of Sydney Metro will push us into third place—the bottom of the pile—in terms of investment. The cost of the Sydney Metro Northwest is \$8.3 billion and the cost of the Sydney Metro City and Southwest is estimated to be between \$11.5 billion and \$12.5 billion, and it will probably be more if one looks at what is happening with light rail. However, if \$1 billion were spent on the main northern line it would make a substantial difference. People on the Central Coast and further north—and I assume people using the Illawarra line and the Blue Mountains line—have asked: Is this huge expenditure going to deliver the extra benefits that are being promised?

People living in those areas will lose capacity. Planning documents obtained by the ABC suggest that Central Coast commuters may also face a shock in 2019 with the end of direct train services from Wyong and Gosford down the North Shore line. That has not been denied by the Government. It has accused us of scaremongering and it has accused the ABC of scaremongering, even though this information was in the Department of Transport's own documents. So, instead of peak-hour services via Chatswood to the city, it appears that Central Coast trains may be rerouted down the main northern line via Strathfield, with most services commencing from Gosford. People in my area will have to change trains to get onto those services. The retimetabling of peak-hour trains and slower stopping patterns will also occur on the northern line.

I note the Minister has just entered the Chamber. We are asking: What will the impacts be on Central Coast commuters with the introduction of the new metro? One would expect that the introduction of new rail lines would bring an improvement—more services—but it is clear that people on the Central Coast will get fewer. They pay the same taxes and they are spending more time on trains than most commuters, but they will get reduced services. The Government is setting this up and talking about the great things that are happening for other parts of Sydney, but I represent the community of the Central Coast and it is clear that this is not great news for us. Instead, it is a deterioration of our current services. I want to be able to tell those people in my electorate who are getting up at 5 a.m. to travel down to Sydney—and quite a few of them travel on the North Shore line—that at that time of the morning, particularly in winter, they will not be forced to change trains once, twice or three times just to get to the city. It is clearly unfair that, when so much money is being spent on other projects, the people of the Central Coast will lose out.

Another point is that, until the tunnel to connect the two metro systems is built, there will be no increased capacity on the North Shore line. This means there is a possibility that other services will be cut under a new timetable. The number of trains currently running will not fit in with the new Metro Northwest line, nor will it fit in with the two lines that currently cross the Harbour Bridge. Central Coast commuters are not silly. They see what is happening, they read what is in the media and, when they hear nothing from the Government, they have

to assume that after the election the Government will give them the bad news of a declining service. They also understand that at the moment there are more trains going past stations and there are more cancellations of their current services.

I have spoken in this place before about the fact that even commuters are standing up even before their trains arrive in Gosford. I showed pictures in the House in the last sitting week of an instance where a four-car service replaced an eight-car service where the one before it had been cancelled, and people were packed like cattle into a railcar. People are saying, "If the Government is spending this much money, how come we're not seeing the benefits? How come we're not seeing the improvements promised to other parts of the State?" It is hard for me to say that all this money is being spent and things will get better when it is clear from the documents obtained by the ABC that the Government lacks direction in refuting what has been suggested. Train drivers and people who work in the system have said it is inevitable that this will happen.

There is clearly no capacity to meet the needs of a growing Central Coast. My electorate is supposed to take 40,000 more residents. In my area there are houses being built with no word about the North Warnervale railway station or commuter car parking along the train line. People are moving into the houses and all we are hearing is, "Sorry, you're going to get fewer services, not more." If this Government is governing for the whole State and spending these amounts of money, it should ensure that the existing services are maintained and not cut back to deal with issues happening in other areas. It is a big concern in my area. We are concerned that, once another entity is created, there will be Sydney Trains, NSW Trains and Sydney Metro—and we will be the even poorer cousin.

My colleague from Cessnock has the same issue, with commuters from his electorate travelling further and for longer to Sydney than those from Wyong. They have seen their service stop. When so much money is spent, current services must be maintained while other areas are improved. It should not be the case that some areas are improved to the detriment of others. People are moving from Western Sydney to growth areas on the Central Coast for a better lifestyle but instead they are finding that things are getting worse rather than better. The Government talks about livability, but Central Coast people spend the most time travelling on public transport, which has a great impact on their lives. They are being duded for other parts of Sydney, and that is simply not fair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (12:53): In reply: I thank the members who have contributed to this debate. Some of them are from out of town and some are members who will be direct beneficiaries of the new metro network. I hate to burst the bubble of my dear friends in the Opposition. I hate to burst the bubble of my studious and learned friend from Strathfield, who seems to have made an error of judgement. She seems a little confused. The member for Strathfield, who earlier today made a number of choice remarks, made one mistake. She obviously does not have a particularly long memory.

The learned member for Strathfield became a Minister on 8 September 2008. She joined the Cabinet of the former Labor Government, admittedly in a junior portfolio, but she had that incredible opportunity to sit around the Cabinet table. What is interesting about that, and the reason I raise that date, is that on 2 December 2008 the then Labor Government, of which the member for Strathfield was a Cabinet Minister, introduced a piece of legislation called the Transport Administration Amendment (Metro Rail) Bill 2008. I want to spell out clearly that that Labor Party legislation was:

An Act to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 and other Acts to establish Sydney Metro and to facilitate the development, implementation and operation of metro railway systems in the State.

I thought I would line that up with the overview of the bill now before the House. It states:

The object of this bill is to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 ... to facilitate the development, implementation and operation of a metro in Sydney by constituting Sydney Metro as a corporation and to provide generally for the corporation's management and functions.

Uh-oh. Then I thought I would look at the provisions of Labor's bill in 2008 and see what it said. It is interesting. The 2008 bill introduced by the Labor Party is quite telling. It talks about the establishment of a board with a chief executive officer [CEO] and board members appointed by the Minister at the time. It speaks of the functions of the Sydney Metro entity—an entity that was a statutory corporation. Oh, dear. I decided to look and make sure that the member for Strathfield did not vote against Labor's bill, introduced to the Parliament in 2008. The vote on that bill passed on the voices.

I do not understand what has happened in the last 10 years, but I do know that those opposite promised the community they would build a metro network, but they did not. When they were in Government they introduced exactly the same bill that we are introducing now. Guess what? Now they are opposing this bill. When the Coalition was in Opposition it supported sensible legislation for the Parliament; when Labor is in Opposition, the Coalition Government having introduced a bill which is exactly the same—it is almost plagiarised, with due

respect to my officials—it opposes it. What has Labor done? Labor members have come into the House and talked about privatisation, boards and chief executive officers and—lo and behold!—the good shadow Minister, a former Minister who 10 years ago sat in the Cabinet of one of the worst governments this State has ever seen, cannot recall or remember the establishment of a Sydney Metro entity by the former Government.

I am sure that, as a new member of Cabinet, she would have been very excited, paying attention to the Cabinet minutes presented at the Cabinet meeting, and that she would have known that this issue was one of the first issues before her in Cabinet. I do not know where to finish this: Those opposite conveniently introduced a bill while in Government but in Opposition something has happened to them. I would like the member for Strathfield to explain to me what is going on. This morning all I heard from those opposite was conspiracy theory after conspiracy theory. They are a giant walking conspiracy theory. Let us talk about privatisation. What is interesting about the establishment of a statutory corporation is that any future government that wants to privatise the network will require to put a bill before the Parliament to do so. The Opposition is saying this is privatisation. We are making it clear that it is not; it is the establishment of a statutory corporation.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Cessnock has had an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Any future government that wants to privatise the network will need to put a bill before the Parliament. In that sense, the Opposition is opposed to parliamentary oversight. It is very silly. I can assure the community that the taxpayers of this State will remain the owners of the Sydney Metro. It will be subject to the requirements of section 99A of the Transport Administration Act 1988—which is exactly the same requirements in Labor's bill when it was in office. That deals with the first conspiracy theory. Those opposite do not understand how to build, maintain or finance infrastructure, as was clearly demonstrated in the speeches given by the members opposite on this bill. The other conspiracy theory that those opposite fail to understand is that as a statutory corporation the entity is not subject to corporations law. As a statutory body, it will be required to prepare financial reports in compliance with the requirements of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. Tick. The shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property is nodding his head in agreement.

Mr Clayton Barr: It is currently being reviewed.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: But you agree with that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Minister will make his comments through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As a statutory entity, it will be subject to annual audits by the New South Wales Auditor-General. I am sure the member for Cessnock knows that statutory entities are reviewed by the Auditor-General. Because it is a statutory entity, it is subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988, which I am sure will please those opposite no end. Their best conspiracy theory is that it will not be subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act and that we are going to privatise the metro. The members opposite have got it wrong.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Again.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Again. That is another conspiracy theory out the door.

Mr Clayton Barr: What about WestConnex?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I think I heard through Mr Temporary Speaker something about the Sydney Motorway Corporation, which has shareholders and is subject to the corporations law. This is not a statutory corporation, as the Government is introducing the bill. The members opposite and their conspiracy theories have again been proven wrong. The shadow Minister, the studious and hardworking member for Strathfield, fails to understand what is going on because she did not bother to read the bill and she did not look at what Labor did when it was in office in 2008. Therein lies the problem.

I make it clear that one of the great advantages of it being a statutory corporation is that we can bring the skill set to government to manage the whole-of-life requirements of these assets. These are brand new assets. We are talking about autonomous trains. For the benefit of those opposite, "autonomous trains" means that the trains are automated, they are not operated by a train driver. They are highly sophisticated machines, unlike those opposite. The key point is that we want to bring in the expertise to manage these assets and to grow these assets. The Future Transport Strategy 2056 clearly shows the future metro network across our city. That development alone will transform public transport passenger services in this State in a way that has never been seen. A global city needs a metro.

Those opposite have cancelled a few projects in their time. They never built the Sydney Metro because they never had the political stomach to transact the poles and wires. What I am hearing now from those opposite, and one of the reasons I suspect they are opposed to this bill, is that they are opposed to the metro. A couple of weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition clearly announced the cancellation of the metro project between Sydenham and Bankstown, the Sydney Metro Southwest project. The member for Bankstown is being attacked by her business community because her leader wants to cancel the metro line between Sydenham and Bankstown. Why on earth would he want to do that?

Five stations along that route do not have disability access or lifts on the platforms. That corridor will be serviced by a turn-up-and-go service with the potential frequency of a train every two minutes. But those opposite are saying to the community, "We do not care", because they want to cancel this incredible train system to service those communities. The message from Labor is, "We do not care". When those opposite were in office, they cancelled the Northwest project approximately three times. They went to the 2015 election saying that Sydney Metro City, which is the connection between Chatswood and Sydenham, is "uneconomic". That is interesting, because if one reads the business case summary it clearly is not.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are on the eve of an election and the members opposite are going to cancel the Sydney Metro Southwest. They are now promising to build the Sydney Metro West. That is interesting because they would not know how to build the Metro West. They are saying to the community, "We are going to take the money from Sydney Metro Southwest and put it towards building the Metro West." I am sorry, but the cost of building the Sydney Metro Southwest line is less than \$1 billion. Unfortunately, the Sydney Metro West project will cost in excess of \$16 billion. They do not have 15 per cent of the capital required to build the Sydney Metro West, based on their financial voodoo economics. The Labor Party is out of touch; they do not get it.

I urge members to come into the House because there is about to be a division. As they enter the Chamber I will remind them that Labor introduced a bill in 2008 to establish a Sydney metro entity with a board. It was the exact same bill to the bill before the House. The shadow Minister has led them all down the garden path. The members opposite carried on in the Chamber and tried to look studious and intellectual. Guess what? They all looked silly. I say to those opposite that we know that they will cancel metro projects and that is why they are not willing to support this legislation—even though they supported similar legislation when they were in office.

The establishment of a statutory corporation is very important in the ongoing management of these complex assets. I spelt out very clearly the reasons for doing so in my second reading speech. This is going to be a critical piece of infrastructure in the future. The assets will be valued in the billions of dollars. The Government is currently investing close to \$20 billion on a metro system, and around the corner we have two additional metros that will come into the stable of metro assets under this entity: the line around Western Sydney Airport and the Sydney Metro West. The community is excited about a new metro system between the city and Westmead. Those opposite do not get it, and they have missed an enormous opportunity to support the Sydney Metro. Today we have seen another demonstration by those opposite to oppose the Sydney Metro. If they are opposed to the bill they are opposed to the projects. The conspiracy theories of those opposite are absolutely absurd.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The member for Cessnock is on a call—a calling of opposing.

Mr Clayton Barr: Tell us about the tunnel.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Which tunnel are you babbling about?

Mr Clayton Barr: The one across the harbour to join them together.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What is your point?

Mr Clayton Barr: You have got that part and that part but you haven't got the tunnel that joins them.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That just shows the member's naivety. We have already contracted the tunnel boring machine to build that tunnel. The contract is about \$2.8 billion. It is the same contractor who did the tunnelling on the Metro Northwest, which was completed ten months ahead of schedule. To help the good member for Cessnock, there has to be a specialised tunnel boring machine to go under the harbour, and we have contracted it. The private sector will tunnel it and there will be a hole—and that is where the member is sticking himself, into a hole, because he is not very smart.

Mr Clayton Barr: How much is it going to cost?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I announced the contract and the value of the contract. You can go on Google and you will see me making the announcement.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Minister will address his comments through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Mr Temporary Speaker, will you tell the member for Cessnock to go on Google and look at the tender issued by the Government in relation to the tunnelling associated with Sydney Metro?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Member for Cessnock, it is on the interweb.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is called the internet. To the members entering the House for the division, I say that in 2008 those opposite introduced the exact same bill to the bill before the House to establish the Sydney Metro with a board and a chief executive officer that were subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act requirements. I have proven that their conspiracy theories are just that—theories. I urge all members opposite to get on board, to join us and back the Sydney Metro and the new entity and to support the bill before the House. I commend the bill.

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

The House divided.

Ayes50
Noes32
Majority.....18

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Fraser, Mr A
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Elliott, Mr D
George, Mr T
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Scully, Mr P (teller)
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G
Grant, Mr T
Hancock, Mrs S

Lalich, Mr N
Cotsis, Ms S
Chanthivong, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J

Third Reading

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

*Community Recognition Statements***WINGHAM MUSEUM WAR DISPLAY**

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:19): In the lead-up to Anzac Day I was honoured to attend the Wingham Museum to unveil a new display as part of the centenary of Anzac commemorations. Stage one of the facelift of the museum's war display features a time line of major conflicts from Sudan to Afghanistan. To quote the museum's curator Terry Tournoff, "What we do here is we tell stories ... We humanise what we have here. We tell stories that relate to our communities". The new display includes the story of the youngest person in the Manning Valley to serve in the First World War. It is the story of John "Jack" Lancelot Andrews, a boy soldier only 15 years old who never returned home. However, his legacy lives on with the letters he sent home, his dog tags and silk-embroidered postcards all on display. That would not be possible if not for museum volunteers like Neal Grenaway, curator Terry Tournoff, and Wingham RSL members Maeve and Eric Richardson.

MINGYUE LAY TEMPLE BUDDHIST HALL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:20): On Sunday 22 April 2018, the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society held a grand opening of the new Buddhist Hall inside the Mingyue Lay Temple in Bonnyrigg. The hall is a culmination of the hard work, time and dedication of both the association and supportive members of the local community who recognised the overwhelming need for a sacred site for families to store the ashes of their loved ones. The hall was built by expert Chinese craftsmen to ensure that their customs and traditions were retained throughout the process. The grand opening attracted a large number of people, with more than 1,000 Buddhist monks, cultural leaders and community leaders present on the day to demonstrate their support of the accomplishments of this phenomenal project. I congratulate the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and everyone involved from the local community for making this dream possible and for their ongoing dedication and outstanding contributions which make our local area a better place for us all.

NORTHERN BEACHES WOMEN'S SHELTER

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:21): I draw the attention of the House to the vital work being undertaken by the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, which is based in my electorate of Manly. I was fortunate to meet with the shelter's Manager Jacqueline Leonard, Diana Jenkins and Acting President Rosy Sullivan last month to discuss their transition from being known as the "Manly Women's Shelter". They are transforming their brand because their remit has changed to incorporate the entire northern beaches. They will continue to support women in crisis with the safety and services they need to regain their lives and to rejoin the community. I was humbled to have been invited to be the shelter's patron. The organisation has helped more than 350 women since it opened in 2010. I look forward to attending the shelter's annual gala dinner, which will take place on Saturday 2 June and which will raise vital funds. I know my colleagues in this place will join me in wishing the shelter great success on the night.

ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:22): I speak on behalf of my community about the Anzac Day Dawn Service conducted this year by Club Wyong RSL. The service was led by Mr Alan Stanford, the President of the Wyong RSL Sub Branch, with the address being delivered by Neeve-Rose Stubbs from Wyong Christian Community School. The poem *A Tribute to Anzac Day* was delivered beautifully by Lea-Bella Foa'iAumatagi and Brock Draszevich from Tuggerawong Public School, and the always wonderful Wyong Drama Group sang the national anthem and "Amazing Grace". I thank the Wyong RSL Sub Branch and those who participated in the service for their work this Anzac Day and all of those who came to the dawn service and who brought their family

and friends. The spirit and lessons of Anzac will live on only as long as our RSLs and communities come together to remember those who gave up so much for our country.

JOEY PROMISE CHALLENGE AWARD RECIPIENT JIMMY BARNIER

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:23): I congratulate Jimmy Barnier, a young Cub, who on 26 March was awarded the highest Joey Award, the Joey Promise Challenge Award. The aim of this challenge is to allow the older Joey Scouts to gain a greater understanding of the Promise and Law and to learn about the founder, Lord Baden-Powell, and the history of Scouting. It involves Joeys undertaking research, having discussions with their parents and leaders, and presenting a Promise Challenge portfolio to their mob. Jimmy was also required to do something for the community, and he got the Scout Group together to create food packages for the Salvation Army Christmas hampers. This is a huge achievement and it is fantastic to see young members of our community learning such valuable lessons. I congratulate Jimmy, and on behalf of the House I wish him continued success with his scouting adventures.

NEWCASTLE JETS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:24): I commend three constituents from the Charlestown electorate who will this Saturday be playing for the Newcastle Jets in the A-League home grand final. Keeping the goals will be Glen Moss, defending will be Captain Nigel Boogaard, and young Lachlan Jackson will have his eyes on central defence. I also congratulate the Newcastle Jets team members on their spectacular semifinal win last Friday against Melbourne City Football Club. I have no doubts that the players will continue their stand-out performance this Saturday, facing off against Melbourne Victory. The last time a team in one of Australia's four major football competitions went from being wooden spooners to champions in 12 months was 84 years ago. What a team! I will be fortunate enough to be among the 30,000 Novocastrian fans in the grandstands this Saturday cheering the team on to a grand final win. Go, Jets!

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:25): I acknowledge the Port Macquarie Hastings Domestic and Family Violence Monitoring Committee for raising awareness through an impressive display of handmade stars at Port Central Shopping Centre. The display aims to give women a greater voice in the community through the committee's efforts in tackling violence while ensuring there is always support available for women and children facing crises in their lives. Renee Bell is the domestic violence prevention educator in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region and is the architect of this incredible display of 1,800 handmade stars. Among the talented designers were Julie Jamieson, Kim Knight, Ashleigh Kemp, Colleen Ryan, Laura Churcher and Ula Inki-Gilabert.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Service was formed in 1980 as the Hastings Women and Children's Refuge Incorporated. This is a fantastic organisation that is working with the assistance of many dedicated volunteers in our region who support women and their children, including single women, with crisis accommodation. This outstanding team, with the support of our very generous community, has built four main services in the Port Macquarie region that deliver outreach services, crisis accommodation, specialist housing support project programs, and community partnerships that tackle domestic and family violence. Once again, I commend the tireless work of the Port Macquarie-Hastings Domestic and Family Violence Monitoring Committee.

AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS MEDALLIST JEMMA SMITH

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:26): Umina ironwoman Jemma Smith recently achieved another fabulous result. Jemma was unbeatable at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships held in Perth last month. Finishing her Higher School Certificate last year and starting as a full-time teaching student at the University of Newcastle has not stopped Jemma training and continuing her streak of success. She claimed more medals than any other competitor at the event, with a gold in the under-19 single ski, being named as Champion Life Saver, and winning four other individual medals and three relay medals. Jemma was pipped in a photo finish on the line in the open single ski event just minutes after completing her under-19 event. Jemma was arguably the best of the coasties, with fine efforts by fellow Umina local Blake Hessel, who was second in the under-17 ironman competition, and Rio Olympian and vocal local Riley Fitzsimmons who finished with bronze in the open-ski paddle. Well done to all our Central Coast surf life savers who competed. I also thank our Central Coast Council surf life savers who completed their final patrol for the year on Central Coast beaches yesterday. I thank them for keeping our beaches safe over the 2017-18 summer. We look forward to seeing them on the beach next season.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (13:28):

A ceremony was held in Parliament House yesterday to pay tribute to justices of the peace. I congratulate and thank them for the work they do. Commemorative certificates were presented to those who have notched up 50 years of service. It was wonderful to be able to see Bathurst local Ian Bates receive a certificate acknowledging his 50 years of service as a New South Wales justice of the peace. I personally thank Ian on behalf the thousands of community members he has assisted over those years. Being a justice of the peace is an incredibly important unpaid role. I thank Ian for his service and dedication. Justices of the peace like him serve as an independent witness to documents people use for official or legal purposes. The primary functions of a justice of the peace are to witness a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit and to certify that a copy of an original document is true and accurate. We should take the time to thank people like Ian Bates who work tirelessly for the majority of their life in performing these legal duties.

ROTARY CLUB OF CAMPBELLTOWN SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:28): I congratulate Campbelltown Rotary Club on the upcoming celebration of its sixtieth anniversary. Over the past 60 years the club has been a vital component in the social fabric of the Campbelltown community. Members are at every community event selling sausages and raising funds to support some great local causes. While it is impossible to thank individually every member who has been involved in the club over the past six decades, I pay specific homage to the current club board: President Diane Blyth; Secretary David Symonds; Treasurer Jermund Johansen; Vice-President Keith Markham; Community Service Director Murray Kear; and all other members. They are all doing a fantastic job continuing the great legacy of the Rotary Club of Campbelltown now and into the future. I congratulate the club once again on reaching this significant milestone.

TERRIGAL BOARDWALK PLAN

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:29): For years our community has cried out for an easy access boardwalk between Terrigal Beach and The Haven. The current footpath scales a large hill separating the beach from The Haven and it is virtually inaccessible to older people, mothers with prams and people with disability. Building this boardwalk would mean that our beautiful beachfront can be enjoyed by everyone. A few weeks ago I launched a community campaign to build this boardwalk between the beach and The Haven. This is a project that has been talked about for decades but never delivered. The time for talking is well and truly over. Now is the time for action. Central Coast Council have completed design work for the prospective project. I am calling on everyone in the Terrigal electorate to jump online to sign my petition so I can lobby the New South Wales State Government to fund this important community project for connectivity between Terrigal Beach and The Haven.

HIDDEN TREASURES HONOUR ROLL VOLUNTEER NADINE MATTISKE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:30): I recognise Mrs Nadine Mattiske of Wurrinya. For the past eight years Nadine has been a hardworking and tireless member of the Wurrinya Progress and Sports Association. This community organisation is the social hub of the 250-strong rural hamlet. Nadine has lovingly performed voluntary service to her community from the Wurrinya Progress and Sports Association headquarters, known as "The Shed". Nadine has contributed to the community beyond Wurrinya and at present she is the registrar for the Forbes Junior Rugby Union Club. Nadine has also been a valued member of the Forbes Preschool Kindergarten and the Saint Laurence's Parish Primary School parents and citizens associations.

Nadine fuels the spirit of her community, which I have personally witnessed when attending Wurrinya's annual picnic day, at which the energy and vivacity of her tight-knit community were remarkably radiant. Recently I had the pleasure of acknowledging Nadine's commitment to her community when her name was inscribed upon the 2017 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll to acknowledge her long-term contributions and Nadine's value to her community. It is the special women like Nadine who are the backbone of our communities and essential to their continued life and vibrancy.

CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH CENTRES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:31): It appears to me that one of the most challenging jobs in this world is to be a parent. I have recently had the opportunity to meet with new parents and babies in my community in my capacity as a member of the parliamentary committee that is undertaking an inquiry into support for new parents and babies. I visited the Cremorne Child and Family Health Centre and the Crows Nest Child and Family Health Centre, where I was able to meet with parents and babies that were born in the last two months or who were between three months and nine months of age.

I was fortunate to meet with the nurses who work there and support these new parents, along with the Nurse Unit Manager, Child and Family Health for North Shore and Ryde, Lindy Danvers, and Service Director, Early Childhood Health, Carolyn Cooper. This was facilitated with the help of the Chief Executive of the Northern Sydney Local Health District, Deb Willcox. It goes without saying that being a new parent is life changing. With such a big change, these services to new parents are vital so that our community can benefit from strong families who have been given every opportunity to teach and develop the next generation of Australians.

ILLAWARRA SURF LIFE SAVING VOLUNTEERS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:32): Last weekend the 2017-18 Surf Life Saving patrolling season ended and I would like to thank and congratulate all of the volunteer surf lifesavers in the Illawarra for their efforts over the last eight months. Surf lifesavers give a great deal of themselves over the summer months so that everyone can enjoy the beaches safely. This season volunteers in the Illawarra have performed 404 rescues, conducted almost 10,000 preventative actions, provided first aid on 434 occasions, assisted with 34 ambulance call-outs and helped to protect the nearly 326,000 people who attended beaches in the area—a sensational effort. At the same time they have participated in competitions and training activities, and also cooked countless sausages and sold countless raffle tickets to fundraise for their clubs. I thank the almost 6,500 members of the Illawarra branch and in particular the members of Towradgi, Fairy Meadow, North Wollongong, Wollongong City, Port Kembla and Windang surf clubs who cover the Wollongong electorate, and especially the members of my own club, Bellambi.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Kiama will sit down.

AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY AWARD RECIPIENT ROBYN FOWKES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:33): Today I recognise Ms Robyn Fowkes of Cootamundra, who was recently presented with the Division of General Psychological Practice Significant Contribution Award. The Australian Psychological Society has acknowledged Robyn's many years of contribution to the field, particularly through her community service. Robyn has worked in psychiatric settings since 1966. For 16 years she worked as a senior school psychologist with the NSW Department of Education, taught at Charles Sturt University and practised in Cootamundra for 29 years whilst also working with general practitioners in Harden and Young. In Cootamundra, she instigated highly successful collaborative child health team meetings and in 2004 developed a trauma response counselling program for emergency service workers. Ms Fowkes' peers have praised her clinical skills as a psychologist, considering her a person of very high standards, personal integrity, honesty, reliability and independence. This is a wonderful achievement. I congratulate Robyn.

BELMONT BASEBALL CLUB

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:34): I was pleased to be able to support the Belmont Baseball Club recently in securing a local sport grant of \$5,000 to purchase a ball pitching machine. Belmont Baseball Club is a growing club with a talented membership. It is a privilege to see the impact that grants like this have on helping members to thrive and prosper in their chosen sport. At the most recent Easter tournament of the New South Wales State championships, we saw for the first time a team from Newcastle qualify for the national championships, which will be held in May this year. The Newcastle team is made up of members from Belmont, including Josh Banks, Daniel Schraeder, Brett Allen, Brendan Pack, William Bull and Jordan Jones. A special mention should go to Josh Banks as well, who has qualified for the under 17s Australian softball team and, of course, the team coaches, Greg Allen and Stephen Pack. This is a great outcome for the Belmont Baseball Club, and I look forward to seeing their continued success in the upcoming nationals.

DENILQUIN VOLUNTEER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEADER KAYE MCCABE

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (13:35): I recognise the service of Kaye McCabe who, for more than 20 years has provided service to the Deniliquin community as a volunteer physical activity leader. Kaye became a gentle exercise leader in 1998 and has been providing classes ever since. Classes originally began to provide isolated farmers with physical activity opportunities. Many of the classes were run with Margaret Burgess, the health promotion officer at the time. Over the years Kaye has run classes in many interesting locations, including the Blighty Football Club. Kaye remembers this being a lot of fun and very social, drawing interested farmers' wives from all around the local area. Classes were also held on the verandah at Smythsdale station, as well as Wakool RSL, with participants travelling far and wide. Kaye indicated the importance of exercise for our health and social interaction when she said: "I enjoy seeing the physical and social benefits of exercise in the community. The company is excellent and the RSL is good for coffee and a natter for those who want to stick around after the class." I congratulate Kaye.

THE ENTRANCE ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:36): I record my appreciation and the appreciation of my electorate for the work done by The Entrance-Long Jetty and Ourimbah sub-branches of the Returned Services League for organising the Anzac Day commemoration services for 2018. As always, I was honoured to be able to represent The Entrance electorate on such an important occasion and lay a number of wreaths throughout the day on behalf of the community. The sub-branches worked hard to involve the community during the day. Local schools and community groups were involved in the services. Ms Oceane Maloney, a school leader from The Entrance campus of Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College, attended the dawn service at The Entrance, followed later in the day by Ms K.D. Dawes, who attended the lunchtime service. Ms Ellita Hunt and Hamish Francis attended and spoke on behalf of the school community at Ourimbah for the lunchtime and afternoon services. Tuggerah Lakes and Gosford regional bands also performed well. I commend all the community groups for the work that was done on that day.

TRIBUTE TO LEIGH EATON

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:37): I inform the House of the passing of Ms Leigh Eaton, a teacher in my electorate from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Riverwood. Leigh has been at St Joseph's Riverwood for the last 19 years. In the first few years, she worked on a part-time basis as her children were still of school age. A few years later Leigh became permanent full-time. Leigh taught the older classes of years 3, 4 and 5. Leigh was a very creative person with a beautiful singing voice. She led the school choir for many years. Leigh was a beautiful, gentle, kind and very funny lady. She had a gift of being able to tell stories using accents and perfect timing, so that her audience—usually her colleagues in the teachers' staff room—would be crying with laughter. She was a teacher who drew the less fortunate children to her with her warmth, understanding and common sense. Leigh leaves behind a wonderful legacy of the hundreds of students she has taught over the years. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Riverwood has lost an outstanding talent. Leigh will be very much missed by her friends, colleagues, students and family.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:39): I pause to thank the many residents, young and old, who gathered at Anzac Day services across Port Stephens last week. I recognise the hardworking RSL sub-branches for hosting these important commemorations. With a common purpose we gathered to remember the lives of those who returned home broken in body or soul, or never returned home at all. In Port Stephens we pay special tribute to the many servicemen and servicewomen who currently serve at the RAAF Base Williamtown and in other arms of the defence forces.

Many dads, mums, sons and daughters have been deployed to the Middle East and elsewhere over recent years but the legacy of their service begins when they return home. I thank the RSL sub-branches of Medowie, Tea Gardens, Karuah, Raymond Terrace, Tilligerry and Nelson Bay for their ongoing support to veterans from all wars. While we see their work most visibly on Anzac Day, we know that the RSL's support of veterans is a year-round task. This year it was particularly pleasing to see the number of students participating in Anzac services across the electorate. I congratulate and thank everyone involved. Lest we forget.

MOOREBANK RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:40): I congratulate the Moorebank Residents' Action Group on its recent win against the Moorebank concrete recyclers proposal to place a concrete recycling plant next to the newly constructed dream homes of residents. Thankfully the developer has sold this site, after much community pressure from the action group, council, myself and the Federal member for Hughes. Two extraordinary women need to be acknowledged for their work in organising the action group and the campaign against concrete recyclers. Fiona Macnaught and Rebekah Foxe have worked day and night—every spare hour they had—to ensure that this development did not go ahead. The Moorebank community owes a debt of gratitude to Fiona and Rebekah and other members of the Moorebank Residents' Action Group. I again congratulate the Moorebank Residents' Action Group and the Moorebank community on this result. I thoroughly enjoyed celebrating it with them last Sunday.

RUTH'S CLOSET DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:41): I recognise the hardworking and passionate volunteers of Ruth's Closet at Warners Bay. Ruth's Closet is a second-hand shop that sells clothes and accessories for men, women and children. All of the profits benefit local not-for-profit organisations, including women's refuges and programs that provide accommodation support for homeless men. Ruth's Closet recently donated \$2,000 to Eastlakes Family Support Services to bolster its Staying Home Leaving Violence program, a free service that helps women escape domestic violence. Funds raised by Ruth's Closet in the first half of 2018 will be donated

to another crisis support service, Nova for Women and Children. Later this year, men's outreach centre Mathew Talbot Homeless Service will benefit from the profits of Ruth's Closet. Ruth's Closet is a fantastic initiative to pay it forward in the Charlestown community. I congratulate the volunteers.

SING AUSTRALIA SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:42): On Sunday 15 April I was honoured to attend a concert held at the Joyce Wheatley community hall to celebrate seven years of Sing Australia in Kiama. I was also honoured to be asked to perform two pieces, Czardas by Monti and Meditation by Massenet, on violin. Sing Australia is a group that exists across the nation, striving to encourage and support those who want to sing, no matter their ability, and all are welcome. This concert would not have been possible without the tireless work of the events coordinator Ross Harrison, conductor Maree Shepherd, group leader Rick Norris and former group leader and emcee Warren McPherson. Thanks must also go to the Deputy Mayor of Kiama Municipal Council, Kathy Rice and Councillor Neil Reilly for their attendance on the day. They are both strong supporters of the arts in Kiama. This event was a roaring success, and I highly anticipate the next one, with the continuing great work and wonderful sounds from these relentless volunteers who do an absolutely great job singing up a storm in Kiama.

TANILBA BAY FORESHORE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:43): Imagine living in the beautiful township of Tanilba Bay, which nestles on the edge of the glorious waterways of Port Stephens, but not being able to access the waterways. This was the case for many ageing residents living at Tanilba Shores who had no wheelchair accessible pathway to the foreshore. Thanks to the Tanilba Bay Parks, Reserves and Hall Committee, who saw a problem and acted to fix it, the problem has now been solved. I was pleased to assist with the allocation of a \$10,000 grant under the Community Building Partnership program and last week formally opened the new path, which enables our older residents, people with disabilities, and mothers and fathers with prams to access the foreshore. I extend special thanks to Fran Corner for leading the charge on this program and to other members of the halls committee for allowing our less mobile residents to now live more active and healthy lives.

EMMAUS CATHOLIC COLLEGE DESTINATION IMAGINATION COMPETITORS

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:44): I congratulate students from Emmaus Catholic College at Kemps Creek who have been selected to represent Australia in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] and social justice initiative. The global finals of Destination Imagination are being held between 23 May and 27 May 2018 in Knoxville, Tennessee, United States of America. During the event the students will compete against 18,000 other students from around the world.

Two teams will be competing, the first of which is comprised of year 10 students Andrew Grima, Katie Forster, Jack Selmes, Jacinta Galea and Cooper Lee, who will be undertaking and presenting on an engineering challenge. The second team is comprised of year 11 students Jessica Reason, Xavier Santos, Telisha Croft and Mya Sara who will be presenting the social justice challenge work that has been happening within the school to support people living at a local aged care facility to help ease the loneliness that can be experienced in the latter stages of life. I congratulate them on their outstanding efforts to date that have seen them excel in these areas and led them to this incredible international competition. I send the best wishes of the New South Wales Parliament to the students competing in this international event.

AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLIST LAURA THURTELL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:45): I recognise Forster Surf Life Saving Club patrol captain and board squad coach, Laura Thurtell, who recently competed in the Australian Surf Life Saving Masters Championships in Western Australia. More than 500 competitors from 311 surf clubs flocked to Scarborough Beach for the long weekend in April for one of the largest ocean sporting events. Laura won nine gold and two silver medals, dominating the 50-54 years age group and team events. Laura will now focus her training towards the world championships that will be held in Adelaide. I wish Laura all the best and thank her for her contribution to the Myall Lakes community.

EXHIBITION

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:45): I want to update the House on the launch of a new art space in Manly, the Manly Art Collab. The space is an artist-run gallery founded by eight local interdisciplinary artists who value collaboration, creativity and camaraderie. The exhibitions change regularly, displaying a broad range of work from paintings to ceramics and photography. It was my great pleasure to attend the opening of the gallery recently. The presence of what must have been half of Manly is an insight into the excitement already generated

by the team and the friendship that the space will build over the coming years. I commend the hard work and efforts of Karen Brooks, Jackie Mare, Julie Sheer, Robyn Boughton, Melissa Moore, Sheree Hooper, Ian Simmonds, Louise Bunday and Nancy Simmonds to the House. Through this initiative they have demonstrated the ability of good people in our community to create spaces that foster a sense of belonging and community spirit.

ROTARY CLUB OF GRAFTON MIDDAY PUBLIC RELATIONS AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:46): I offer my congratulations to the members of the Rotary Club of Grafton Midday who were awarded a Public Relations Award at the recent Rotary District 9640 Conference. This district takes in 51 Rotary clubs and is bounded by Grafton in the south-east, Glen Innes in the south-west, Goondiwindi in the north-west and the Gold Coast in the north-east. The Best Single Event Award was in recognition for the inaugural Carols by Candlelight event held last December. In association with the Clarence Valley Orchestra and Chorus, the Rotary Club of Grafton Midday presented a new spectacular at Alamy Creek Reserve, replacing the previous Market Square Carols in Grafton. They featured television celebrity vocalist Monica Trapaga, along with the Clarence River Dance Academy. More than 1,100 locals attended this wonderful event. I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the subcommittee who made this event possible: Peter Robinson, Greg Butcher, Des Harvey who was a dashing master of ceremonies in his yellow jacket, Adrian Van Ash and Herman Claassens. I wish them continued success with this year's event which is due to be held on Saturday 1 December.

PORT MACQUARIE ORTHODONTICS TEAM BLACK TIE BALL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:47): I recognise the hardworking team at Port Macquarie Orthodontics who are busy organising a black tie ball to raise vital funds for the Heart Foundation. The Roll Out The Red Carpet black tie ball to be held on 2 June is one of a number of amazing projects that the Port Macquarie Orthodontics team is coordinating to raise upwards of \$14,000 to support the fantastic work undertaken by the Heart Foundation for research and development in cardiovascular disease. Senior organiser Luke Nancarrow and his team—Laura Manning, Tracey Pascoe, Hannah Bell, Elle Brown, Denise Buckley and Jenna Gaul—have been tirelessly working towards making this event to be held at the Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club a huge success.

Regretfully, heart disease is the single biggest killer in Australia, with one Australian dying every six minutes. For more than 50 years the Heart Foundation has been leading the battle to tackle this alarming statistic to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians. Statistics show that 1.4 million Australians are living with heart disease and each year 55,000 Australians are admitted to hospital suffering from a cardiovascular complaint. I congratulate the Port Macquarie Orthodontics team on their outstanding display of community service in their generous and determined efforts to raise funds for the Heart Foundation.

CENTRAL COAST DISABILITY NETWORK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:48): I commend the fantastic work happening at the Central Coast Disability Network [CCDN]. Ably led by their chief executive officer, Jenny MacKellin, CCDN provide disability advocacy services as well as a wide range of other employment and support services to their many clients. In fact, CCDN have been so efficient and so effective at their work that they have now expanded to the mid North Coast and to the Northern Territory. CCDN, based in Erina, has been serving our local community on the Central Coast for almost 40 years now. It has been a pleasure to work with Jenny and her team to ensure all people with disability on the Central Coast are well looked after and properly cared for. I congratulate Jenny and her outstanding team on their positive and proactive work in our community. This stands in stark contrast to a private member's statement made in this Chamber on 8 March that stated their doors would be closing in June. Quite the opposite has happened. This business is going from strength to strength, growing and leading the way on the Central Coast. Again I congratulate Jenny and the team and hope they keep up the great work.

HUNTER SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS FORMER STUDENT VISWANATHAN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:50): I congratulate the outstanding on-screen achievements of Ms Geraldine Viswanathan. A former Hunter School of the Performing Arts student from Whitebridge, Geraldine has reached the dizzying heights of Hollywood, recently being praised by critics for her exceptional performance in the 2018 comedy film *Blockers*. Since concluding filming on *Blockers* Geraldine has starred in another Netflix movie produced by Ben Stiller and an indie drama produced by Will Smith. She has also just finished filming a new TV series with Daniel Radcliffe. What a resume! Geraldine said she is proud of her most recent role because she portrayed a character "that is unapologetic and strong in what she wants, and it is hard to find characters where young females are being treated this way". Geraldine is not only a conscientious theatrical artist; she is using her time in the spotlight to send a great message to other young women. I congratulate Geraldine.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I will leave the Chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to the Italian Consul General in Sydney, His Excellency Arturo Acano, and the new Italian Ambassador to Australia, Stefano Gatti, special guests of the Parliamentary Secretary to Cabinet, and the member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti. I also welcome to the Chamber Mr Tim Fielding, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama. I acknowledge in the gallery the international law students from the University of New South Wales.

Announcements

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT: MILLICENT PRESTON-STANLEY

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I inform the House that today the Parliament continued its celebration of the contribution of women in politics by welcoming to the Parliament's collection one of only two portraits of Millicent Preston-Stanley, painted by Mary Edwards in 1950. The portrait was a finalist in that year's Archibald Prize, after which it hung at the Feminist Club (New South Wales) until its donation in 1973 to the State Library of New South Wales. For the first time in more than 40 years, the portrait is now on public display in the Legislative Assembly vestibule, hanging alongside the Parliament's own portrait of Millicent, painted by Reginald Jerrold-Nathan in 1951. I encourage members to view the portraits, which will be on display until late July. This is the first time in either painting's history that they have hung side by side.

Also welcomed to the Parliament's collection today was the second volume of Millicent's work, entitled *My Daily Message*. It is a remarkable book filled with wise words and daily wisdom that still ring very true today. The Parliament will now work to conserve the book and make it accessible to members online. I thank those who have made both editions possible, including the Preston-Stanley family, the Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC, the Speaker of this place, Shelley Hancock, MP, and the parliamentary staff.

Question Time

MINISTER FOR WESTERN SYDNEY, MINISTER FOR WESTCONNEX, AND MINISTER FOR SPORT

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:25): My question is directed to the Premier. The Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport has delivered an unfair M4 toll, an extravagant stadium splurge and now a road corridor that ploughs through hundreds of properties, which is another failed policy that the Government will have to backflip on. With that record, why on earth is the Minister still serving in the Premier's Cabinet?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:26): Given that the Leader of the Opposition has abandoned Western Sydney, why is he still the Leader of the Opposition? The Leader of the Opposition has asked a question about the Minister for Western Sydney. The Leader of the Opposition claims that he cares about Western Sydney, so let us take a look at his track record. He refuses to support the ANZ Stadium becoming a rectangular stadium, even though he said he would. What is wrong with supporting the sports-loving residents of Western Sydney, who rely on that stadium at Homebush? Why did he backflip on supporting the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Western Sydney?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yesterday the member for Granville said it should not be supported because the museum will be smaller and Western Sydney does not want it. Guess what? Why is it good enough for the people of eastern Sydney but not good enough for the people of Western Sydney?

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about the Minister for Western Sydney. The Premier should return to the leave of the question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Leader of the Opposition abandoned his support for sporting facilities in Western Sydney. He also abandoned having an iconic cultural institution in Western Sydney. He does not think the people of Western Sydney are good enough to have a Powerhouse Museum that is bigger and better than the current one.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Guess what? The Leader of the Opposition does not think the people of Bankstown are good enough to have a metro.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The Premier is two minutes into her answer and she has only mentioned the Minister for Western Sydney once. I ask the Premier to answer the question she was asked.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will have to wait and see. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Labor Party also does not think it is good enough for the Industrial Relations Commission to move to Western Sydney; it wants to keep it in the central business district. This comes on top of its failure to support reduced travel times for people in Western Sydney.

Ms Prue Car: Point of order: My point of order relates Standing Order 129. Gladys, we just want to hear you try to defend Stuart.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time. Members will refer to other members by their correct titles.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Guess what? WestConnex is a project that will allow people from greater Western Sydney to spend less time in traffic and more time with their families. It was reported in an article in the *Daily Telegraph* last year that, "Mr Foley for the first time has committed to seeing through all three stages of WestConnex."

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier is now four minutes into her answer and she still has not mentioned the Minister for Western Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: Back him in.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Last year the Leader of the Opposition said that he supported all three stages of WestConnex but a few months ago when a motion was moved in this place he said that he does not support it. What has the Leader of the Opposition got against Western Sydney? What has he got against infrastructure? What has he got against jobs? Why does he not even live in his own electorate?

WESTERN SYDNEY JOB GROWTH

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:30): My question is addressed to the Premier. How has the New South Wales Government delivered record jobs growth in Western Sydney?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:31): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question because I know how much he appreciates what jobs mean to his community. When people have secure jobs they can take care of themselves and their families. They also take great satisfaction in their contribution to the broader community. I am extremely proud of the most recent New South Wales jobs figures. In fact, the Treasurer talked about this only a few days ago. The Government is really excited that in the past three years we have delivered 270,000 extra jobs. We set a target of 150,000 and we have massively exceeded that. It also pleases the Government to no end that the unemployment rate in Western Sydney has fallen to its lowest level in recorded history.

I repeat: The unemployment rate in Western Sydney is at its lowest level in recorded history. That is why we are the party of the workers. Those opposite talk about it; we act. We are providing the jobs, the infrastructure and the services that the people of New South Wales need. I know that the member for Seven Hills and all other members who represent Western Sydney electorates, including those opposite, are glad that this Government has delivered 189,000 extra jobs. The Government is incredibly proud of that achievement. We know how important jobs are to individuals and to families. A breakdown of the various Western Sydney electorates shows that jobs in the Blacktown area, which includes the electorates of Riverstone, Blacktown, Mount Druitt, parts of Seven Hills, Prospect and Londonderry—

[Interruption]

Which parts of Blacktown, Mount Druitt, Seven Hills, Prospect and Londonderry are not in Western Sydney? Can I have that on the record? Those opposite do not think that is Western Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier acknowledged the interjection so it will be recorded.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The problem with the New South Wales Labor Party is it thinks Western Sydney stops at Strathfield. It is governing for the inner west—

[*Interruption*]

The member for Lakemba got it right. It is Sussex Street. But I digress. In the electorates that I mentioned jobs have increased by 28,600.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Turning to the statistics for the Parramatta region, which includes Parramatta, Granville, Auburn, Seven Hills, Prospect, Fairfield and Bankstown—do those opposite think those electorates are in Western Sydney?—I am pleased to say that people in those areas have seen an extra 39,800 jobs. In the outer west, in Blue Mountains, we have seen more than 13,500 extra jobs. In the south-west, which includes Liverpool, Cabramatta, Holsworthy and parts of Mulgoa and Camden, we have seen 41,000 extra jobs. These figures roll off the tongue easily, but this has happened after years of hard work, after acknowledging that not only does a government need to turn around the budget position by being a good fiscal manager but also it needs to invest in infrastructure, because when a government invests in infrastructure the private sector invests in the community and it creates jobs.

I take this opportunity to thank everybody in New South Wales, especially those hardworking people in greater Western Sydney who have had the courage and the confidence to employ people and to contribute to the boom that we are currently experiencing in New South Wales. In my recent response I also had the opportunity to highlight the failed policies of those opposite. One would think the Opposition would stand for something, but all it has done is cancel projects and, as a result, has cancelled jobs. Should the Opposition ever be in government, every time it cancels a project it means that those extra jobs will not happen. It is the Opposition's policy not to support the third stage of WestConnex and not to support the south-west metro. That would cost 20,000 jobs in Western Sydney. We know the member for Bankstown is very sensitive. [*Extension of time*]

While we are on the topic of metros, I thank the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. He and I, alongside the local members, were able to lay the last track of the north-west metro—a project Labor that promised in the nineties—

Mr David Elliott: Eighty-five.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It was first promised in 1985. It was promised and cancelled. The Treasurer says he was three years old when it was first promised. Labor never managed to do it. Now we see, literally, the light at the end of the tunnel. I cannot conclude my answer without acknowledging some comments made by the shadow Treasurer. I have in front of me a list of the 26 taxes and charges that the Labor Party introduced in New South Wales when it was in government. I am incredibly proud that many of the job creators have been our small businesses—the tradies, the people who have had the courage to start their own business—and guess what? They are thriving under a Liberal-Nationals Government. Guess what? In the past two budgets we have abolished \$2 billion worth of taxes on small businesses. Imagine those opposite doing that in their lives. All Labor does is put up taxes, ruin the budget position and cost jobs. That is why we are the party for New South Wales and the party for the workers.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:38): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the cost of the CBD light rail has already blown out by \$500 million—that we know of—will the Premier tell the public how many more hundreds of millions of dollars the project will require to be completed, if that ever happens?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:38): First, the member for Maroubra should say thank you for that project, because he wants it in Maroubra. He said in his local paper that he wants that project in Maroubra. And guess what? The budget for that project was \$2.1 billion. Those opposite can call it whatever they like, but the Government released an estimated total cost. Those opposite do not like hearing the truth.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Opposition asked the question. Opposition members will listen to the answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government released an estimated total cost, we went to market, we signed the contract and we announced that the project cost is \$2.1 billion. Those opposite cannot handle the truth. That is the truth; they are the facts.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It has got to be unparliamentary to call the Auditor-General a liar.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra knows the Premier did not say that. I place the member for Maroubra on two calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That demonstrates why Labor can never be trusted. Opposition members will lie through their teeth; they will say anything to get into office. But I digress. The member for Maroubra sat in Cabinet when the former Labor Government took the decision to build the CBD to Rozelle metro. Labor wasted half a billion dollars without even turning a single sod. Labor said to the business community, "We want to build this project. Come and invest. Put all the bits together"—and guess what? Not a single sod was turned and Labor trashed our reputation overseas. When I became the Minister for Transport—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Opposition has asked a question. The Premier is answering that question. Opposition members will listen to the answer—even though they may not like it.

Ms Anna Watson: Guess what? She's not.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I recall that when I was the newly appointed Minister for Transport I went overseas to encourage people to invest in the north-west metro, and guess what? Every person I spoke to thought I was going there to apologise for the CBD to Rozelle metro. We should remember how Labor trashed our reputation through its failed infrastructure projects. Labor announced and cancelled 12 different rail lines; it wasted half a billion dollars on a project that did not even have a single sod turned.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question simply asked how many more hundreds of millions of dollars the project will cost. Is it on time and on budget?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra is quoting selectively from the question. He is reading only one part of it.

Mr Michael Daley: The interrogative part of the question was: How many more hundreds of millions of dollars will the project cost? Is it on time and on budget?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let us not forget the failed T-card. Yesterday we notched up two billion trips on Opal. For years and years, Labor could not even deliver an electronic ticketing system. We did it in less than two years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on both sides of the House will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: To Labor's credit, although it announced and cancelled a dozen different rail lines it did manage to build half a rail line. Labor was building the Parramatta rail line but then it had to change the name because the line stopped at Epping, and it became the Chatswood to Epping rail line. It was twice the cost to build half the rail line. I say to the people of New South Wales: Just look at Labor's record. The last time Labor made a commitment to Western Sydney for a rail line it stopped at Epping, because that is how far Labor thinks Western Sydney goes.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is up to the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals to deliver the infrastructure that our State needs—and let us not stop at greater Sydney. In the regions, in the north, the south, the east and the west, we are building everywhere.

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

TWEED HEALTH SERVICES

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:43): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government working to improve health outcomes for people living in the Tweed?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:44): I have not even started to answer the question and as usual those opposite are talking down regional New South Wales. They hate seeing regional New South Wales prosper and hate seeing investment in regional New South Wales. I get a question from this side of the House about regional New South Wales and members opposite use question time to play politics, and denigrate

the communities and families of regional New South Wales. I thank the member who is 100 per cent for the Tweed for his question. It was a fantastic question and he is a fantastic local member.

On the watch of the local member, Geoff Provest, the Liberal-Nationals Government, with the support of the fantastic Minister for Health, last year made a commitment of more than \$500 million towards a brand new Tweed Hospital. Over the past 10 months we have been on that journey, but as usual those opposite oppose every step of that journey, but I will return to that shortly. Along that journey the first thing to do is to identify a new site. I can announce that, with the support of the community, doctors, nurses and the hard work of the local member, a new site was selected in Kingscliff.

What is important about the new site is that it is on Cudgen Road in Kingscliff opposite the TAFE. The Government will build a \$500 million hospital to service the people of the Tweed and beyond, and it will also give us an opportunity to consider the TAFE site as a health educational precinct in the future. I will work on that with the Minister. The Government is committed to delivering services locally to ensure that regional people can access world-class health services locally. I have a case study, but members opposite do not want to know about patients such as Jayne Henry from Tweed Heads, who is currently working through treatment following breast cancer. In a social media post about the hospital Jayne said:

To undergo the radiation therapy I require, will mean driving myself four to five times a week for a total of six weeks to Lismore, the Gold Coast or Brisbane, this hospital would mean I would have the treatment here.

Tragically for Jayne and her family this is not the only case of cancer touching the family. She went on to say:

My husband underwent major facial and throat surgery for mouth cancer last year at Gold Coast Uni Hospital. He will undergo major reconstruction work on his mouth this year again at Gold Coast Uni Hospital. The new hospital could allow him to have the surgery here.

I am truly grateful for this hospital, I am also very grateful it will be close by. I will be supporting this hospital site.

That is a great story and endorsement by someone who recognises the importance of getting world-class local health services at a regional level. This is not only about spending \$500 million on health, it is also important for the Tweed's economy. It will drive jobs during construction and post-construction. It is an exciting time for an exciting part of the State that is experiencing growth—an area where the population will grow to 125,000 over the next few years. That is why the Minister upped the ante when those opposite did nothing for 16 years. We are comparing \$100 million or \$200 million to \$534 million for this hospital to support the patients and families of those who need care in the regions. That is why this hospital is important.

Once the new hospital is built by this Liberal-Nationals Government, 70 per cent of the current and future population of the Tweed will be within a 30-minute drive of this world-class hospital. It is clear that since the announcement we have had the shadow Minister, Walt Secord from the other House, and the big red bus "Schools and Hospitals", but I think they drove the bus through the Tweed Hospital because they do not support it. They do not support the hospital and they do not support the site. Typical of those opposite, as with all the infrastructure projects they want to cancel in Sydney, that disease of cancelling projects is now in the regions. There is no doubt that those opposite, if elected next March, will cancel Tweed Hospital.

Ms Pru Goward: They want to cancel Goulburn too.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: And they want to cancel Goulburn. We know their story. That is why it is so important that we put a stake in the ground. That is why we have identified the site. We know Labor has a big red shiny bus.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Deputy Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There is no doubt they want to cancel. It is important that the Government futureproof its work over the past 10 months to identify a site and put a stake in the ground so that Labor cannot cancel it if our worst nightmare comes true and those opposite gain the levers of this State again. [*Extension of time*]

Why do I believe they will cancel the hospital? We already know that Labor has done a grubby deal with the union in relation to public service pay rises that will cost this State \$6 billion. They have to fund that and help their union mates. We know they have to fund it some way and they will do it at the cost of regional New South Wales. As I said yesterday, history is a great lesson for the future. Under 16 years of Labor nothing was done for regional New South Wales.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Labor did not build hospitals and it allowed the school system and school buildings decay, yet Labor members make promises despite our \$4.2 billion plan for education. There is no question that under those opposite regional New South Wales will go back to the bad old days of Labor. Regional

areas will see absolutely nothing while Labor shores up Labor electorates against The Greens in the city, making sure Labor looks after its own and it will do that by pork-barrelling. There is no question about that. Those opposite do not want to support the Tweed Hospital. Typical of Labor they have sent the message down the line and are telling their Labor councillors to oppose the site.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. The Deputy Premier has the call and will be heard in silence. If he is not, the Clerk will continue to stop the clock.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There is no doubt that Labor has no intention to build a hospital—it did not do it in 16 years—by its language, narrative, shadow Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. They keep going up there. They are now using Sussex Street and sending the message down to their local Labor councillors to oppose the site, to make sure they hold off on a development application—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: —hold off on a site being transferred to New South Wales so we can get on with building the hospital. Those opposite will oppose the hospital. I can assure the people of the Tweed 100 per cent and the member for Tweed 100 per cent that the Liberal-Nationals Government will build this hospital. It will build this hospital for the present, it will build this hospital for the future and it will build this hospital for the families and the communities of the Tweed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do Opposition members realise that it is their turn to ask a question?

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:52): My question is directed to the Premier. In her media statement of 17 December 2014 she said that major construction on the CBD light rail would finish in 2018. Was she being deceptive and misleading from the very start?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:52): I ask the shadow transport Minister to table that press release because she is being deceptive. I ask her to table that press release because we always said passenger services would start in 2019. If they want to change the truth, as they always do. Go for it.

Ms Jodi McKay: This says "major construction".

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Excuse me, you have typed out three lines as evidence on a bit of paper. Table the release. I am sure that I will get the release.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier has the call.

Ms Jodi McKay: I have actually got it here. I am very happy to read it out to you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: And what they do not know the difference between is civil and passenger services. We said passengers would use the service in 2019.

Ms Jodi McKay: Mr Deputy Speaker, this is the press release. This says major construction of the project is now expected to finish in 2018.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Strathfield. The member for Strathfield. The member for Strathfield.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I have it? Can I just have it? Read the rest. Can I have it? She won't give it to me. Give it to me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the clock, please.

Ms Jodi McKay: Can I suggest, Mr Deputy Speaker, that her staff get her the press release that she sent out because we're not giving it to you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just one moment, Premier. The member for Strathfield will leave the Chamber for two hours. Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Point of order: I ask the member for Strathfield to apologise for misleading the House before she leaves the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate members jumping up and down to the lectern without seeking to take a point of order. I have asked the member for Strathfield to leave the Chamber for two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 14:54.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: All members who have been called to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order. Members jumping up to the lectern without taking a point of order and trying to take over the debate will not be tolerated. The Premier will be heard in silence. An Opposition member asked the question, and members will listen to the answer, whether they like it or not. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The shadow transport Minister's performance today demonstrates a number of things. First, she either did not read the press release she asked the question about. Here it is. The press release says:

Major construction of the project is now expected to finish in 2018 and services scheduled to commence in early 2019.

And guess what? It is in the same sentence. You cannot miss it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens will leave the Chamber. I warned members who had been called to order that they were deemed to be on three calls to order. I will read out the electorates of members who are now on three calls to order: the members for Cessnock, Keira, Strathfield, Maroubra, Shellharbour, Port Stephens and Maitland.

[Pursuant to sessional the member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 14:56.]

Mr Luke Foley: And no-one opposite.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the Leader of the Opposition disputing my ruling?

Mr Luke Foley: I want you to referee both sides.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the member disputing my ruling? I place the Leader of the Opposition on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I simply say that the date when services start is in the same sentence as when major construction finishes. I say a few things to those opposite. First, did the shadow Minister for Transport read the press release before she asked the question? Secondly, if she did read the release, why did she choose to mislead the House? And, thirdly, this is a pattern of no homework, lies and deceit from those opposite. I say to those opposite: You are in no shape to lead New South Wales. They do not do their homework, they lie and they will say anything. The people of New South Wales know you for what you are.

EDUCATION REFORM

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:58): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the New South Wales Government striving for excellence in education to prepare students for the future?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:58): I thank the member for North Shore for her question and for her passion for school-based education in her electorate of North Shore. I recently had the opportunity to visit Neutral Bay Public School with the member and its Principal, David Shuster, where I was able to see some of the challenges that the school community faces. The school has been expanded recently with an eight-classroom development, but such is the popularity of that school that it continues to need further investment into new facilities. I look forward to working with the member for North Shore on this issue that she is very passionate about.

There are twin pillars that relate to the importance of education provision. Any world-class education system is predicated on providing these two elements—equity and excellence. Both elements are important and one is foundational for the other. Indeed, a leading educational journal talks about equity and excellence in education. When Mr David Gonski and his review panel released his second seminal report on the state of education across Australia, it is important to recognise, as Mr Gonski reflected, that this latest report should be book-ended with his earlier report, which related to equity in schools. It is a principle that the Berejiklian-Barilaro and, indeed, Hazzard Government holds very dearly.

Members on this side of the House who were in this place in the early years of government—as you were Mr Deputy Speaker—will recall that the fiscal cupboard was threadbare. We were not left with much by those opposite. We had some difficult decisions to make when the original Gonski report was released. It says something about the priorities of this Government that when there was not a lot of cash around we prioritised school-based education and found the money necessary to ensure that we were able to sign up to the full six-year funding agreement around Gonski. We were able to fully fund that agreement, liberating an additional \$4.3 billion into school-based education, which is a legacy that those on this side of the House should be justly proud.

The first Gonski report laid the ground work for excellence. As Pasi Sahlberg, the former Director General of Education of Finland and now a professor at the University of New South Wales, once said, "Investing in equity in education equals excellence." We cannot have excellence without equity. Now that the principles of needs-based sector-blind funding are secured in New South Wales we can get on with the business that David Gonski talks about regarding the further promotion of excellence in our school-based education system. It is great to read Mr Gonski's report because so much of what he says is already occurring in New South Wales. What might seem exceptional or revolutionary in other Australian jurisdictions is literally what we have been doing in New South Wales for some time. I am pleased to see that in his second report Mr Gonski has held up New South Wales up as a leading example.

We have delivered substantial reform to drive improvement in education to prepare students for the future. Recommendation 6 of the Gonski report focuses on the need for early intervention in literacy and numeracy, which is exactly what this Government has done through the \$340 million literacy and numeracy strategy, ensuring that students have the foundational skills to succeed in education and also in life. Recommendation 23 of the Gonski report seeks to establish a national research in evidence base. That is very much based around the pioneering work in New South Wales on research and best practice in education through the Centre For Educational Statistics and Evaluation—research that provides an evidence base to tell us what works best in our schools. Recommendation 17 prioritises leadership of learning. So many educational leaders from Hattie to Robinson have talked about ensuring that principals have the time and the space to serve as leaders of teaching and learning in the schools they serve. [*Extension of time*]

We talk about the principle of leadership in learning, where we are easing the administration burdens of principals and helping them focus on instructional leadership through our \$50 million school leadership package. Other recommendations refer to the need to devolve autonomy or decision-making to local schools. That is precisely what this Government has been doing through Local Schools, Local Decisions. Recommendation 15 talks about better induction for new teachers. Again, that is precisely what we are already doing in New South Wales. There is one element of Mr Gonski's report that, if taken in isolation, is frankly something that we on this side of the House would not agree with. That is, a suggestion that our teachers and the system have been letting students down. I do not believe that is the case. I think our teachers work extraordinarily hard and in New South Wales they have laid the foundation for incredible success for the current generation of students.

I will take the time to reflect on the comments of the Federal member for Bowman about the teaching profession that I disagree with profoundly. I have not had a job that has been more physically or emotionally taxing or rewarding than the period I spent as a classroom teacher. That is an experience shared by members from both sides of the House. It is an incredibly rewarding profession, but also an incredibly difficult and taxing profession. The Government is all about supporting teachers and providing the foundation for educational excellence for all our young people.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:05): I direct a question to the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing. Will the Minister inform the House of whether she supports the removal of the goods and services tax [GST] on tampons, pads and other sanitary products?

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (15:06): I thank the member for her question. We do know that this is a cause of some debate and has been so since the GST was first introduced. It is important in this debate that the level of responsibility is made known to the community; that is, the GST concept and GST formula rests with the Commonwealth Government to deliver leadership.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has not completed 30 seconds of the answer. Members will cease interjecting.

Ms TANYA DAVIES: It is important that any changes to the GST formula or GST application are done in a comprehensive way looking at the entire GST alignment and application across this nation. It is also important to note that the Federal Opposition is calling for this change. But I ask the question: When they were in Government for six years in this nation why did they not take leadership? Why did they fail to deliver leadership on this issue?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The question related to the Minister's point of view. It is not to ask questions of the Opposition. She is to tell us what her view is. The policy released by the Federal Labor Opposition has been costed. We want to know her opinion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Ms TANYA DAVIES: As I said, this is a matter that has caused numerous debates since the GST was first introduced. I am sympathetic to these causes and calls. As I said, a responsible Government, whether State, Territory or Commonwealth, needs to approach this in a comprehensive manner and that needs to be led by the Federal Government. If the Labor Opposition Federally did not do anything when they were in power for six years, what is their confected sensitivity on this issue now? Secondly, this New South Wales Labor Party was in Government for 16 years and did nothing.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister has completed her answer.

CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS FUNDING

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:08): I address a question to the Special Minister of State, better known as "SMoS". Will the Minister advise the House of NSW Labor's response to calls for the Medich funds to be donated to charity, and any other related matters?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:09): I thank the member for Heathcote for his question and the House's ongoing interest in this very important matter. Yesterday the New South Wales Government gave the Opposition leader an ultimatum: by midday today the Opposition leader should inform the people of New South Wales to which charity the \$260,000 in blood money from convicted murderer Ron Medich would be donated. The Opposition leader has failed. This failure raises an ugly spectre and ugly questions that need to be answered. Why did Luke Foley, then Assistant General Secretary of the Australian Labor Party, NSW Branch, fail to ensure \$260,000 in blood money was not placed in trust as his bosses claimed? Why did the Opposition leader not speak up sooner?

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

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

Mr David Harris: My point of order is Standing Order 73. Clearly what the Minister is doing should be done by way of substantive motion. It is not appropriate for him to use the House to do what he is currently doing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will listen further to the answer.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Why did the Opposition leader not speak up sooner? Did he not tell Sussex Street on the morning of Tuesday 24 April, eight days ago—

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

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

Mr David Harris: It is the same point of order. Clearly the Minister is making imputations of improper motives and he is not entitled to do it this way. He must do it through a substantive motion.

Mr Luke Foley: You guys are in court so you don't have to pay back illegal donations.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In view of the interjections and comments I am will allow the Minister to continue.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On 24 April, eight days ago, a day that will live in infamy, the day that the Opposition leader refused to tell Sussex Street the money should go to charity, was it the case that he was only too happy to participate in the lie, in the denial, in the distraction, to avoid donating this murderer's blood money to charity? It was only after the tsunami of public and political pressure crashed over him and his colleagues that the Opposition leader changed his mind. That much we know. But this came at a cost. We know what happens when you break a promise to Sussex Street. We know what happens when you agree to a cover up and then you back out.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The member for Wyong did have a point when he invoked Standing Order 73. This heavily prepared piece of Shakespearian tragedy should be done by way of substantive motion.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I inform the House that it has not gone unnoticed that today the horse's head was placed in bed by Sussex Street in the pages of the *Australian* newspaper. That is a little reminder of the consequences of betrayal in Sussex Street.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The horse's head was next to the labrador in the former member for Charlestown's veterinary clinic when he walked out to cop \$10,000 from Jeff McCoy. That is where the horse's head is. While we are talking about things veterinarian, we are happy to go there because that is in an Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] report which is about 10 inches thick. If they want to bring a motion on about local donations, let us go; let us get it on. We have got oodles and oodles of it from ICAC. Do not worry: I am leaving. This is a farce.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! In view of the quality of that point of order and the statements that were made, I will allow the Minister to continue. He will be heard in silence.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Back to the question: Where is the Medich blood money? There are almost 300 Labor-affiliated associated entities on the Australian Electoral Commission's books where those opposite could have hidden this money. There are unions, left-wing think tanks, holding companies and shelf companies.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will continue to be heard in silence.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: They said they put it into a trust, but where is the trust? Tracking Labor's dodgy money is like tracking Osama bin Laden. We have followed the fortune cookie crumbs back to the lazy Susan at the Golden Century and we cannot find any evidence of any such deposit into any such trust that the Australian Labor Party [ALP] has under any such circumstances.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It is not only an improper motive but it is also unparliamentary for a Minister of the Crown to draw a parallel between a convicted murderer—a convicted felon—to members in this place. That is exactly what he is doing. Deputy Speaker, I ask you to call him to order and that he cease berating us.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: We can find no evidence of any such deposit into any such trust ever being undertaken by those opposite and that begs the question: Did the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of Labor lie in 2010—that no freeze or trust arrangement was put in place? Did they establish a new trust into which funds were deposited by New South Wales Labor without disclosing it to the relevant authorities? These are important questions of law and, most importantly, questions of morality. I refer the House to a statement made in 2010 by Premier Kristina Keneally. She said, "Donations are a matter for the party office and I understand the General Secretary has made certain undertakings in relation to this donation." She continued, "I would on this particular matter acknowledge the police and their diligence." She further stated, "There may come a time when I have something to say about this matter, but I will not do anything that will prejudice the ongoing court processes."

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: From the commencement of this performance, this Minister has been in breach of Standing Order 73. You know that, Mr Deputy Speaker, and so do I. He should have no leeway to continue this performance but, if he does, maybe he should talk about the money they have to pay back for Ronney Oueik.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are your comments not against Standing Order 73?

Mr Lee Evans: I request further information.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 131. With regard to the request for an extra two minutes, you have the discretion to choose whether the extra time will be granted. Given the poor quality of the response we have heard so far, I suggest you do not grant the extra time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: As Deputy Speaker I have quite a few discretions but no-one wants to listen to them.

[Extension of time]

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The truth is out. I say to Senator Keneally that perhaps now is the time to say something about this matter. She refused to do so 10 years ago; maybe it is time to tell us what she knew as to where the money went. The people of New South Wales have justifiable concerns about the honesty and the integrity of the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite who have failed to declare their conduct in this disgraceful matter.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order relates not only to Standing Order 73 but also to Standing Order 74. There is an obligation to prevent quarrels when we have this quality of response and only one side is being punished for it. That standing order is clearly not being upheld.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of the people of New South Wales and this Government I state again that we have justifiable concerns about the honesty and the integrity of those opposite, led by the former Assistant Secretary who has failed to declare their conduct in this disgraceful matter. Was it the then Assistant Secretary briefing the Premier on this matter? Was it the Secretary? Why has former Premier Senator Keneally not come forward to give her opinion and recollection in this matter? There has never been anything to trust in New South Wales Labor. I ask it again to give the money to charity like it promised.

KANGAROO MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:21): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. With large numbers of people visiting the Morisset Hospital site every day to see, pat and photograph kangaroos and in so doing at times risking personal injury and impacting animal welfare as well as creating a significant problem for the management of this operating mental health and developmental disability facility, will the Minister act to implement improved management by relevant authorities, including Health and Environment?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:22): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. It is not entirely without notice in view of the fact that he made a private member's statement last night just after 7 o'clock and the video has gone wild on the internet.

Mr Greg Piper: Viral.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Viral, I understand. It is an interesting and challenging issue for us all. For those who do not know, the Morisset Hospital has approximately 130 patients with mental illness and psychiatric issues. There are probably another 40 or 50—

Mr Greg Piper: Sixty.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I accept that—40, 50, 60 people with disabilities who are being gradually transitioned out of that facility. The Morisset Hospital site lies approximately 4½ kilometres east of Morisset train station. It would be about a nine minute drive in a car through 4½ kilometres of forest. It is an open area with a number of buildings and group homes, and possibly up to 400 or 500 eastern grey kangaroos.

As Australians, we like our kangaroos, and this is a relevant question. Eastern greys are marsupials from the family of macropods. They are known as *Macropus giganteus*, which means they are large. The problem is that there are a lot of visitors to the site. This should be treated very seriously as there have been tourists, who do not necessarily speak English and cannot read the signs, as well as locals, who have been extremely badly injured by eastern greys grazing on the property. I say to our tourist friends that this is not an official tourist site but a private hospital site. It is a site where people have serious mental health issues—some of whom have come through the court system and are forensic patients—and are recovering. There are a range of concerns around tourists coming onto the site. Male eastern grey kangaroos can grow to about six feet tall, or 183 to 188 centimetres, and they can have shoulders that are as large as mine.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank my colleagues for their undue excitement; I did not realise they would get excited about that. I say to the people in the public gallery that it is a very narrow environment in this House! Eastern grey kangaroos have large shoulders and can do a lot of harm. Male kangaroos, particularly when the females are in their estrous cycle and are ready for breeding, can be quite dangerous. When they are looking for food that has been brought in by tourists who do not understand that normally kangaroos are herbivores that eat grass and drink water can also be quite dangerous, and they will fight for it, but that is rare. [*Extension of time*]

Visitors should not be on this dangerous site as they run a real risk of injury. A number of government agencies are located around the site. It is a heavily forested area so Forestry, Sport and Recreation, National Parks, and a whole range of other agencies, as well as the health department and local government, are involved. I suggest it would be helpful to the member for Lake Macquarie and to locals, tourists and others to bring a community group together, including the member for Lake Macquarie, with various government agencies to address this problem. It is a large, unfenced area and it would be unpopular to close it off to visitors, but its management is the issue. How do we manage it? I do not have a simple answer. I think the answer is to bring the community together, and I ask the member for Lake Macquarie to be involved.

I am pleased that the member for Lake Macquarie has raised this matter because tourists need to know just how dangerous our unofficial national emblem can be. Eastern grey kangaroos can be very dangerous. In his video the member for Lake Macquarie highlighted that people suffer some very serious injuries, including very

large intestinal stomach injuries, from eastern grey kangaroos. I will make sure that we get a group together to try to find a solution, but there is no easy solution.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:30): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the Government's incredible pipeline of building helping the people of New South Wales and delivering jobs? Are there any risks to those jobs?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:30): I thank the member for Drummoyne for his question, which pointed out that this Government is building world-class infrastructure. It does not matter if it is a mega project from Metro through to WestConnex or NorthConnex: We are seeing an incredible number of families benefiting from their loved ones working on construction sites across New South Wales. The Metro project alone has benefited 34,000 families whose loved ones work on what is, without doubt, one of the most magnificent infrastructure builds that this country has ever seen.

Young people are also benefiting through apprenticeships, on-the-job training and traineeships. There are 500 young people under the age of 25 employed on the Sydney Metro Northwest project. It is a phenomenal opportunity for them to gain skills for life to go on to bigger and better jobs. This Government is providing this opportunity because it has been able to manage the finances to get the infrastructure pipeline in place. A lot of indirect jobs have been created as a result of this Government's work.

This question also referred to risks to jobs. One person alone poses the greatest risk to many of the thousands of jobs on projects across the State. In recent weeks the Leader of the Opposition, who is not present, has on a number of occasions stood in front of a camera he would cancel a number of projects. It is fair to disclose to the Parliament the jobs that he will cancel. He has said he will cancel the Sydney Metro Southwest project. The Opposition does not care about the Bankstown corridor or south-west Sydney, which the Leader of the Opposition has proven time and again. For the benefit of the House, during peak construction 1,500 people will be constructing the Sydenham to Bankstown metro. Under the Leader of the Opposition it will be cancelled. The Leader of the Opposition has also indicated cancelling WestConnex stages two and three. WestConnex generates 10,000 jobs. The M4 and M5 link involves more than 2,800 direct jobs on site and 8,400 indirect jobs will be created as a result of this Government investing in that link, which the Leader of the Opposition also said he will cancel. They are tremendous jobs that will support the families of this State.

On the West Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link he again said publicly that he was going to cancel the project. Guess how many jobs are associated with building those projects? There are 15,000 jobs. He has said he does not support that project—I repeat, these projects will create 40,000 jobs. One of the great benefits of construction is that indirect jobs are also created along the way. As a result of his approach to cancelling infrastructure projects, 80,000 jobs are being cancelled by the Leader of the Opposition before the next election, which will affect 80,000 families. The cancellation of these jobs says it all: Luke Foley is the biggest risk to jobs in this State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister will refer to members by their proper titles.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Leader of the Opposition does not care about these 80,000 jobs, but he does care about a couple of jobs. He cares about his own job and how the blood money is going to be spent, because we know that at 8 a.m. on 24 April there was a phone hook-up with the secretary of NSW Labor when he indicated to her that no money should go to charity; they need it for the next election. We can only presume that the money is going to go into seats like Port Stephens, Prospect—whose members seems to be quiet nowadays—and The Entrance. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Trish Doyle: What about all the train-building jobs in South Korea?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You would not talk about the trains you were building in China when you were last in office. Let us talk about the 250 maintenance jobs at a facility at Kangy Angy on the Central Coast, which will be created by that investment; the Leader of the Opposition has been quiet about those jobs. On that score, we have blood money being spent by those opposite on the next election to secure the re-election of a couple of Labor members. We know that the Leader of the Opposition has lost control of the Left caucus, he has lost control of the whole caucus, he has lost control of the Labor Party, and he has lost control of himself. It is nowhere more obvious that he has lost control than as stated in the *Australian* today under the headline, "Labor head office rejects preselection push for Foley favourite". Talk about jobs for the girls—forget about jobs for the boys under Luke Foley. We know he is interested in jobs, just not construction jobs.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister's answer was outside the scope of the question that was asked, which was about transport.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister has concluded his answer.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Amal Dib, daughter of the member for Lakemba. I hope she has enjoyed her father's performance in question time.

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**.

West Byron Development

Petition calling on the Government to ensure that the proposed development of West Byron Bay will not detract from Byron Bay tourism, will enhance koala population connectivity and will not adversely affect the efficient operation of Ewingsdale Road, State significant wetlands and Cape Byron Marine Park, received from **Ms Tamara Smith**.

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

ST FLORIAN'S DAY

Reordering

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:39): I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [St Florian's Day—International Firefighters' Day] have precedence on Thursday 3 May 2018.

This motion should take precedence as it is very important to acknowledge our emergency services personnel and volunteers who tirelessly work to protect life and property. This motion is especially significant and timely after the recent bushfires that affected my local area in south and south-west Sydney. St Florian's Day is a dedicated day on the international calendar for the world to acknowledge and celebrate the actions of firefighters. Firefighters go above and beyond in the cause of protecting people, property and the environment. Our firefighters are the ones who run into the face of danger, when others leave. They put their lives on the line so that we can be protected. Day in and day out, men and women from all across New South Wales dedicate their time to helping others.

Many firefighters are volunteers. They sacrifice their time with their families, friends and work to protect their communities. Recently I watched many of our local firefighters leave their own homes, which were potentially under threat, to serve and protect others. This was an amazing display of selflessness that seems to come naturally to these people. They are community heroes doing an amazing job under the most trying of circumstances, and they deserve recognition. Our firefighters are courageous. They are hardworking and they showcase great skill and a range of capabilities, even in the most difficult and unexpected situations. Somehow they manage to keep level heads and promote a spirit of calm in times of uncertainty and chaos. Whilst individually

we can prepare and promote the need for fire action plans for our households, we can never truly predict how we will react to such an unusual situation. Yet our fireys not only fight the fire but lead communities through difficult circumstances.

It is important to note that firefighters do much more than protect us from fires. They attend road accidents, assist with storm recovery and step in to help other agencies. Many fireys are tireless fundraisers and communications experts, and I often see my local Rural Fire Service [RFS] brigades holding fundraiser barbecues at local Bunnings stores and giving up their time at Christmas to fundraise, promote fire safety and put a smile on the faces of our local children. They are also happy to give up their time to provide a lifetime's worth of expertise, mentoring our next generation of Fire and Rescue or RFS personnel. Many firefighters from our local communities will deservedly receive commendations for their efforts in ensuring the safety of fellow citizens as part of International Firefighters celebrations.

Firefighters are humble. They say they are just doing their job or are in the right place at the right time. But they are really extraordinary, and I would like to see members in this place joining together to thank them for their efforts. In the spirit of St Florian's Day, and with the heartfelt gratitude of this House and the communities we represent, this House must send its thanks to each and every firefighter for their service.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:42): My motion on government performance is very important, because members on this side of the House often hear those opposite talking about this State being number one. When it comes to taxing, this State is number one—not gold class but platinum class, top-shelf stuff. Residents of New South Wales under this Government pay \$1,200 more in tax than they did in 2011. There is not a tax that those opposite do not love. I remember the former Federal Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott calling Labor's proposed carbon price a "great big new tax". The Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet, loves a great big new tax, does he not?

Where else is this State number one? It is number one in waste. What other government would waste \$2.2 billion on rebuilding two stadiums, when schools and hospitals in the State are in desperate need of funds? In the last few weeks, the member for Londonderry has revealed that this Government is number one for something else: It is number one for stealing people's homes. Those opposite are a pack of thieves. Now they will not only take money out of your back pocket but take your home and business.

Those opposite are number one when it comes to taxes, they are number one when it comes to waste and they are number one when it comes to stealing the home or business people have worked hard to own and operate. Yesterday they referred to my very good friend, the member for Kogarah, and they asked him to go over to that side. In the spirit of bipartisanship, today we on this side ask the member for Penrith to come over here. The member for Penrith is the greatest supporter of the New South Wales Labor Party so far. This gentleman has been at the forefront of every stuff-up over the last 12 months—give him a task, he stuffs it up. He went running for stadiums and stuffed that up. He was unhappy when, as the Minister for Western Sydney, he was not a part of the corridor announcement. There he was, jumping for joy, while hundreds of people were knocking down his door saying what a dope he was. Not only that but he is also the architect of tolls—the greatest tolling Minister we have seen in the history of tolls. This Government is addicted to waste, it is addicted to tax, it is addicted to incompetence and it is about time we debate its failings in this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the notice of motion standing in the name of the member for Holsworthy have precedence on Thursday 3 May 2018.

The House divided.

Ayes45
Noes31
Majority..... 14

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J

AYES

Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Provest, Mr G
 Speakman, Mr M
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Pavey, Mrs M
 Rowell, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Petinos, Ms E
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Donato, Mr P
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Minns, Mr C
 Piper, Mr G
 Tesch, Ms L
 Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
 Car, Ms P
 Daley, Mr M
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harris, Mr D
 Kamper, Mr S
 McDermott, Dr H
 Park, Mr R
 Scully, Mr P (teller)
 Warren, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Dib, Mr J
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Leong, Ms J
 Mehan, Mr D
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T F
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Constance, Mr A
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Stokes, Mr R

Chanthivong, Mr A
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Foley, Mr L
 Haylen, Ms J
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N
 Mihailuk, Ms T

Motion agreed to.*Motions Accorded Priority***POLITICAL DONATIONS****Consideration**

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:51): My motion should be accorded priority because this is an issue of integrity. This is an issue of transparency and cuts to the core of why the Leader of the Opposition should never govern this State. The member for Auburn and Leader of the Opposition made a commitment to the people of New South Wales to give back the donations in question. What we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition today is a desperate man who will try to funnel donations to the Labor Party's marginal seats to win votes. To the people of New South Wales, I say: Look at what the Labor Party does and not what the Labor Party says. Actions speak louder than words. In 2010 the then Labor general secretary Sam Dastyari, with the help of assistant general secretary Luke Foley, said the party would gift the sizable donation to charity if Mr Medich was found guilty. The court has handed down its verdict, and where are we?

I suggest the Leader of the Opposition get the blood off his hands. The Leader of the Opposition must show leadership. Today will be a defining day in this Parliament for Luke Foley. The time has come to donate the funds to charity. His actions today will determine whether he will be here tomorrow. He needs to act with transparency, honesty and integrity. He ought to fulfil his commitment and his promise to the people of New South Wales, show leadership and do the honourable thing. The Leader of the Opposition must also be very careful: The Right in Sussex Street are coming for him. And Michael Daley, the member for Maroubra, needs to get ready. At least the member for Maroubra had the decency to hand back developer donations—admittedly it was after he was sprung, but that is a story for another day. I reiterate the point: Act with honesty, transparency and in the immediate interest of the people of New South Wales to respect those donations. Those of us on this side of the House will not stop prosecuting this issue until Labor refunds the donations in question to a victims of crime charity. My motion should be accorded priority because Labor is yet to do what it said it would do.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Consideration

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:54): My motion should be accorded priority because it is well known that this Liberal-Nationals Government is the highest taxing government in the history of Federation. We on this side of the House—and I would like to think one or two on the other side—hear countless reports from their constituents about the very high cost of living in New South Wales. The people in this State are now paying \$1,200 more in tax than they were paying in 2011. In addition to that, each year motorists who live in Western Sydney—they are suburbs to the west of Concord and to the west of Kirribilli—pay thousands of dollars for the privilege of driving to and from work daily on congested roads.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Has the member read his motion?

Mr RYAN PARK: I do not have to read my motion. My motion should be accorded priority because this Government is hooked on taxation. This Government is all about making it more and more unfair for the people of New South Wales. It is also hooked on tolls. There is not a tax or charge this Government has not considered increasing. This Government loves to make it hard for people. The member for Epping should sit down. Those opposite claim they are the party for the workers, but they are only the party for the very rich workers. The workers that the men and women that the mighty Labor Party represent are those this Government is hurting the most. Labor represents those workers who can afford to pay the least. This Government continues to make it harder and harder for the men and women of the regions and the men and women of Western Sydney. So it is about time that we debated in this House the issues that are important to the men and women of New South Wales.

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

The House divided.

Ayes45
Noes31
Majority.....14

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Provest, Mr G
Speakman, Mr M
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Rowell, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
George, Mr T
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Sidoti, Mr J
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Greenwich, Mr A
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P (teller)
Warren, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Leong, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F
Watson, Ms A (teller)

NOES

Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Constance, Mr A
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Stokes, Mr R

Chanthivong, Mr A
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Foley, Mr L
 Haylen, Ms J
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N
 Mihailuk, Ms T

Motion agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the member for Cessnock, the member for Strathfield—who has been removed from the House for two hours—the member for Keira, the member for Maroubra, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Maitland, and the Leader of the Opposition that they are all on three calls to order. If they are called to order again they will be removed from the House for the rest of the day under Standing Order 249. Even though this debate could be somewhat contentious, I expect the debate to be conducted in accordance with Standing Order 52, which means that any member speaking has the right to be heard without interruption or other conversation.

Mr David Mehan: Is anybody on the other side of the House on the list, Mr Assistant Speaker?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I place the member for The Entrance on three calls to order.

POLITICAL DONATIONS**Priority**

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (16:05): I move:

That this House calls on the New South Wales Labor Party to immediately refund all of convicted murderer Ron Medich's donations to a victims of crime charity.

It is vital that the Labor Party, under Luke Foley's leadership, refund the donations to a victims of crime charity—it is the right thing to do and it is what Labor said it would do. Between 2003 and 2009, Mr Medich contributed some \$260,000 to the Australian Labor Party. At least the member for Maroubra had the decency to give back developer donations, although it was after he got sprung. When Mr Medich was accused of culpability in the murder of businessman Michael McGurk, the Australian Labor Party, under then Secretary Sam Dastyari, and aided by his assistant secretaries—one being, wait for it, Luke Foley—committed that if Mr Medich were to be found guilty the Labor Party would donate the money to charity. In 2010 Mr Dastyari said:

Should Mr Medich be convicted, these funds will be donated to charity.

What has the Labor Party done since the verdict? Absolutely nothing. It still has not given the money to charity, as it said it would. I wonder why that might be. Is it because Foley's bosses in Sussex Street do not want to? Is it because the bosses in Sussex Street are angry that Mr Dastyari said that? Or is it because Luke Foley's friend was rejected by Sussex Street as punishment for doing the right thing and offering to pay the money back? Money talks. It is easier to keep the money than keep a promise to the people of New South Wales.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale is now on three calls to order.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Yesterday in question time the Labor Party was put on notice. Luke Foley, the Leader of the Opposition, was put on notice to reveal which charities will be the beneficiaries of the \$260,000. Mr Foley, we are still waiting and we are going to hold you to account. Why? Because it is the right thing to do. In this case the right thing will cost Labor a quarter of a million dollars, but I guarantee that doing otherwise will cost Labor a great deal more. We want to ensure that those funds are donated to genuine causes. We all know that the Labor Party's donations are funded by unions and third party campaigners. We must be assured that the money in question does not get funnelled back into those organisations.

Mr Stephen Kamper: We don't get any from Photios.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Answer your emails. I have sent an email to *grassrootsgiving@nswlabor.org.au*. Can NSW Labor please respond to my emails?.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind Opposition members that some of them are on three calls to order.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Actions speak louder than words. The former Leader of the Opposition John Robertson put out a booklet some 10 years ago talking about a new standard. But the Leader of the Opposition's new standard, "Foley's New Standard", is a record low—it is blood money; an absolute disgrace. I reiterate to the Leader of the Opposition: Give the money to a victims of crime charity. The donation in question should not be overlooked as water under the bridge. After all, in 2010 we were told by the Hon. John Aquilina, the then Leader of the House, that the funds were "frozen" pending the outcome of a criminal case. It is a matter of public record. If the money is in a trust, as Labor says it is, it must be donated to charity immediately. The case has now been finalised and it is time to pay back the \$260,000. That is why I have put forward my motion today calling on NSW Labor to immediately refund the donations in question to a victims of crime charity. Kaila Murnain can do whatever she wants.

Mr Paul Scully: Who?

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Exactly. Who knows her? She can keep sending these emails to all her friends in marginal Labor seats and trying to use the money as a bloody slush fund. That should not ever happen. Those opposite should all hang their heads in shame. Where is their leader now? Where is their future leader? Why are they not in the House? It is because they are all ashamed of what they have done. All those opposite are a disgrace and should be put on notice.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:10): Now that the member for Drummoyne has put away the wet lettuce that he has tried to whip us with, we will get into the substance of this motion. What the member for Drummoyne did not do in his contribution is help himself out, so I will do it for him. I move that an additional point be added to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by adding "and calls on the Liberals to withdraw its appeal against the decision ordering it to repay almost \$250,000 in illegal donations and provide repayment confirmation by midday Thursday."

Those opposite are awfully good at setting deadlines for meaningless things and for things that are already underway. Here is a deadline for them: Call off the silks, put the law suit away and end the controversy over illegal donations. We have had a Supreme Court ruling in which Justice Adamson found that the amounts paid into the Liberals' account were unlawful political donations. The member for Drummoyne has even said he is the person who nominated a charity that will get the money from the Labor Party. Right now we have a legal challenge to a Supreme Court ruling on illegal political donations. Our donations were not illegal. By midday tomorrow we expect the Government to provide this House with confirmation that it has ceased the legal action and that it has repaid the \$250,000, as ordered by the court.

Thankfully, the member for Drummoyne has opened up Pandora's box in instigating a debate on donations. Let us look at the record. It might be time to refresh the memories of members opposite about some of their own past crimes. They should be used to illegal donations crimes because we already have a court ruling on foot about it. But we need to go back and replay the video of Operation Spicer. We all remember Operation Spicer and the Eight By Five mob. In 2014, during the ICAC's Operation Spicer inquiry, the commission heard that senior Liberal Party officials used the Millennium Forum—was the member for Kiama not involved in that?—and another Liberal entity, the Free Enterprise Foundation—maybe that was the member for Kiama's—to funnel prohibited donations, and "prohibited" and "illegal" are the two words that keep coming up whenever we talk about Liberal Party donations, from property developers into the 2011 New South Wales election campaign.

Mr John Sidoti: What about murderers?

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Funny the member for Drummoyne should mention murderers because I refer him to Tony Madafferi. Remember him?

Mr John Sidoti: No.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: No. In September 2004 the Liberal Party received \$51,000 via the Millennium Forum in declared donations from Mr Madafferi. Do members know who he is? He is named in two coronial inquests as being a mafia boss and an alleged hit man. The member for Drummoyne may want to check his facts about Liberal Party donations before he talks about blood money and that sort of stuff.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Let us recap the three points. First, we have a court ruling that says illegal donations need to be challenged and appealed. Secondly, we have Operation Spicer uncovering prohibited donations from developers. Thirdly, now we have \$51,000 in the skyrocket of the Liberal Party from the mafia—from the mob. They did not even get a lobster dinner like the Victorians did. But maybe the member for Drummoyne did—who knows? It is all about the mob; it is all about illegal donations.

Those opposite have not talked about any issues that are important to the men and women of New South Wales. There was nothing about congested roads or overcrowded trains that are skipping stations. There was nothing about the fact that this is the highest-taxing Government in the country. There was nothing about toll roads, nothing about privatisation and nothing about the \$2.2 billion splurge on Sydney stadiums. We do not hear about that any more. It is a massive spend by the Government, but we hear not a word about it. All we have is this trumped-up excuse of a motion. But it turns back on the Government straight away, because it is more guilty than anyone in the Labor Party when it comes to taking illegal donations. [*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Wollongong of a couple of old adages: The louder your voice, the lesser your argument; and empty vessels make the most sound. The Chamber has microphones. There is no need for members to shout. I know that the member for Wollongong was trying to be heard above his colleagues' interjections but, as I said, I want decorum in this debate. When the member carries on in that manner he encourages others to do the same.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:16): I promise not to shout. It was an appalling lack of insight on the part of the Labor Party not to recognise that it had received money from a person convicted of murder. The money was received by the Labor Party—

Mr Stephen Kamper: We didn't know he was a murderer.

Mr Chris Minns: What are you talking about? It wasn't donated from prison.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: When the Labor Party received the money it was advised that Mr Medich was accused of being part of a conspiracy to murder.

Ms Julia Finn: That's not true.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I will give those opposite some free legal advice.

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

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Lawyers are not in the habit of giving advice for free but I will give some to Labor members. In many respects, the undertaking given by the then secretary of the Labor Party—that he received the money and was made aware of the circumstances relating to its donation—amounts to a trust. As a lawyer, I have received money in my trust account on numerous occasions. If on one occasion I said that I would freeze the money, in my view it would constitute the creation of a trust. In many respects, those persons—being Dastyari and Foley—became trustees of a trust and the failure to account for that money in the circumstances amounts to a breach of that trust.

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

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: In fact, it would disqualify them from sitting in this place. If they have spent that money, they should know that there is an equitable principle of tracing it. They ought to be able to show the State where the money is. Where is the money?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Rockdale that if he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Clearly, those opposite need some advice on the charities to which they can potentially donate that money. I suggest that they consider organisations such as Vocal, which provides advice, solace and support to victims of crime. They could also—

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

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: They could perhaps consider the Homicide Victims' Support Group, the NALAG Centre for Loss and Grief, the Witness Assistance Service, Grieflink or the Family and Friends of Missing Persons Unit in New South Wales. They are all victims' charities. Surely Labor has already done the work. This money must be appropriately paid immediately to one of those charities to indicate that the trust with which it is held is being honoured.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:19): I am glad that the legal advice offered by the member for Epping was free because no-one would pay for it. No wonder you are in here, mate. Fair dinkum.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the member for Campbelltown to Standing Order 73, which Labor members have alluded to several times today. Members will be referred to by their correct titles.

Mr GREG WARREN: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I appreciate your support. There is something that those opposite should consider. While the Government seeks out political opportunities, at the heart of this case is the grieving family of a dead man. But what do we see from those opposite? We see a Liberal Party that lives in a glass house and that does not come to this issue with clean hands. Liberal members are seeking to gain an opportunity from a terrible, sad situation. They are misrepresenting and misleading the House for their own political gain. That says everything we ever needed to know about those opposite. What an appalling, immature, unprofessional and scandalous display. Let me tell the member for Epping something for free: You should never seek fortune from another's misfortune. I do not even have to be a lawyer to know that.

While those opposite try to exploit and seek political gain from a terrible situation, they are appealing a decision to repay \$240,000 in illegal donations. There were donations totalling approximately \$600,000 leading up to the 2011 election. During Operation Spicer the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] heard that senior Liberal Party officials used the Millennium Forum and another Liberal-linked entity, the Free Enterprise Foundation, to funnel prohibited donations—including from property developers—in 2010 leading up to the 2011 New South Wales election. ICAC was told that a "substantial part" of the \$700,000 donated to the New South Wales Liberals by the Free Enterprise Foundation before the 2011 election came from illegal donors. Let us get to the facts of the matter. The money was donated over a period, and it is rightfully going to charity. That is already happening. Those opposite know it is happening. Do they not read the paper? [*Time expired.*]

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (16:22): In reply: Ten out of 10 for the Labor Party for trying to deflect. Labor members bought absolutely nothing to the table. All they had to do today was say, "You're correct, we are sorry and we will give the \$260,000 to charity." But they failed miserably. The member for Wollongong tried to deflect the arguments. He represents the table of knowledge and he claims to come into this place with clean hands. I say: Shame on him. The member for Campbelltown also tried to deflect the questions. All he had to do was say, "It is filthy money; give it to a charity."

Mr Greg Warren: That's what they're doing.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: When? Name it now. We want to know when.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the third time.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: He cannot do it. We will not let Labor get away with this. Until it announces that it is going to give the money to charity, we will not cease—every minute of every day. We are not going to give up. If those opposite want free legal advice they will not get any better than that offered by the member for Epping, and they should consider taking it. At the end of the day, this is a very simple argument. Members opposite made a monumental mistake in accepting \$260,000 and then committed at the time to give it back. To date, that has not happened. All members have is a memorandum from their Labor Party boss trying to pork-barrel in Labor marginal seats.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Wollongong that he has been called to order. I remind the member for Rockdale that he is on three calls to order.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Every single member opposite should be ashamed for trying to get all possible value from that dirty, filthy money. This matter will not go away today, tomorrow or the next day. This will be an albatross around the neck of the Leader of the Opposition until he comes clean about what he is going to do. He was in a position of responsibility; he made the call and only he can now come good and donate the money to charity. To date, he has failed miserably. Government members are going to make each and every Opposition member accountable to come good on their promise, and we will not let up until they do.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment of the member for Wollongong be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes	31
Noes	42
Majority.....	11

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P (teller)
Warren, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Leong, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F
Watson, Ms A (teller)

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Provest, Mr G
Speakman, Mr M
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
George, Mr T
Griffin, Mr J
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Rowell, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Sidoti, Mr J
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Chanthivong, Mr A
Cotsis, Ms S
Haylen, Ms J
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N
Mihailuk, Ms T

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Hancock, Mrs S
Hazzard, Mr B

Amendment negatived.

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

The House divided.

Ayes47
Noes26
Majority.....21

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Johnsen, Mr M

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
George, Mr T
Greenwich, Mr A
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G

AYES

Leong, Ms J
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Piper, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Provest, Mr G
 Smith, Ms T F
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

Marshall, Mr A
 Parker, Mr J
 Petinos, Ms E
 Rowell, Mr J
 Speakman, Mr M
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harris, Mr D
 Kamper, Mr S
 Mehan, Mr D
 Scully, Mr P (teller)
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
 Car, Ms P
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Lynch, Mr P
 Minns, Mr C
 Tesch, Ms L
 Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Dib, Mr J
 Foley, Mr L
 Hornery, Ms S
 McDermott, Dr H
 Park, Mr R
 Warren, Mr G

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G
 Grant, Mr T
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Stokes, Mr R

Chanthivong, Mr A
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Haylen, Ms J
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N
 Mihailuk, Ms T

Motion agreed to.*Bills***FARM DEBT MEDIATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018****Second Reading Speech**

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (16:37):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Farm Debt Mediation Amendment Bill 2018 makes a number of important updates to the Farm Debt Mediation Act 1994 following a 2017 review of the legislation and significant stakeholder consultation. The Farm Debt Mediation Act was introduced in 1994 after a long drought, when pressure for bank accountability was mounting. Following on the footsteps of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have since adopted substantially the same framework. This Government is amending the Act to improve the operation of farm debt mediation in this State.

Once the amendments are enacted, the New South Wales Act will form the basis of a move towards national harmonisation of farm debt mediation legislation. Our primary industries comprise a significant part of New South Wales' economy. However, farm businesses are subject to the uncertainties of weather and market fluctuations and as such can operate in boom or bust conditions. There are times when farm businesses are stretched financially, and in some cases this is due to circumstances beyond the control of the producer. This places significant pressure on the farm families relying on income from the farm business and the broader regional community.

This Government is committed to supporting farmers to increase their resilience and risk preparedness through drought and other downturns. The \$300 million NSW Drought Strategy is the primary support measure for farmers. In particular, the Farm Innovation Fund, which is the cornerstone of the strategy, assists with farm

capital infrastructure improvements. Other Drought Strategy measures include skills and training for primary producers, greater access to information and an enhanced network of weather stations across New South Wales, as well as rural resilience officers and rural support workers across the State.

Recently we announced a new addition to the NSW Drought Strategy: the Drought Transport Fund. This new measure provides up to \$20,000 in a seven-year low interest loan to pay for the transport of fodder, water or stock. Despite these assistance measures, there are times when farmers will be unable to service their debts and this is where the Farm Debt Mediation Act comes in. The Act plays an important role in enabling a financial solution to be negotiated when a farm business has difficulty meeting debt repayments. Farm debt mediation enables parties to negotiate options and find solutions that are acceptable to all parties.

I now turn to the details of the bill. The Farm Debt Mediation Amendment Bill 2018 will enhance the accessibility, flexibility and fairness of the Act. The first amendments will extend the protection of this Act to a broader range of primary producers. The definition of "farming operations" will be expanded to include on-farm and offshore aquaculture and farm forestry that are currently outside the scope of the Act. By doing this, the Act will provide a broad and inclusive protective buffer for farmers who are substantially employed in primary production. The definition of "farm machinery" is also being extended to secured farm machinery commonly used on farms, such as vehicles, machines and other implements.

Mediation is an efficient and effective way to resolve financial issues between farmers and creditors. The bill further encourages farmers to seek mediation early, before defaulting on a loan. When mediation occurs early farmers are in a stronger bargaining position at a time when their emotional stress is lower. The bill includes amendments that provide an incentive for early mediation by enabling farmers to ask their creditors to mediate before they default on their loan. If a farmer later defaults on the loan, the Act also requires creditors to provide one mandatory invitation to mediate before taking enforcement action. The Act does not preclude further voluntary mediations if this is what the parties want.

In addition, the Liberal-Nationals Government aims to discourage situations of the past, where multiple mediations sometimes resulted in a number of loan restructures, compounding debt and, in some situations, bankruptcy. The requirement to offer only one mandatory mediation minimises this risk and encourages farmers and creditors to attend mediation with a willingness to find a viable and durable solution. I turn now to the third main area of amendments. These amendments protect farmers who, under the previous provisions of the Act, may not have been aware that a creditor had invited them to mediate.

The bill includes provisions for serving notices under the Act and makes time frames for responding to notices clearer and more flexible. The Rural Assistance Authority will be authorised to allow a farmer extra time to respond to an invitation to mediate in certain circumstances, including if the farmer has experienced or is experiencing extreme events such as natural disasters or physical and mental health issues. These changes will reduce the number of situations where a farmer has not responded to a notice to mediate and a creditor begins enforcement action to recover a farm debt believing the mediation offer has been declined. If a farmer has been subject to these extreme events it can be unfair to deem the farmer to have lost the protection of the Act.

I turn now to the fourth main area of amendments. The bill introduces a penalty to discourage enforcement action being taken contrary to the Act, in addition to the enforcement action being declared void. The maximum penalty for individual creditors who take unlawful enforcement action will be set at 500 penalty units. Currently it is \$55,000. For corporations, there is a maximum penalty of 2,500 penalty units or \$275,000. These amendments respond to instances where some creditors have foreclosed on farm properties without offering mediation.

There have been several instances of litigation in the courts where farmers have challenged enforcement action by creditors for failing to offer mediation. This penalty ensures compliance with the Act before taking any enforcement action. The fifth area of amendments relates to the role of the mediator and the mediation process. These amendments clarify the role of the mediator and the requirements for notifying, arranging, conducting and concluding mediations. This will ensure that neither party is disadvantaged by the mediation process. The bill also increases the penalty for unlawfully disclosing confidential information relating to the mediation to a maximum of 100 penalty units, currently \$11,000.

The sixth area of amendments relates to decisions made by the Rural Assistance Authority in administering the Farm Debt Mediation Act. The authority will now have the power to require farmers and creditors to provide the necessary information to enable it to determine whether the Act applies. In addition, farmers, creditors and mediators will have access to internal review of certain decisions made by the authority, consistent with administrative law principles. This review will be conducted by a person not substantially involved in the original decision. The Act currently does not recognise mediations that take place in other jurisdictions where the farmer owns mortgaged property in New South Wales and elsewhere.

The amendments will correct this situation by enabling mediations concluded under corresponding legislation in another jurisdiction to be recognised in New South Wales. These amendments will contribute to the harmonisation of farm debt mediation laws nationally and provide a model Act for those States and Territories that do not yet have farm debt mediation legislation. Importantly, nationally harmonised farm debt mediation legislation will enable the consistent interpretation and application of farm debt mediation legislation by lenders, borrowers and other decision-makers across Australia. This bill responds to the findings of a review of the Act in 2017.

Farm debt mediators, financial counsellors, lawyers, farmers, industry bodies and accountants provided feedback to that review. There is broad stakeholder support for the key features of the Act including its simplicity, flexibility and structured approach to informal dispute resolution and its procedural fairness and equitable cost-sharing. There is also strong support for amendments to progress the national harmonisation of farm debt mediation nationally including recognising interstate mediations. This bill introduces important changes to improve the operation of very good legislation. These amendments will support farmers and creditors to resolve debt issues successfully. The amendments also provide an improved and updated model of farm debt mediation for other jurisdictions. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:47): I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in response to the Farm Debt Mediation Amendment Bill 2018. The Opposition supports the bill, which will update and modernise the 1994 legislation following a thorough consultation process carried out by the Rural Assistance Authority. The original Farm Debt Mediation Act 1994 was a response to drought conditions in the 1990s, as the Minister stated. I note that the New South Wales legislation has been adopted by Victoria and Queensland. It would seem that imitation is the ultimate source of flattery. It is timely that we debate this bill at this juncture, a time when drought conditions are lingering across many parts of the State and even more parts of the State are soon projected to go into drought.

Climate change is presenting a whole range of challenges, not least the uncertainty it is bringing to food and fibre producers in New South Wales and right across the nation. The challenge for farmers and the Government is to ensure sustainable, fair programs and processes that acknowledge these emerging threats. Farm debt mediation is a structured negotiation process in which the independent mediator assists the farmer and the creditor in attempting to reach agreement on the present arrangements and the future conduct of financial relations between them. The object of the mediation under the Farm Debt Mediation Act 1994 is to provide for the efficient and equitable resolution of farm debt disputes. Mediation is required before a creditor can take possession of a property or any other enforcement action under a farm mortgage. On many occasions this has allowed the farmer to save the property. In 2017 the Rural Assistance Authority undertook a review of the Act. Farm debt mediators, financial counsellors, lawyers, farmers, industry bodies and accountants responded and engaged with the process.

Unlike much of the consultation undertaken by this Government, the process in this case has been sound and I believe the amendments improve the Act. I will refer to the broad elements of the bill under seven key points. One, the bill extends the Act to cover a broad range of primary producers incorporating operations such as on farm, and offshore aquaculture and farm forestry. Two, it provides an incentive for early mediation by allowing farmers to ask their creditors to mediate before they default on their loans. Three, the bill also makes provision for the serving of notifications to mediate and makes time frames for responding to notices clearer and more flexible, allowing the Rural Assistance Authority to intervene and allow the farmer more time to respond to an invitation to mediate.

Four, the proposed amendments also introduce a penalty to discourage enforcement action being taken contrary to the Act, particularly in instances where creditors have foreclosed without offering mediation. We can imagine in this day and age in light of the royal commission into banks that this has to be a positive development. We have to get the future of farms out of the hands of those who are allegedly representing the banks. Five, the bill clarifies the role of the mediator and the requirements for notifying, arranging, conducting and concluding mediations as well as increasing penalties for unlawfully disclosing confidential information. Six, the Rural Assistance Authority will be able to require farmers and creditors to provide the information to allow the authority to determine whether the Act applies, along with access to internal reviews for both sides. Seven, the bill enables mediations concluded under corresponding legislation in other jurisdictions to be recognised in New South Wales.

This leads me to a very important part of this bill and something we need to be very alert to in New South Wales where there is bipartisan support for the bill. We should monitor and pursue a harmonised, national approach to farm debt mediation. I urge the Minister and the Government to press their Federal counterparts to consider introducing Federal legislation for farm debt mediation. We on this side of the Chamber must do the same with our Federal counterparts. I will explain the importance of Federal legislation on this front. Due to the

fact that farm debt mediation is only available in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland I have heard tales of institutions, such as banks, moving the location of where accounts are held to States and Territories where such legislation does not exist, thus allowing the banks—those very honest, or should I say not so honest and very dodgy dealers—to shift the location of the debt and thus seek to intervene on a farm debt under State legislation where protections are not in place for the farmer.

The banks shift the location of the debt, but the farmer cannot shift the location of the farm. Given the daily horrors emerging out of the royal banking commission, this will not come as much of a surprise to people reading their *Hansard* or listening to this speech. We need Federal legislation to ensure fairness exists between farmers and financial institutions, regardless of the location of the farmer; and, more importantly, any shonky dealings of the financial institution as to where the account is held. The NSW Farmers Association has advised that it supports this bill, which it believes will streamline the process, improve accountability and better enable transparency and fairness.

We must acknowledge that climate change is creating risk for our primary producers. This nation has always been a land of extremes of droughts and floods, but recent decades are proving that this climate variability is becoming more extreme. Governments must put in place programs and systems that will be best able to respond to these changing circumstances. They must ensure that when debt threatens a particular operation that processes and rules are in place to allow for a fair and reasonable opportunity to work through the issues. Banks should not be able to game the system in a morally corrupt way to avoid good legislation such as this. I urge the Government and the Opposition to press their Federal counterparts to convince the Federal Government to bring in national laws to ensure an equal playing field regardless of where the financial institution is and where the account is held. I commend the Farm Debt Mediation Amendment Bill 2018 to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Matter of Public Importance

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:54): The New South Wales Government is proud once again to support the Safer Australian Roads and Highways Group's Yellow Ribbon National Road Safety Week initiative. This week, the Sydney Harbour Bridge is being lit up in yellow and will remain yellow for the duration of Yellow Ribbon National Road Safety Week along with a number of other monuments and buildings across the State and country to focus the nation's attention on road safety. For a long time this nation has been concerned about road trauma. A number of government initiatives have led to education campaigns, television advertising blitzes, work in schools and more. Historically, much of this has been somewhat anonymous, wrapped up as government programs and advertisements. What I see changing is that so much of the driving force for road safety education is now coming from the community.

The groups doing the work, developing the programs and lobbying governments for change share this characteristic: they bear the name of or have a direct relationship with a person who lost their life on our roads. This represents a transition: an element of personal pain and loss is embedded in much of this work. It is important that we do not simply know that local monuments are being coloured yellow for National Road Safety Week; we must also understand the link to the community. In this case, to 23-year-old Sarah Frazer who lost her life along with a tow truck driver beside a road that was not built to standard. There was insufficient room for a driver to pull over in the breakdown lane and remain safely out of harm's way. Sarah's father established the Safer Australian Roads and Highways [SARAH] Group to ensure more lives are not lost through preventable and clearly foreseeable situations such as the one that took Sarah's life.

This week is an important time to reflect upon our own behaviour on the road and to think about what is driving our road toll. Our number one killer remains speed and last year 167 lives—43 per cent of our road toll—could have been saved if people had slowed down. The second-biggest killer is fatigue, with 75 people dying because they were too tired to drive. An astonishing 67 of them—nearly 90 per cent—were on country roads. While decades of evidence show that seatbelts save lives in a crash, last year 30 people were killed because someone was not wearing one. It is obvious to me that we need a cultural shift in our attitudes to road safety and how each of us behave on the road. Driving is a privilege not a right.

I have the up-to-date figures on the New South Wales road toll for the 12 months to 1 May 2018. Over this period the total number of people killed on New South Wales roads reached 411, which is an increase of 47 on the year to 1 May 2017. In the Sydney metro area, the toll was 102 deaths, which is up from 88 the year before. In the rest of New South Wales there were 309 deaths compared with 266 in the previous year. When we see how this looks on a graph, the image is truly horrifying. More must be done to stem the carnage. Over the decades, the concerted efforts of government, industry, community organisations and road safety advocates have saved

thousands of lives on New South Wales roads. In 1978—40 years ago—we reached a peak of 1,384 fatalities in New South Wales. By 2014 we had driven the number of deaths down to 307, which was the lowest road toll since records began in 1923. Tragically, since 2015 the road toll has been slowly increasing.

As too many people know from personal and painful experience, our road trauma statistics are not just numbers; they are real people who leave family and friends behind and will never be the same. Then there are those who are seriously injured who face a life of pain. Road trauma does not affect just one family; it can affect whole communities. In February, the Government announced an ongoing commitment to saving lives on the State's roads with the launch of the Road Safety Plan 2021. It resets our priorities to work towards the goal of a 30 per cent reduction in road deaths by 2021. The plan brings our total commitment to targeted road safety programs from the Community Road Safety Fund to \$1.4 billion over five years. It includes a new Saving Lives On Country Roads safety infrastructure upgrade program with an initial \$125 million commitment.

Those living outside of Sydney make up only one-third of the population of New South Wales, but last year deaths on country roads made up approximately 75 per cent of our road toll. Under this program, we will roll out rumble strips, lifesaving flexible barriers and other proven and cost-effective safety works to help prevent run-off road and head-on crashes at high-risk locations across the State. Other key highlights in the plan include the biggest roadside drug-testing program in Australia, which will double the number of mobile drug tests to 200,000 each year by the end of 2020 with an expansion to include cocaine testing. These are just some of the ways the Government is working to improve safety on our roads.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:59): I acknowledge National Road Safety Week in the New South Wales Parliament. Roads infrastructure is important for every electorate, but few more so than the Blue Mountains electorate. The highway is a way of life for almost every resident of the Blue Mountains. Not only is it our connection to jobs and commerce in Sydney or Lithgow, it is also our main arterial road between each village and town to the shopping centres of Springwood, Katoomba and Winmalee. Likewise for constituents in Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine and Mount Tomah at the northern end of my electorate, the Bells Line of Road is a similar fact of daily life for every resident.

For those reasons, road safety is front of mind for everyone in the Blue Mountains electorate. We must engage with a major highway just to get from one end of a small village in Warrimoo or Bullaburra to another. Truck drivers and tourists use the highway and both are an essential aspect of our economy, but governments and communities must grapple with how best to achieve a happy coexistence between trucks and traffic and the local residents who live along the highway. Therefore, we in the mountains are absolutely aware of the significance of National Road Safety Week. We are also aware that it was an initiative kicked off by one of our own. Dear Peter Frazer tragically lost his daughter Sarah Frazer to a road accident on the Hume Highway in 2012. Peter has been unrelenting in his campaign in the years since that tragic incident to ensure that motorists drive so others survive. I acknowledge also the tow truck driver who went to Sarah's aid who lost his life. I also note my friends and Blue Mountains residents Jasmine Payget and Laurie Strathdee who lost their son Rian in 2004 in an as yet unsolved hit-and-run incident with a truck on the Hume Highway near the Southern Highlands.

Many long-term Blue Mountains residents would recall the horror road tolls during the 1990s. The toll has been reduced by the widening and separation of the highway between Glenbrook and Katoomba. However, there is always more to do as every year we aim to reduce the toll to zero. This National Road Safety Week, I reiterate the need for us all to drive so others survive. As individuals this means paying closer attention while driving, not driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or while feeling tired and fatigued. For government it means providing adequate funding to upgrade road infrastructure to reduce as far as possible the risk of crashes on our highways and motorways, and changing laws to ensure people slow down when near emergency services and breakdown service operators. Finally, it means ensuring the trucking industry also pays its workers adequately so that they are not forced to undertake dangerous shifts that put themselves and other road users at risk. I commend the matter of public importance.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:02): As Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport, it gives me great pleasure to address the House on National Road Safety Week. I commend the member for Blue Mountains for her contribution to this discussion and the member for Albury for raising it. Everyone across this great State is affected by National Road Safety Week. I put on record some of the statistics and scale of road trauma in Tamworth. For the five-year period between 2012 and 2016, 39 people were killed and 354 were seriously injured. The fatality rate of 8.4 per population of 100,000 is almost twice as high as the New South Wales State average of 4.5. During 2017, 13 fatalities were recorded and as at midnight on 19 March, six fatalities were recorded for 2018. When we ask who is involved, almost 50 per cent of those killed were aged 50 years and over, and males made up 87 per cent of fatalities and 66 per cent of serious injuries. More than 70 per cent of the serious casualties were to motor vehicle occupants. What was the cause? Speeding was a factor in 46 per cent of fatalities and 32 per cent of serious injuries. Fatigue was a factor in 46 per cent of fatalities

and 20 per cent of serious injuries. Alcohol was a factor in 13 per cent of fatalities and 9 per cent of serious injuries. Illicit drugs were a factor in 13 per cent of fatalities.

I am the father of a 19-year-old boy who lives in Canberra who now has his license and is traversing the highways and byways. We implore him to be safe, keep safe, stay alert, pay close attention, do not get distracted while driving and rest when appropriate. We live in Tamworth, which is a good eight-hour drive to Canberra. I say the same thing to my daughter who is on her L-plates. We are trying to ensure that, with professional driver help, she has all the tools she needs when she gets behind the wheel to stay safe. Even when she is with her girlfriends who are on their P-plates the last thing we say to them is, "Drive carefully." We sincerely hope that they will do that because when they are behind the wheel the lives of other people are in their hands, not only those in the vehicle. They need to be spatially aware of what is happening around them. Please be safe, keep it safe in National Road Safety Week.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (17:05): In reply: I thank the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Tamworth for their contributions to this matter of public importance. In my electorate of Albury there have been three recent car crashes, each of which resulted in the deaths of two people. All three crashes occurred on Sundays, in the afternoon or evening. Two were single-vehicle accidents. On the afternoon of Easter Sunday 1 April, a vehicle careered off the road at Burrumbuttock, hit a tree and burst into flames. Two men aged 84 died in the single-vehicle accident. On the evening of Sunday 22 April, two young men died after their car collided with an earthen road barrier at the end of Cadell Street, Corowa. The car became airborne and crashed into a garden shed. Police have praised the actions of Corowa nearby residents who responded to the fiery crash. They got to the scene within seconds. I understand that high speed is being investigated. Again, it was a single-vehicle accident.

At about 7.00 p.m. on the evening of Sunday 29 April Graham and Tracey Crawshaw heard a loud bang out the front of their home on the Gerogery Road. Approaching one of the two damaged vehicles they found a woman in shock. She had freed herself from one of the wrecked cars, but in the other was a woman aged 68 who had died and her husband who was critically injured. The neighbour performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation and supported the man until paramedics arrived. The driver was later pronounced dead. As members can understand, the Crawshaws were left shaken by the accident.

Inspector Scott Russell, quoted in the *Border Mail*, summed up the situation well, saying that such incidents affect a large number of people. "Three double fatals in a month, there's family mourning, there's friends mourning, and there's a community mourning", he said. "These people belong to people and you've got to think of those consequences. It affects a lot of people." This third and latest double-fatality crash came at the end of a major traffic operation that detected a large number of offences. Education must continue. Recently in my electorate a number of programs have been run for secondary students to bring home to young people the reality of the impacts from a car crash involving serious injury or death.

I attended two of these. One was presented by the Blue Datto organisation. The other presentation was quite confronting in its realism, aided by presenters who had firsthand experience of road trauma and its effects. Feedback from students was, despite the realism, overwhelmingly positive as an education experience. However, even that does not provide any guarantee that at some point they may face difficult decisions amongst their peers as to whether to continue in a car that is being driven dangerously. But, of course, there is no absolute guarantee of road safety because this is a battle without end, and that is why National Road Safety Week is such an important event to mark.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I commend the member for Albury for bringing this matter of public importance to the House, given its significance.

Bills

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ROAD SAFETY) BILL 2018

Returned

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

Private Members' Statements

FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:09): I voice a number of serious concerns brought to my attention recently by local residents who have sought my help. For those members who do not know, Weston Street is a small dead-end road in Fairfield. Weston Street is home to several houses, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Parish,

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School, and a before and after school child care centre, which is due to commence operating shortly. Surrounding the street is also the Fairfield RSL, Fairfield train station, a large block of apartments, a number of eateries and businesses, and the Fairfield City Leisure Centre and Fairfield Adventure Park. This once quiet street is now known for its hustle and bustle, as car and foot traffic ramp up tremendously on weekday mornings, afternoons and weekends, not to mention the 700-plus school children in attendance Monday to Friday and the copious number of parishioners visiting the church on weekends.

This small cul-de-sac is approximately 120 metres long, and is well known for its limited access and the onerous traffic queues that occur within Weston Street, along the adjoining Vine Street and quite often up Lawson Street, which spans back to the overpass that heads into the Fairfield central business district. I was astonished to learn of not one but two development applications [DAs] currently before Fairfield City Council for the construction of two six-storey residential apartment buildings, with a combined total of 81 new units, bang in the centre of this tremendously small stretch of overdeveloped roadway.

Since learning about these two DAs there has been community outrage, with local residents, home owners, business owners, and concerned parishioners voicing their strong opposition to the construction of two six-storey apartment blocks to be located in this incredibly busy location. Their concerns were compounded when I discovered the lack of due process afforded to local residents and stakeholders who will be directly impacted by these proposed developments. Correspondence relating to exhibition periods for the DAs were dated the same date that the exhibition period commenced, but the letters were not received until weeks later, which gave locals very little time to view the application and plans, and put forth their objections within the specified period.

Local stakeholders have also raised a number of serious objections to both of the proposed projects for a number of reasons. It was incredibly concerning to learn that no traffic survey had been carried out as part of any traffic assessments in the area, no consideration was given to the school's drop-off and pick-up arrangements, and no consideration was given to the parish activities or the safety of the schoolchildren moving within Weston Street. Grave security and safety concerns have been voiced, as the six-storey units will not only directly overlook people's homes, but also into classrooms of the adjacent school, and the playgrounds of primary and pre-school children that is soon to be built. This is simply unacceptable.

The issues I have raised today represent only a portion of the concerns raised by local residents objecting to these two DAs, as both projects will result in significant overdevelopment of this location and will adversely impact on the area. It has been made abundantly clear that should these projects go ahead as proposed, they would have an adverse impact on not only on parking and horrendous traffic congestion at this location, but also there would be an inherently larger risk to all pedestrians and motorists in the area, especially around Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School. In light of these concerns, I have made representations to Fairfield City Council and the Minister for Planning with regard to the community's objections, accompanied by approximately 1,000 signatures that were collected within a few days of residents receiving notice of the DA. In light of the overwhelming community opposition to these proposals, I will hold a community meeting this Sunday at Weston Street from 11.30 a.m. to further discuss these issues with affected local residents and stakeholders to ensure their concerns are being heard and listened to.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:14): Again I am humbled by the superhuman effort of the NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS], NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Police Force, State Emergency Service [SES], community firefighting volunteers and hundreds of volunteers who saved my community from devastation by the Holsworthy Menai fires that raged from 13 to 16 April. After receiving updates every 15 minutes, the situation was not getting any better, and by early evening on Saturday 14 April I was of the opinion that the fire was heading for a massive disaster of the likes of the Como fires of the 1990s, when hundreds of homes were either lost or damaged, lives were lost and RFS personnel were injured. Through Saturday night the wind dropped for a time, which allowed firefighters to get in front of the main mass of the fire. At this stage the fire front had not crossed Heathcote Road, but by Sunday morning the fire had jumped Heathcote Road.

Since being elected in 2011, my worst nightmare has been what my community now faced. Early on Sunday 15 April we were summoned to RFS headquarters at Lidcombe to have a briefing with the Premier and my colleagues the member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbon, the member for East Hills, Glenn Brookes, and the member for Cronulla, Mark Speakman, representing the Minister for Emergency Services. Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons laid it on the line that later that day we were going to face one of the most challenging times our communities had faced for decades. Without overstating the facts, a westerly wind was expected to pick up to 100 kilometres per hour that afternoon, whipping up the fire from controlled to out of control and heading straight for my community of Menai. The fire front was generating temperatures in excess of 1,600 degrees, which means that flora was bursting into flame hundreds of metres in front of the fire. This is the environment that our volunteers

were working in. The endless training, modern equipment and great management teams ensured that everyone was kept as safe as possible.

On Sunday afternoon another briefing was organised at Heathcote RFS regional headquarters, with the Prime Minister in attendance. Again, there was no good news. My colleagues and I attended a press conference with the Prime Minister, and I went back to the situation room where RFS, NSW Fire and Rescue, SES, police and council members were gathered. I approached our local police superintendent. His face told the story. It was time for me to get out and leave the experts to their work. The winds, as expected, had picked up and air support was having very little impact because the wind was blowing at 100 kilometres per hour. This was a full-blown emergency. Electronic alerts had been sent informing residents to enact their fire plans and seek shelter if they had chosen to stay. This was not what we wanted to hear.

I had posted a Facebook message at the Lidcombe RFS headquarters earlier that morning warning residents that it was time to react to the fire. In the last seven years I have sent out a surviving summer emergency booklet containing information about the implementation of a fire plan. Thankfully, many people had heeded the advice and had set into train their fire evacuation plans and left their homes to seek shelter in evacuation housing or with relatives and friends. The elderly, sick, infirm and young children heeded the earlier warnings and left early. That left our heroes to go about their work unheeded instead of being concerned about residents' wellbeing. The firestorm that eventuated was something that even the most seasoned firefighters had not seen for decades—the perfect storm. Everything was against us: The dry fuel on the ground, little rain for weeks and low humidity all added up to the worst conditions ever seen so late in the season, and in autumn to boot.

On Monday we attended a thank-you session for the troops at Menai RFS station, because the worst was finally over and my colleagues and I sighed with relief that our State's volunteer heroes had pulled off a miracle. Every electorate within the Greater Sydney area was involved or on call. RFS and NSW fireys from the electorates of my mates, including the member for Terrigal, along with RFS in Dural, Wentworth Falls, Glenbrook, Campbelltown to name a few, had all helped to fight the fire. As a member of Parliament representing a bushland seat, this is not the best scenario. Recently, I stood here congratulating our emergency services for their action in fighting the Royal National Park fires. Today I thank them again. I thank God no lives were lost and no substantial property loss was sustained, again because of these mostly volunteer organisations. On behalf of my community, I owe our emergency services another big thank you. I repeat: volunteers spend hours and hours of training in preparation for events like the one we experienced in mid-April. This year all I and other members can say is, "Thank you".

BATHURST ELECTORATE JOB GROWTH

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (17:19):

It gives me pleasure to inform this House about the jobs being created in the Bathurst electorate, where there has been a jobs bonanza. The New South Wales Government is working in partnership with small businesses in Bathurst to create opportunities for young people to get and keep a job, because they need certainty that jobs will be maintained in the local area. Last week I caught up with the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, when he spoke at the Lithgow District Chamber of Commerce. We spoke about the importance of small businesses in our communities, especially in regional areas. These small businesses may only employ a couple of people or even up to 20 people, but they are the backbone of the economy in New South Wales. Many of the small businesses are owned and run by the hardworking mums and dads of this State, who are critical to our local economies.

I am very pleased that Nu-Rock has been established in the Lithgow area, with the help of an interest-free loan of \$500,000 from the New South Wales Government. Nu-Rock will turn ash from the coal-fired power station into concrete blocks, which will be lighter and cheaper than concrete blocks that are currently on the market. Nu-Rock will create 21 jobs in the Lithgow City Council Local Government Area, which will make a significant difference to the people of the area. I believe demand for this product will grow in the local area, across the nation and beyond, which could result in more than 100 jobs being created in the very near future. When the Deputy Premier was in Lithgow, we also toured Simplot, a well-known manufacturing plant in the Bathurst electorate. Simplot makes the Chiko Roll, which is popular with a lot of people, perhaps with a can of Coke. The Deputy Premier talked about many young tradies grabbing a Chiko Roll and a can of Coke to eat on their work site.

In 2013 Simplot faced difficult times, but the New South Wales Government partnered with Simplot in the form of payroll tax support to enable Simplot to retain jobs at its manufacturing plant. At the time Simplot was talking about reducing its staff to about 75, but with the support of around \$1 million given to Simplot by the New South Wales Government, Simplot has increased its workforce by about 48 and now about 123 people are employed at the Simplot manufacturing plant. It is important to note that five years later Simplot is investing \$12 million in its plant, which means it will produce 18 million Chiko Rolls every year. This will ensure that those jobs have a future in the Bathurst electorate.

Last week the Deputy Premier and I made a significant announcement in relation to tourism. We all know about the iconic Jenolan Caves because many of us have visited the caves, probably with our families. The New South Wales Government will invest \$8.5 million in that site as part of our Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund. That money will be used for the construction of walking tracks and the improvement of the Blue Lake. A new education centre will be established along with a visitors centre, and a theatre will be built. This investment will create an additional 40 jobs during the construction phase and an additional 50 ongoing jobs. About 250,000 people visit the Jenolan Caves each year, and there is the potential for this number to grow by 150,000 following the development, for a total of 400,000 visitors per year. The development of this site will help to support the local economy as increased visitor numbers boost the incomes of cafes, restaurants and accommodation providers in the area. This jobs growth is about growing the Bathurst electorate and creating opportunities. Once again it is the New South Wales Government that is facilitating this growth.

PALM BEACH AND WHALE BEACH ASSOCIATION 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (17:24): Today I congratulate the Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association on reaching its one hundredth anniversary of service to the local community this year. This not-for-profit volunteer residents group is a tireless advocate for the local community and its wonderful, unique and special sylvan environment. The men and women who make up the association work hard to defend and nurture the stretch of peninsula from Whale Beach to Barrenjoey Headland on Sydney's northern beaches and the extraordinary waters in between—it is my understanding that the waters of Broken Bay is the only place in the world where five bodies of water meet, in an extraordinary display of natural beauty. With the Pacific Ocean to the east and the Pittwater to the west, this is a truly exceptional corner of outer metropolitan Sydney where residents and members of the public can enjoy the spectacular natural beauty of the oceans, beaches and bushland and be part of the fun, outgoing and strongly bonded local community with an active social conscience and sense of public service.

Originally called the Palm Beach Progress Association when it was established in 1918, the group became the Palm Beach Association in 1944. It then amalgamated with the Whale Beach Preservation Society in 1998 to become the Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association in 2005. The association was instrumental in the establishment of Palm Beach's Governor Phillip Park—a stretch of green space nestled on the thin tongue of land bounded by the ocean beach, Barrenjoey Headland and the Pittwater—and for its maintenance, improvement and protection ever since. In 1925, the association proposed that this strip of land become a public park and, with the blessing of the local council, Governor Phillip Park was born. Today the park is an invaluable public asset where people from all walks of life and different communities can savour the picturesque surroundings of Palm Beach and have a picnic or barbecue, and where children can play in the truly outstanding playground.

The term "recreational area" is a fairly common phrase used to describe parks and open green spaces, but Governor Phillip Park is a place that really grasps the core meaning of "re-creation". This is a place where you can bask in the untrammelled glory of nature and find refreshment and renewal of body, mind and spirit. The Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association is very proud, passionate and protective of this park. It is but one of the association's many wonderful achievements over the past century of active service for our community. In 1922 the association pushed for repairs to Sunrise Road, an important residential thoroughfare, paying the princely sum of £26 3s to ensure the works were completed. In 1920, it fought to get polling booths set up in Palm Beach, which provided a vital outlet of democratic expression for the local community. It has worked to reclaim and protect the sand dunes, opposed off-shore sand mining and fought on many occasions to defend the character, amenity and natural environment of the local area. Indeed, the core objectives of the Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association are—as stated in its mission statement—to "protect and enhance the natural beauty of the area and protect its residential amenity".

Since its inception, association members have been passionate and ferocious advocates for the natural environment the local community loves and cherishes. They recognise that protecting our natural environment is foundational to the wellbeing of the local community and the local economy. One only has to climb to the top of Barrenjoey Headland and look down on the ocean, beaches and bushland that make this area so special to realise how much poorer we would be if this were degraded or destroyed. The Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association's commitment to protecting and improving local amenity has also been key to making this area such a wonderful place in which to live and to visit. Local communities can often become anxious about growth, and this is understandable. We can see countless past examples of how growth that is poorly managed can have significant negative impact, and not be the equivalent of human progress and of making life better for everyone. It is absolutely vital that, when we do grow as a local community, as a city, state and nation, we ensure that the public first and foremost reap the benefits of that growth. That growth should be done in a way that recognises an area's ecology, community and society.

It is through the work of the Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association, and other organisations like it, that we can ensure local communities have their say loudly and clearly on decisions that affect them. The association's century of community advocacy has ensured that the best interests of their local community are front of mind with decision-makers at all times. My local community lives and thrives on our spirit of volunteering and public service. Whether it is through our surf lifesaving clubs, bush care groups, cultural organisations or local community associations, giving back to our local community is a vital part of what makes Pittwater such a special place. I salute the Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association for its part in ensuring that that public service ethos burns brightly in our local community. I thank serving committee members, including President Professor Richard West, AM, Vice President Virginia Christensen, Vice President John Warburton, Treasurer Douglas Maher, Secretary Janette Davie, AM, and honorary architect Bruce James. I congratulate them again for reaching a century of distinguished service to their local residents, and I look forward to attending the one hundredth annual general meeting next week.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:29): Meg, who is 60 years old, lives with her 90-year-old mum. Last quarter the electricity bill for just the two of them was \$800. Meg has told me they are very careful with their electricity use and they generally try to live in only two rooms of their house. I was very happy to tell Meg about the Woy Woy: Free Bring Your Bills Day & Community Expo to be held at the wonderful Peninsula Community Centre on 3 May 2018. It is a fabulous place to visit but it saddens me greatly that tomorrow so many people will be lining up for help with their bills, especially their electricity bills. The St Vincent de Paul Society informed me that last year it exhausted its annual rebates in just one of these quarterly sessions. Families in my electorate tell me that they have to choose between food and electricity—and this is before the costs of winter heating are added to their electricity bills. They are resorting to having a good cooked meal at Mary Mac's Place or Coast Shelter to get them through the week.

Today I also speak on behalf of the increasing number of homeless people on the Central Coast. I thank Mary Mac's Place and Coast Shelter for supporting our vulnerable people. As I said, they provide regular meals and outreach services for people who are unable to provide for themselves. I also thank Orange Sky Laundry. It provides a mobile facility for people who need to launder their clothes. I have already heard good reports from the stakeholders who contributed to the forum on the Central Coast Council's Central Coast Affordable and Alternative Housing Strategy that was held today. The strategy aims to provide a coordinated and systematic approach that will inform the delivery of services, create opportunities for innovation and create partnerships to address this issue in our community. This Government promised that thousands of homes would be financed under the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, yet the number of homeless people on the Central Coast continues to increase. Has the Government delivered?

In recent years home prices and rental costs have risen rapidly and in my electorate many happy people have moved because they could no longer afford to live there. Public housing homes have also been sold to local developers for undisclosed prices. It was Pacific Link Housing, our local community housing provider, that identified the need for affordable and social housing. Pacific Link Housing has worked very hard to ensure it receives block funding to ensure that its developments come to fruition. I commend Pacific Link which, in partnership with Evolve Housing, has successfully built 30 new social and affordable units in a facility in Woy Woy. Local people are thrilled to have been offered the opportunity to live in affordable accommodation in their local community. One lady who, after living on a friend's farm in southern New South Wales, was able to move back home to the coast, and a young guy on a small income was able to afford to live close by his nan in her sunset years. This great success happened very quickly with the provision of block funding: approval and built. In what other electorates besides Gosford are we seeing such examples in New South Wales?

Last week in a meeting with the NSW Council of Social Service it was revealed that the 30 units we have in Woy Woy are included in the total 47 new social and affordable housing properties that have been developed across the coast by this Government under the Social and Affordable Housing Fund. The Government is spending billions of dollars on stadiums and it is receiving millions of dollars on public housing assets sold, but what are the disadvantaged people in New South Wales receiving? The two new stadiums are worth more than \$2 billion but who will benefit after this one-off build? The Government can justify spending billions on stadiums, yet it cannot increase the pot of funding to support early intervention reform for all the community groups that require this support. Imagine what the result would be if the Government invested the same amount it is spending on the two stadiums into human services to create jobs, provide houses and support the health of the people of New South Wales.

I commend the Government for turning its gaze to closing the gap on health and wellbeing outcomes for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, but it is not providing the additional funds to do that. This Government is merely relocating early intervention reform initiative funds. This will hurt other vulnerable communities and leave

more vulnerable Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians worse off. Recipients will see service gaps. So instead of investing the money to do it correctly, it is doing two things badly. Robbing Peter to pay Paul will not solve the problems which require early intervention support in this State. I express my disappointment at the Government's lack of action to improve the wellbeing of the disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our community. Indeed, I will continue to express my disappointment until we have a government that cares about our most vulnerable people.

MANY ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:34): Last week I attended a number of services around the electorate of Manly to commemorate Anzac Day 2018, in this final year of the centenary of Anzac. In the lead-up to Anzac Day I hosted a community evening for the Invictus Games at Manly Life Saving Club. The evening featured a panel discussion that focused on the power of sport and social connection to help service men and women overcome both the physical and mental challenges they face as a result of injuries sustained whilst serving our country. We also discussed what lessons everyday people could take from the mental resilience shown by our modern veterans.

I thank Adrian Talbot, who is an Afghanistan veteran and an Invictus Games London 2014 competitor; Garth Callendar, a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan and author of *After the Blast*; senior Army psychologist Jacqueline Costello; and Ben Webb, an Afghanistan veteran and manager of the Northern Beaches Veterans Centre, for giving up their time to be panel members. I also recognise the support of Freshwater Community Bank and Manly Life Saving Club.

The Invictus community evening sparked a discussion about what legacy the Games wanted to leave and how we can continue to honour the Anzac spirit as we open a new chapter post the centenary of Anzac. Across the four Anzac services I attended—the dawn service held at the Manly Warringah War Memorial Park, the commemorative service held at Harbord Diggers in Freshwater, the commemoration service held at the Manly War Memorial on The Corso, and the afternoon at North Manly Bowling Club—the mix of ages in attendance demonstrated the opportunity that exists for the Invictus Games to deliver an important message and to introduce the challenges and opportunities of the modern veteran to a new audience.

I thank the Manly Warringah War Memorial Park Remembrance Trust, in particular President Mr Bob Giltinan, along with past President Mr David Hickey, for their organisation of the Manly Dam service. In the words of the trust, their vision for the War Memorial at Manly Dam is to "acknowledge all persons who gave their lives, served or are serving Australia in the armed forces and civilian support services throughout the years and include those who work and strive for world peace." I appreciated their kind invitation to attend the service and to pay my respects.

I also thank the Harbord RSL Sub-Branch and the Mounties Group for their invitation to address the Freshwater community at their commemorative service. I have been fortunate to work with Mr Sean Rout of the Harbord RSL Sub-Branch on many projects, including a soil collection undertaken at Jacka Park in Freshwater for the New South Wales ANZAC Memorial at Hyde Park. Mr Rout delivered a moving recount of two Freshwater heroes: Joseph Saunders and Fred Reynolds. The address from young Nara Jordi of Harbord Public School was a highlight of the service. Sean and the Mounties Group continue to make the Harbord Diggers commemorative service one of the finest on Anzac Day.

I also recognise the Northern Beaches Council events team, in particular Sabrina Shearer. They are a supremely professional outfit, who work incredibly hard to support services across Manly. I was proud to hear Manly student Miss Carla Krnel from Stella Maris College deliver a moving address as the youth speaker. She is a credit to her generation, family and school. Lastly, and certainly not least, I thank Ross Aldridge and Warwick Hamlin and the people of North Manly Bowling Club, who invited me to their service held at the club in the afternoon. It was a privilege to be present as we raised the Australian flag over the club. Lest we forget.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE TIMOR SUPPORT GROUPS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:37): The Blue Mountains community enjoys a close relationship with the people of Timor-Leste. We are a small region, yet we host several East Timor support groups, and many individuals have undertaken fundraising and volunteer roles in East Timor. Today, Timor-Leste enjoys a period of growth and stability. However, following the 1999 referendum for independence, a campaign of violence was unleashed. Approximately 1,400 Timorese were killed and 300,000 were forcibly pushed into West Timor as refugees. The majority of the country's infrastructure, including homes, irrigation systems, water supply systems, and schools, and nearly 100 per cent of the country's electrical grid were destroyed. This fledgling nation required considerable support from the United Nations, its nearest neighbours and other nations in order to re-establish security, stability and basic services such as hospitals, schools, roads, power et cetera. It is within this

context that support groups in the Blue Mountains have grown to provide direct assistance from the grassroots to communities in Timor-Leste.

Established in 1996, the Springwood East Timor Support Group hosts an annual trivia night and, with funds raised, has provided assistance to Dr Dan Murphy's Bairo Pite Clinic, Topu Honis Shelter Home in Oecusse and the Aloia Foundation. The group's members include Pam and Chris Gorman, Vic O'Callaghan and Vanessa and Chris Joret, along with many others—too many to name. In 2004 the Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters [BMETS] project was established. Mary Waterford, Jude Finch and Suzie van Opdorp were founding members. Over the past 13 years the sisters have raised more than half a million dollars and have supported scholarships, violence prevention programs and women's projects. Other members of the group include Louise Nash and Lesley Sammon. I note the passing of founding member Gail Clifford and her contribution to East Timor, the Blue Mountains and Leichhardt Municipal Council.

As a result of the work of BMETS, the Blue Mountains Hatobuilico Friendship Committee was established. The committee has worked on practical projects in the mountainous village of Hatobuilico, including the rebuilding of community centres and schools. I commend the work of this committee and note the contributions of John and Elaine Telford, Sheila Quonoey and Councillor Romola Hollywood. The Blue Mountains Trek for Timor has contributed more than \$300,000 to projects including the building of district schools, provision of student resources and income-generating projects for women. This work is truly inspiring. It is based on respectful relationships and empowerment and shows how reaching out can be powerful. Recently I had the opportunity to have a young Timorese student on work experience in my office. Domingas Soares is in year 10 at Korowal School in Hazelbrook. She grew up in a poor family in Saelary. Her parents separated when she was six months old. She is the youngest of seven children. Her father died in 2009 and Domingas and her sister went to live with their aunt. Their aunt did not send them to school. Instead, Domingas said:

... she would hit us and scream at us. In 2010 she sent us to an orphanage. I was terrified to go to the orphanage because I did not know what an orphanage was and I did not speak Tetum. I only speak my native dialect Makasae.

I was excited because I didn't have to live with my aunt anymore. I thought my life would change forever because there is no one to hit and abuse me. But I was wrong.

My sister and I were ... bullied and verbally abused by [people]. We wanted to tell the nuns but they did not believe us.

Domestic violence happens at the orphanage, school, neighbourhood and in the street. Sometimes you see parents hit their children ...

At the orphanage, life was hard. We woke up at 4:50, to pray and clean then go to church and school. We did not do our homework until 11 at night and we did not go to bed til 11:30. I did not start school until I was ten years old.

In 2011 my Australian mum (Wendy Chandler) told the nuns that she wanted to look after my sister and I. She took us out of the orphanage to live with her. I was really happy, but the communication between us was hard because I did not speak English then. But then I started to learn English.

Today I'm studying [and living] in Australia, I'm so happy that I get this wonderful opportunity and good education. I hope ... one day, I'll go back to my country [to work] to stop the domestic violence there, and listen to those people who need help.

Domingas' advice to politicians is this:

Listen to young people and stand by their side when they need you. Don't leave them alon[e] to suffer from domestic violence or any violence. Bring their issues up and discuss it with them, young people need you. We're your future so please look after us. I believe you all can do this.

REGIONAL AUTOPSY SERVICES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:42): There is a woman in Gundagai by the name of Jill Jones. On 16 July last year she and her husband, Bronc, lost their son Mark in a car accident on the Gocup Road. Mark, aged 52, was not only a son; he was a father of three, a brother, a husband and a friend to many. He was also a long-time member of the Gundagai Tigers as a player, club statistician, trainer and strapper. But for two weeks after his accident his family endured more grief than was necessary. After four days laying in Tumut morgue, Mr Jones's body had finally been transported to Newcastle to the Department of Forensic Medicine for formal identification and an autopsy to determine the exact cause of his death. But 10 days after the accident, the family was still limbo and did not know when forensic formalities would be concluded and Mr Jones's body released. Given the reliance on one government-gazetted transport company to return Mark home, the Jones family faced a wait of 16 or 17 days after he died—at the earliest—before they could bury him.

They could not fix a date for a funeral. They could not make a single arrangement. They sat in limbo, buried in grief, with no hope for closure. Jill Jones described the situation as sheer madness. Not long afterwards a second lad died near Gundagai, so twice in a six-week period the Cootamundra electorate office had to intervene in the cases of families desperately trying to secure the return of their sons' remains that required examination in Newcastle. These families are not alone. It happens time and again.

One funeral director is quoted in Wagga Wagga's *Daily Advertiser* as saying that the two weeks' wait is frustrating for many local families. There has to be a better way. Autopsy services can only be performed by the limited number of qualified forensic pathologists who are based at Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong where they are supported by specialist staff and equipment based at these locations—Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, which are all less than three hours from each other.

Meanwhile construction on Western Sydney's \$91.5 million Forensic Pathology and Coroner's Court Facility at Lidcombe has begun. I understand this is necessary for our growing city. However, it must be recognised that a family has lost a beloved son and a community has lost a beloved citizen. It is bad enough that the family is grappling with that loss but, just because they live in a regional area, should they then have to wait two weeks to bury their dead? We need a facility servicing the southern region of the State, and by regional, I mean really regional, not greater Sydney, not Newcastle and certainly not Wollongong.

Whether we upgrade or utilise an existing facility in southern New South Wales or build a new one, this is an opportunity for meaningful decentralisation that genuinely helps grieving families on the ground when they need it most. It is also an important opportunity for jobs growth. There is a need for this service to be provided closer to home. Whether it takes training or infrastructure, the politics needs to be taken right out of this conversation. There is a system here that is not working and is hurting victims because of their geography. This brings new meaning to the tyranny of distance. Right now we have husbands, wives, parents and children waiting two weeks to get their loved ones home. As the member for Cootamundra, my constituents should not have to endure another day of grieving because it is too hard to service regional New South Wales. I know we can do better.

GOULBURN CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

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) (17:47): This afternoon I bring to the attention of the House an update on the benchmarking process currently occurring at Goulburn Correctional Centre. I am told when prison benchmarking comes to a correctional centre there is a three-month consultation period with management, staff and the Public Service Association on draft benchmarks for that particular centre. Following this, there is a 12-month implementation period over which the changes can occur.

The Goulburn Correctional Centre has just begun its consultation period and I am advised that Goulburn is being benchmarked against its own staffing levels from 2016. On 23 April I attended the site to meet with management and staff to gain a better understanding of the proposed staffing changes. What is critically important to me, to the Government and of course to the staff is the safety of custodial officers and all those who work directly with prisoners. As the member for Goulburn, community safety is also critical, as it is to the Government. As with any changes in the workplace, there has been anxiety and confusion amongst the staff.

There will be some changes of duties, including an additional senior assistant superintendent, a deletion of the assistant superintendent rank, a reduction in the current number of senior correctional officers and the creation of nine case manager positions. Staff affected by benchmarking will be able to apply for voluntary redundancy and it is important to note the overall number of base grade correctional officers will rise from 157 to 185 across both centres. I am delighted to advise the House that the following additional roles have also been proposed—an additional senior psychologist, two additional psychologists, one additional senior service and programs officer, one additional service and programs officer, and one additional religious counselling officer. This is all part of our determination to reduce reoffending in New South Wales.

As a result of the benchmarking process, the Goulburn complex is expected to have 242 custodial positions, an increase of one from the current 241. The current 25 vacancies will be also filled permanently. I strongly emphasise that this is a starting point and I am advised by the Minister that the final number will be decided at the end of consultation and will be based on the safety and security needs of the centre and the staff. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has begun the \$47 million upgrade to the existing Supermax facility within the Goulburn Correctional Centre. I was delighted to be recently contacted by local contractors who now know they, too, are able to bid for the construction works through the tender process. I am pleased that the Government understands the impact of investments such as these on the local economy. It is great for local jobs and local businesses when they get the work.

The changes to the existing Supermax will also allow for increased use of that facility and the ability to utilise the centre to its full capacity. I am pleased that the New South Wales Government has begun and committed to this project. A new corrections facility was recently proposed for Goulburn by a private provider. Let there be no doubt that this proposal would result in significant wage cuts for staff who work there as well as cuts in staff numbers. This is exactly what happened at Parklea prison. I remain mystified as to why the local Australian Labor

Party [ALP] continues to indulge in this proposal and I certainly cannot understand why the local Labor candidate would want to cut local jobs because this is surely what will happen.

The proposal of a new jail has understandably created a level of angst that our current corrections centre would downsize or perhaps even close. I set the record straight and advise the House that the \$47 million upgrade of the Supermax is clear proof of the Government's intention to keep Goulburn jail as an important State-owned asset. Only the ALP candidate wants to build a private prison in Goulburn, which would inevitably reduce the operations at our existing facility. I have every confidence that the consultation process will continue to address the concerns raised by the employees and alleviate concerns of job security and employee safety. Benchmarking is set to deliver at least one more additional job to Goulburn. The scaremongering just has to stop.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE INVESTITURE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (17:51): Following the Siege of Jerusalem in 1099, the First Crusaders founded a hospice in the Holy Land where the monks of Saint Mary's abbey cared for weary pilgrims, in addition to the sick and injured. The hospice, established by Christian merchants from Amalfi, appointed St John the Baptist as its patron saint and adopted the eight-pointed white cross of Amalfi as its emblem. The Hospital of St John of Jerusalem was subsequently born and instituted humanitarian ideals in the new industrial world by advocating for the cause of first aid for the sick and wounded through volunteer efforts in the service of humanity.

Today the Maltese cross, as it has come to be known, is recognised throughout the world on ambulances. Through its white decoration, symbolising purity, the four arms of the Maltese cross denote the four cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude. Its eight points epitomise the proverb-like proclamation of the eight beatitudes recounted by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, which include the blessedness of the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, the persecuted, the humble, the comforters, the meek, and the righteous. For centuries the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem was headquartered on the island of Rhodes in Greece and afterwards in Malta, where it continued its role operating in major hospitals and providing shelter and sustenance for the sick and less fortunate. Today, the religious order is located in Rome and has journeyed far and wide for the faith to flourish in the present day across the world.

Around 1140, the Order of the Knights of St John in Britain built their headquarters in Clerkenwell, London. The order continued to prosper in England until Henry VIII confiscated all the lands and property that had been previously donated to the St John order over the years and eventually dissolved the order during his reign. Irrespective of the hardships which resultantly ensued, the devoted knights of the order vowed to continue their work in assisting the greater community. As a result, during the Victorian era, a collection of dedicated volunteers revived the active presence of the order throughout the United Kingdom, drawing inspiration from the original order in Jerusalem.

Soon afterwards volunteers provided ambulance and first aid services, particularly during regal processions and significant public events. As a result, a royal charter was granted to the order by Queen Victoria, thereby bestowing the status of a Royal Order of Chivalry on St John. At present, St John Ambulance is active in 44 countries across the world and comprises approximately 400,000 volunteers and staff. It is renowned in Australia as a principal provider of first aid services, training and equipment, with more than 130 years of experience. I have had the privilege of being involved in this charitable organisation since 2000. I have joined my fellow peers to advocate for the accreditation of compulsory first aid for new drivers in our great nation.

Each year at Government House His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales and Deputy Prior and Knight within the Order of St John Ambulance Australia, along with his wife, Mrs Linda Hurley, Dame within the order, are invited to preside over the annual investiture ceremony. For members who may be unfamiliar, the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John is an order of chivalry of the British Crown, with Queen Elizabeth II presiding as sovereign head. This Saturday 5 May I have been invited to join Professor Mark Compton, AM, Chancellor of St John Ambulance Australia, in addition to the Chair of St John NSW, Sean McGuinness, and Sue Campbell-Lloyd, to recognise the unparalleled level of dedication of certain members.

The following individuals will be recognised: Adjunct Professor Jason Bendall, promoted to officer for his significant service as the Chief Professional Officer; Trevor Murphy, promoted to officer for his significant service to the Broken Hill adult and cadet divisions; Kylie Brooke, admitted as member for her service as the Divisional Superintendent Goulburn Combined Division; Helen Chant, admitted as member for her service as the Assistant Regional Superintendent, Southern Region, and secretary for the Murray training area; Michael Cheng, admitted as a member for his service as the technical officer at the State Communications Group; Paul Houghton, admitted as a member for his service as the Divisional Superintendent at the Kiama Combined Division; Jenny Page, admitted as a member for her service as divisional duties officer, divisional officer, and the Divisional

Superintendent at the Hills Adult Division; and, Elliot Williams, admitted as a member for his service to the Lower North Shore Cadet Division, NSW State Operations Group and as the State Nursing Officer. I will join a range of other members and supporters of the Order of St John or, as it is colloquially known in New South Wales, St Johns Ambulance, to celebrate these awards. I celebrate that St Johns Ambulance has provided over 130 years of support to the ill, injured and infirmed across the State of New South Wales.

TWEED-BYRON POLICING

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:56): This evening I praise the police in the Tweed-Byron local area command. In the past few months the Tweed-Byron command has received five probationary constables and has been allocated another six additional general duties positions and two additional crime investigation positions. These allocations are thanks to the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force initiated by Police Commissioner Fuller. I praise our current police Minister Troy Grant for his ongoing commitment to the men and women in the Police Force.

The police in my electorate do a fantastic job. They are led by the fantastic Superintendent Wayne Starling, who is previously from the South Coast. I know he has the full support of his team, as it is reflected in the fact that we have had the lowest crime rates across the Tweed-Byron area in the last 3½ to four years. Superintendent Wayne Starling leads by example and does an excellent job. It is a difficult command, as it covers an area ranging as far south as Byron Bay up to the Tweed where many major festivals are held and it deals with influences from across border. The superintendent instils teamwork and support for his front-line staff.

In the past 18 months, the Tweed has had the good fortune to have a new \$25 million police station, and in the next few months a joint maritime, fisheries and water police facility, which will be permanently based in the Tweed, will be opened. The more we can do for the local police force the better. I often do a ride around with the local police on a Friday or Saturday. I am always amazed at their dedication and professionalism and the way in which they cope with difficult situations. I encourage all members of Parliament to accompany the police in their electorate on a night shift. It is confronting to see what they do: attending car accidents and dealing with domestic violence and drug use. These men and women put their lives on the line to keep the community safe. Every member of Parliament should thoroughly support the police. I know that many members and I do. The police do a fabulous job under very difficult circumstances. With the relatively recent introduction to our streets of ice and other new designer drugs that make people very aggressive, the police need our support now more than ever before.

The Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to boosting the authorised numbers of police to a total of 16,795, which is a record high level of policing. An additional 994 new positions have been added since 2011. The strength of our Police Force continues to increase across cities and regional areas of New South Wales. The Government has already exceeded its 2011 commitment. Police officers already number above what the Government promised in 2011. Commissioner Fuller has my complete support, and I look forward to more positive announcements as a result of re-engineering. We are entering a whole new era with counterterrorism and many different issues facing us. The men and women of our Police Force are rising to meet those challenges. To keep our community safe the Liberal-Nationals Government is backing the NSW Police Force by increasing officer numbers and the acquisition of new technology.

The paramount concern of all members of Parliament is keeping their communities safe. Future challenges will be presented by cybercrime and child safety issues, but I am satisfied that people across New South Wales will be protected by the hardworking and dedicated men and women of the NSW Police Force. Mr Temporary Speaker, and member for Terrigal, knows that I am 100 per cent committed to the Tweed. I thoroughly endorse Superintendent Wayne Starling and all the other fine men and women in the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Before I call the member for Port Stephens, I mention that I also took a ride on patrol with police officers from my local area command, which was very informative. It was well worth doing.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:02): As a piece of public policy, the creation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] was a monumental reform. Its objective was simple and yet profound: A tangled mess of chaotic, fragmented and inequitable support programs littered across the country would be replaced with a national scheme focused on equity. The so-called "postcode lottery" would end, and the genesis of a person's disability would be irrelevant. Instead, the scheme would be based upon a person's needs. The purpose of the scheme was to enable people with disability to fulfil their potential, engage meaningfully with

their communities and live their lives with respect and dignity. Alongside Medicare and superannuation, this Labor initiative will have a lasting legacy for the future of our country and our citizens.

However, unfortunately, as many members of this House will know, the implementation of the scheme to date has largely been a shambles that has been compounded by the Berejiklian Government's decision to wash its hands of all responsibility for people with disabilities in this State. This Government's response to the NDIS has been to privatise home care and shut up shop on Ageing, Disability and Home Care [ADHC], with the result that supports and services that were once relied on by people with disabilities are no longer available. The Hunter's large residential centres—Stockton, Tomaree and Morisset—are now being managed by the Department of Family and Community Services, and not by ADHC.

As the acting shadow Minister for Disability Services and alongside my colleague the shadow Minister for Disability Services, Sophie Cotsis, I have met with countless NDIS participants, carers, advocates and service providers who are really struggling in their interactions with the NDIS scheme. There are many people struggling at all stages of the process—trying to participate, trying to get a plan that reflects their needs, trying to maintain a plan that works, and then trying to access the supports and services that they, or their loved ones, need. This last element—trying to access the supports and services they are funded for—is particularly difficult for people living in the regions.

For the record, I acknowledge that I am hearing largely from people and organisations who are struggling. Many people have already benefited enormously from the scheme, and the life-changing independence they have achieved is what the scheme is about. Those successes are definitely worth celebrating. But alongside that there are many people who are struggling. It is interesting that among the people who are facing those challenges is a deeper understanding that the scheme is worthwhile and that the Federal and State governments just need to make it work. Systems must be improved. The gaps in services need to be addressed. People need to be able to access services. We must ensure that there are oversights and safeguards for those services and the quality of those services. People generally need more help.

From the beginning, the New South Wales Government has seen the NDIS as a way of removing responsibility and liability and the cost involved with supporting people with disabilities. In doing so, it has ignored the fact that many people with disabilities in this State will never participate in the NDIS. Many of them are now looking for services and supports that are no longer there. The Government's management of the closure of the Stockton Centre, Tomaree Lodge and Morisset disability centre is nothing short of shameful. The closure of those centres was announced many years ago and the orderly process of moving residents into new homes was meant to conclude next month. However, the promised new homes for those residents are not there and the closure of the centres has now been extended to 2020—residents are living in limbo.

I have spoken previously in this place about the neglect of the first group of residents who were relocated from those centres to a group home. I do not intend to revisit that tragedy here today, but suffice to say that people died in the most tragic of circumstances that were entirely preventable. Families of residents in those centres are now left wondering what the future will be for their loved ones. The services on site at those centres have been whittled away and the departmental group tasked with supporting the transition has been disbanded. Many of us are frightened to think what the future holds for those residents with no family and for whom the Public Guardian is responsible.

We must always remember that the decisions we make in this place regarding the provision of services to people with a disability have very real consequences. So we have to get this right. When we are talking about people with complex intellectual and physical disabilities there is little room for error. It is time that government—both Federal and State governments—took stock and returned to the original goals of the NDIS: the twin aspirations of choice and control that have not been met for too many people. We need to ensure we have a society that is accessible to everyone and where everyone can achieve their potential, regardless of where they live. I urge the State and Federal Coalition governments to do more so that all people can access the services they need.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)
(18:07): The contribution by the member for Port Stephens is confected and absolutely misconstrues what has gone on. The National Disability Insurance Scheme was initially developed as a direct result of the efforts of the Coalition Government in New South Wales. Many years ago then disability services Minister Andrew Constance started talking about the possibility of getting individual packages for people with disabilities, and the idea was well supported. Federal Labor, the Federal Coalition and all State and Territory governments have embarked on this program and are very supportive of making sure that individuals with disabilities are empowered.

For the member to use this forum today to tell absolute confected lies is quite disappointing. Private members' statements are supposed to be about a member's electorate, but she has used hers as a platform to

completely misrepresent the situation. We will continue as a Government to support people with disabilities and to do whatever we can to make sure the transition is as smooth as possible, albeit with challenges.

WAKEHURST ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (18:08): I mention in the House tonight two of my local primary schools and acknowledge the incredible work done across each of the public schools in my electorate of Wakehurst. It does not matter which public school I visit, the staff, school executive and community are doing incredible work. The Wakehurst community—the mums, dads, grandparents and carers—is involved with its local schools. The community takes a great interest in the schools when there are changes in leadership. Cromer Public School, one of the outstanding public schools in this State, recently had a change of principal. Late last year at Cromer Golf Club I attended the retirement function of long-serving principal Maureen Gray. A number of teachers from all across the State who worked with Maureen acknowledged her great passion and love for the teaching profession and in particular for children. Today I acknowledge Maureen and thank her for the work that she has done over many years for public education in New South Wales.

The community and I are pleased that Julie Johnson was appointed through merit selection as principal of Cromer Public School. Julie has been at the school since I became the local member of Parliament—since about 1991. For the past 27 years she held a number of positions—as a teacher initially, as an advanced skills teacher, as assistant principal, as deputy principal and as acting principal following the retirement of Maureen Gray. I am pleased that she was appointed as principal at the end of the last term. Julie's dedication to her students and colleagues in public education over the years has been superb. She has a good reputation in the school community. It is with great pleasure that I congratulate her on her appointment and wish her well as principal of Cromer Public School—one of the finest public schools in New South Wales.

Beacon Hill Public School, which is not far away from Cromer, recently had a special funding arrangement that will help with before and after school care arrangements. The principal at that school is Mrs Peta Hanson. Peta has not been at that school for long but she has made a huge difference. Peta and her community applied for funding from the Before and After School Care Fund and Beacon Hill Public School has been given \$30,000. Many families who live in the Wakehurst electorate are working families—mums and dads who are busy paying the mortgage, getting the kids to and from school, getting them to sport, and doing all those things that families do.

No matter the parental arrangements, mums and dads tend to have to work and there is often a need for flexible before and after school care. I am delighted to confirm that Beacon Hill Public School will receive \$30,000 as part of the New South Wales Government's \$20 million initiative that is designed to create more out-of-school-hours care places. It is tough trying to do all the things that parents or carers need to do for primary or high school children. Some of us do not have families to support us. I think this \$30,000 will go a long way towards supporting the Beacon Hill community by making sure that before and after school care arrangements are better than they are now.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I welcome to the public gallery the Turramurra Rotary Club, guests of the member for Ku-ring-gai and Parliamentary Secretary.

Private Members' Statements

UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE GLOBAL HEROES OF HOPE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (18:14): It is with pleasure that I congratulate Lyn Moseley and Margaret Jones of Dungog in the Upper Hunter electorate who have been recognised for their diligent work with the Cancer Council NSW and Relay for Life. These ladies have been recognised and honoured as 2018 Global Heroes of Hope. Each year the American Cancer Society recognises a select group of individuals from the global relay community. These Global Heroes of Hope are exemplary cancer survivors or carers who are willing to share the story of their personal cancer journey, becoming a voice for Relay for Life and Cancer Council NSW.

This year 36 individuals from Australia, Japan, South Africa, Ireland, Singapore, Malaysia, Bermuda, Denmark, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the United States of America have received Global Heroes of Hope awards. I congratulate Lyn Moseley and Margaret Jones on being awarded this prestigious honour. Lyn Moseley became active with Relay for Life and the Cancer Council following the diagnosis of her father in 1990 and her mother in 2005. Lyn has participated in the Dungog Relay for Life since 2002 as a team captain for 15 years and

on the committee since 2009. She has also been co-chair and secretary since 2011. Lyn is also a member of the Dungog Shire Palliative Care Volunteers group. Lyn has worked tirelessly for Relay for Life, and this is how she describes it:

I absolutely love Relay for Life. It is an opportunity for a community to come together and support each other in an emotionally safe environment regardless of their experience with cancer, whether on a cancer journey as a survivor, carer, family or friend. Relay enables people to be proactive about their own health and contribute towards a cancer-free world in the future.

Through her involvement with Dungog Relay for Life Lyn aims to ensure that her family and others in the community are able to lead a long and cancer-free life. I also mention Margaret Jones, another Global Hero of Hope for 2018. Margaret has been part of the relay family since 2001. Margaret has been team captain for the past 15 years and been on the committee since 2003. She has been co-chair since 2011 and in the past seven years Margaret and the committee have advocated relay involvement and awareness in the Dungog shire, implementing fundraising activities, including purple and yellow day, men's cancer awareness bowls day, street stalls and various fundraising activities at local clubs. Fundraising has increased, with \$254,000 being raised in the past seven years. I share a few words from Margaret:

Being a participant in Relay for Life, where others share their stories and experiences, is both humbling and enriching.

Over the years I have had numerous meetings with Lyn and Margaret, whether at Parliament House, or over coffee and a catch-up. Last week I caught up with them in Singleton to hear about the great work that they are doing, as well as participating in the Relay for Life. They are liaison officers for the Cancer Council NSW. I assure members that they are 110 per cent passionate about the issues of cancer—the research, all stages of care, and cancer suffering across our community. They do a magnificent job for the Dungog community. I thank Lyn and Margaret for their exemplary and tireless work with the Cancer Council NSW and Relay for Life and for their dedication to our community. On behalf of the Upper Hunter electorate I let them know that we are proud and we thank them for their efforts.

BRUNSWICK HEADS BOAT HARBOUR MASTER PLAN

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:19): I welcome the visitors in the gallery from Turrumurra. I am sure they will hear great things shortly. I will talk about Brunswick Heads, which is a beautiful town in my electorate that has Simple Pleasures as its motto. It has a boat harbour that needs reinvigorating and submissions have just closed for the public to give feedback to the Department of Primary Industries. I am hopeful the Government will listen to what the public wants and that the boat harbour does not, as some fear, end up as a flashy marina for rich tourists. We want to retain public access to the boat harbour for community groups and boaties, and we want it to be a working marina. For years Brunswick local Phil Walters has been determined to set up a College of Marine Studies at the Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour. His vision, which is supported by many local organisations, is that the marine college would retain maritime activities associated with the Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour and provide a future for boat building and related skills training. Phil has been working on this project with various local and State Government bodies, particularly Crown Lands, for 14 years.

The College of Marine Studies received a small grant from Byron Shire Council in 2007 to conduct a scoping study and played a role in initiating the Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour Master Plan. A College of Marine Studies would offer qualifications in boat building and preserve wooden boat building skills. The college would be an educational drawcard for boat builders across the east coast of Australia. The college would also act as a not-for-profit registered training organisation at the Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour where regional students could train and participate in apprenticeships linked to the repair and maintenance of boats. The college aims to establish a school of excellence in all things marine, which will not only keep the old marine skills alive, but equip people with the qualifications to enter local, national and global marine industries. Courses that could be rolled out tomorrow include speed boat restoration, dinghy building and restoration, and sailing. Courses to be offered in the future include marine surveying, deckhand qualification, boat handling, shipwright, and marine hospitality.

The potential economic benefits for Brunswick and its surrounding areas are great. The college would generate jobs in marine industry, boat repair and tourism. The college is seeking a permanent home and we are exploring locating the college at the Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour or a nearby location. I call on the Government, particularly Crown Lands, to support the aspiration of my community to have a College of Marine Studies. As their local member I will continue to work on this initiative. The draft master plan has removed the slipway for boats that form part of the viability of the scoping study. I understand that it is on its last legs, but it is a real issue now for boaters. Crown Lands has taken a different position with regard to uses for the site and the College of Marine Studies has effectively been sidelined in this process, but the consultation process has not finished. I am still hopeful and so is the community.

I have been going to Brunswick Heads all of my life. My grandmother is from Mullumbimby and my grandfather, Arnold Norris, was a founding member of the Brunswick Heads Surf Life Saving Club. He loved to

patrol and was very competitive. He also played rugby league for Queensland after World War II. Every Christmas my family and I stayed at the Lakeview Terrace Caravan Park, which used to flood a lot. My grandfather was also a fanatical fisherman and he would regularly take his skiff out on the Brunswick River. As a war veteran, I know this was soul food for him. I loved collecting pippies with him on the beach.

That is why I am drawn to this vision of keeping the Brunswick harbour as a working marina. I will support the boating community to retain boat building and boat repair at Brunswick harbour. I am also inspired by people such as Phil and his vision of a marine college. It will ensure that the history and knowledge of boating stays in our area. It will bring jobs to our locals and attract students from across the country to engage with a thriving and living boating history. Given the possible economic and social benefits that could be derived from an educational facility of this kind, retaining the marine college as part of the Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour Master Plan and keeping the mouth of the Brunswick River as a working harbour would mean the Government is supporting our regions, as it says it does.

KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:24): I welcome to the public gallery the Turramurra Rotarians. This year the Ku-ring-gai electorate has remembered, as it has done in past years, Anzac Day in services before and after 25 April. Those services were conducted in a number of places, including churches and schools throughout the electorate. One of those services that I attended on Sunday was at St John's Anglican Church at Gordon, which contains the Pozieres Cross returned from the World War I battlefields by the Ku-ring-gai regiment. The unique service on Sunday, which emulated the kind of commemoration conducted 100 years ago, was conducted by Father Keith Dalby, a former member of the Royal Australian Navy.

This year four Ku-ring-gai remembrance services were held on 25 April. Each service was particularly well supported by young people, some of whom were wearing the decorations of a family member now deceased. The Northern Region Scouts hosted a very well-attended Dawn Service at Bicentennial Park, and Ron Seymour organised the community dusk service at the Kokoda Track Memorial in Wahroonga, each of them acknowledging the sacrifices made by many thousands of Australians in times of conflict. Between those two ceremonies were two services at the Wahroonga Memorial and Turramurra Memorial Park, which were both conducted, as they have been for the past 16 years, by local members of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia—or the "Nashos", as they are affectionately known. I will give a short tribute to our local Nashos.

The National Servicemen's Association of Australia was founded in 1987 and is now the second-largest ex-service organisation in Australia. It represents the 287,000 young men who were called up for service in the Navy, Army and Air Force in two schemes between 1951 and 1972. From 1951 to 1959, all men turning 18 on or after 1 November 1950 were required to register for the scheme. The first call-up notices were issued on 12 April 1951. The 227,000 who were called up were intended to form the 3rd AIF, but the ceasing of hostilities in Korea meant that they were not needed.

The second Nashos scheme was introduced in 1964 in response to Australia's growing involvement in South-East Asia. Twenty-year-old men were required to register with the Department of Labour and National Service. From 1964 to 1972, more than 804,000 men registered for national service, 64,000 of whom were called up in a birthday ballot to serve in the forces. More than 15,000 of those served in the Vietnam War, with 210 killed and more than 1,200 wounded. Another 150 men served in Borneo; two of them were killed and the remainder were in support units in Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The National Service Scheme ended in December 1972. The last Nashos marched out of camp on 14 February, which is now National Servicemen's Day. The Nashos are an important part of Australia's military history and we are indebted to those men who served our country with distinction, many on foreign soil. Despite giving up two years of their lives, those Nashos who served in Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Australia were not eligible for the repatriation benefits available to active servicemen. Those men would no doubt be forgiven if they looked on their time in the Army with bitterness, but instead, for the past 16 years, the Northern Sydney Sub Branch of the Nashos has been at the forefront of Anzac Day activities and other times of remembrance in the Ku-ring-gai community. The Nashos ensure that those who did not return from the fields of war, those who returned home damaged in body and mind, and those who continue to serve today are remembered with equal pride.

Former Flight Lieutenant Brian Wright of Wahroonga, a former Spitfire pilot in World War II, is one who made it home. Our community was delighted that he was in attendance again this year at the service at the Wahroonga Memorial. Continuing their tradition of having a theme for each Anzac Day, the Nashos chose to reflect not only on the service of Brian, but also that of his father, John, who lived in Wahroonga as well. Remarkably, John was a Captain in World War I and flew a Sopwith Snipe in the 4th Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps. Captain Wright was posted to Europe during the Great War, was credited with destroying four

German aircraft and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross during his service. He signed up again in World War II, this time with the Australian Imperial Force and ultimately became the Commanding Officer of the unit with the 8th Division in Malaya.

Following the fall of Singapore, he was captured by the Japanese and placed in Changi prison camp for the next 3½ years until the end of the war. My uncle Jacques, who served in the Dutch East Indies Army, also was in Changi. Given that most of them are now in their eighties, the Nashos decided that the 2018 Wahroonga and Turramurra Anzac Day services would be the last that they would conduct but, happily, the Sydney Northern Region Scouts has offered to take over. From humble beginnings and small attendances in the first year, the services conducted by the Nashos now draw many hundreds of local people on a day of solemn remembrance, which is another reason why the Nashos will not be forgotten in Ku-ring-gai.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:29): I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai, the Parliamentary Secretary for Finance, Services and Property, and welcome the Turramurra Rotarians to the New South Wales Parliament this evening. I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for updating the New South Wales Parliament on the Anzac Day activities and commemorative services in his electorate. As a returned servicemen myself, having served six years in the Royal Australian Air Force in the mid-1980s, I know how important it is to bring this valuable information to the New South Wales Parliament so we can all share, remember and commemorate. Lest we forget.

SCHOOLS AIR CONDITIONING

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:30): In the middle of the heatwave in mid-December last year, there were plenty of stories of students having classes outside because the 41-degree temperature outside was cooler than the temperature inside the classrooms. During heatwaves, many parents in my electorate do not send their kids to school at all because the classrooms are so hot. Merrylands Public School in my electorate is about to open a new building with 10 new classrooms in it, but the new building will not be air-conditioned as the school does not qualify for it under the Berejiklian Government's Air Cooling Policy. The school's other classrooms are air-conditioned, using funds raised by the school's Parents and Citizens [P&C] Association over many years. The school's population has grown by about 50 per cent over the past five years and more growth is expected.

The works at the school include removing some existing facilities and constructing a three-storey school building with a total of 10 open-plan classrooms. The school's P&C has been told it will need to raise a bewildering and outrageous \$100,000 to \$150,000 if it believes the new building should be air-conditioned. It has been told it must be ducted as the classrooms are open plan but, even if this is the case, it is extortionate to ask this of a school where many families are from disadvantaged backgrounds, including many Afghan refugees.

It is not the only local school where parents are worried. In 2016 I was delighted that Granville Boys High School P&C Association was successful in its application for Community Building Partnerships funding for air conditioning in its second-storey classrooms. The school has many classrooms from the 1960s that are very hot in summer and unbearably cold in winter. When it is 40 degrees outside, it is up to 52 degrees inside the classrooms on the upper floor. The P&C sought \$40,000 in funding to install air conditioners and raised \$20,000 itself. After a long application and approval process, it received the much-needed funding, but it should not have to come to the point where parents are responsible for the temperature inside their children's classrooms.

Granville Boys High School students are lucky their parents and P&C fought so hard for this funding, despite a Government and a Minister who just do not seem to listen. The Berejiklian Government only provides full air conditioning to schools with mean maximum January temperatures of 33 degrees Celsius or above. Under the Berejiklian Government's policy, only 148 schools in New South Wales are currently entitled to air cooling—not air conditioning. But January is not the problem and the average temperature is not the problem; it is the extreme heat that parents are worried about. The 2017-18 summer has been much warmer than average, with several heatwaves during December and January, and there have been heatwaves well into autumn. Several new monthly and summer records were set for the single hottest day and the warmest days overall, especially in the west of Greater Sydney.

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—and let us make it affordable for schools by using solar power and battery storage as much as possible. The Berejiklian Government is installing air conditioning for the top end of town as part of its stadium splurge, yet there is no air conditioning for schoolkids. Down the road from Merrylands Public School, Parramatta Stadium will have 30,000 seats and every one of the 3,000 seats in the corporate boxes will be air-conditioned—but not the new classrooms at Merrylands Public School.

As my colleague the shadow Minister for Education Jihad Dib has said, a new Labor Government will allocate \$300 million to provide air-conditioned classrooms powered by solar energy 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 and Ministers who are embarrassed by this Government's decision. After seven years in office, the New South Wales Government does not even have a record of how many schools have air conditioning—probably because it is mainly bought by the P&Cs. Newly built schools, such as Wentworth Point Public School, have been designed without air conditioning. In contrast, the Government has committed to unnecessary expenditure for the knock down and rebuild of Allianz Stadium.

What is the Government's attitude to kids? When I was growing up in a small country town, on the very hot days school would be cancelled and all three schools would go to the local pool. But in my part of Sydney, the Liberal-Nationals want to close local pools. They have closed Parramatta pool and they fought really hard to close Wentworthville pool as well. But the Government will not air-condition the classrooms. Our kids deserve better than this. I really want them to be able to learn and for their parents to be able to send them to school on hot days to learn in comfort. This is not good enough.

ILLAWARRA REGION SPORTS FUNDING

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:35): Recently I highlighted the Government's game of funding hokey-pokey with Wollongong and its eligibility for government funding programs. I am disappointed to notify the House that this sordid game continues. I remind the House that under the Government's adopted definitions of convenience, the Illawarra is a region divided. In the Government's eyes it is sometimes considered a regional area, while at others it is classed as metropolitan. The Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra, the person who is supposed to represent the entire region on the Executive, claimed in the *Illawarra Mercury* recently that, "Only parts of the Illawarra are regional"—so says Gareth Ward. Perhaps it is time the member for Kiama had his title changed to Parliamentary Secretary for some of the Illawarra some of the time.

I refer to the recent revelation that Wollongong—the-third-largest city in New South Wales—has been deliberately excluded from the \$100 million Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund. Given the Wollongong local government area had already been excluded from the regional sports facility funding pool, it is surprising that it has now been excluded from the metropolitan funding pool. That is right—for the purposes of upgrading local sporting facilities, Wollongong has been simultaneously excluded from both the regional and the metropolitan funds. It has been left out completely. To add insult to injury, an unnamed spokesman from the Office of Sport told the *Illawarra Mercury* on 1 May:

The government used Australian Bureau of Statistics data to determine eligibility for regional and metropolitan funding grant categories.

If the Government wants to talk about statistics and data, there are approximately 40,000 registered players in sporting clubs in Wollongong who would have a view. The Wollongong community loves their sport, and Wollongong has produced some of Australia's sporting greats. Yet under this Government Wollongong has been sidelined from even applying for funds to upgrade facilities. How is it possible that the Premier, who pledged that she wanted every part of the community to share in the prosperity of the State, wilfully excludes thousands of sporting participants and their local grassroots clubs from applying for a fair share of the funding available under these programs?

This is nothing short of a disgrace and it is becoming a growing scandal. Do the Premier and Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra believe that 40,000 participants in sport in Wollongong do not deserve improvements to their facilities? Why is this wilful, stubborn, disgraceful treatment of the people who live in the third-largest city in the State taking place? Why is the Government's pathetic defence for denying Wollongong access to the funds—as asserted by the Office of Sport—because, "the Wollongong area has received sports funding in the past." It nominates funds for the WIN Stadium northern grandstand and Local Sports Grants. In the last budget WIN Stadium funding was to fix a leaking roof, and every electorate has access to funds under the Local Sports Grants program!

This shallow attempt at justifying Wollongong's exclusion is offensive. This latest game of funding hokey-pokey makes clear why the Wollongong community requires the development of a new consistent definition, which will allow it a fair shot at a fair share of funding opportunities. Under the Government Wollongong has had the playing field tilted against it every time. What is worse, the decision comes at a time when the Government is splurging more than \$2 billion on stadiums in Sydney for elite sport; a splurge from which the Government cannot name a single benefit for the people of Wollongong.

The Berejiklian Government is willing to let amateur and semi-professional sports in Wollongong languish on the sidelines. Wollongong residents thought that it was unfair that commitments such as Unanderra station lifts were taken away from them when the Government was elected; but they are certainly insulted by the decision to deliberately exclude them from funding to improve sporting facilities that mean so much to so many. The decision is simply wrong. It is worse than ball tampering. It is the political equivalent of match fixing. There is no justification for this because such blatant public policy negligence cannot be justified. There is no excuse and no fig leaf to hide behind. But the solution is simple: the Government needs to do the sporting thing to give us a sporting chance. We need another backflip. The Berejiklian Government must provide funds for Wollongong sporting clubs to apply for, and it must do so immediately. Anything less is not only an insult but wilful neglect of our community, something for which any government should be denounced and condemned.

Once again I take this opportunity to call for a third category of funding eligibility to be added to funding programs for large regional centres like Wollongong, Newcastle and others. It is simply not good enough for this Government to try to ignore a problem of its own creation when it comes to Wollongong's eligibility for funding and investment in the area. Labor, on the other hand, has already committed to invest \$225 million in Wollongong and surrounds through our Illawarra Jobs Action Plan. In sporting parlance, so far the scoreline of commitments is an absolute trouncing: \$225 million to nil. I hope that common sense on this issue will prevail, and there will be a government backflip to rival the backflips of gymnasts at the Commonwealth Games. It should be on the agenda, and Wollongong should get a sporting chance.

HORNSBY ELECTORATE COMMONWEALTH GAMES AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:40): In April this year Australia was on show as we held the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast. With more than 6,000 athletes competing, it was with pride that I watched the Australian athletes show the world what they are really made of. I was particularly proud to see a number of athletes from the Hornsby shire who were chosen to compete. These athletes, no matter where they finished, have done our community proud. I want to acknowledge them today for all the hard work, the early morning training, the sacrifices they have made for their careers and for showing the younger generation just what is possible when you are determined to make your dream a reality.

For Mount Kuring-gai local Alysha Burnett, this was her first Commonwealth Games. The 21-year-old had a fantastic lead-up which included a silver medal in the heptathlon at the Taipei World University Games late last year. She got off to an amazing start with a number of personal best times and was on top of the leaderboard after three events. However, her track results in the second half were not good enough to keep her in medal contention. She was ranked ninth overall, a phenomenal achievement for her first ever Commonwealth Games. Alysha, who attended Asquith Girls High School, is now studying a Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science at the Australian Catholic University. She first started her athletics career at Foxglove Oval with Northern District Little Athletics, a wonderful organisation fostering young talent in our local community.

Also competing was fellow local and former student of Mount Kuring-Gai Public School Rohan Bright. I have been watching Rohan compete for many years and I was very proud to see him represent Australia in April. Rohan has a form of short stature called hypochondroplasia. Having started swimming after recommendation from his doctors he has found a love of competing and smashing the competition. Taking inspiration from his cousin Torah Bright, who won gold at the Winter Olympics, Rohan hopes that he will also one day take the Olympic stage. Last year at the World Dwarf Games in Canada, Rohan took home five gold medals out of five events. He also made the final at last year's Australian Swimming Championships. I am proud to say Rohan finished fifth in the 50-metre men's final and sixth in the 200-metre individual medley at the Commonwealth Games, and I could not be happier for him. Alysha and Rohan have done Mount Kuring-gai proud, and I know there were many in the local community cheering them on.

Hornsby local Larissa Pasternatsky has not had it easy. Plagued by injury, she has had to work harder than most to make her dream a reality. This year, however, she has turned a corner winning the NSW State Championships for 100 metres and 200 metres sprint double and placing third in the 200 metres at the nationals. She is ranked in the top three for both 100 metres and 200 metres in Australia. This secured her a place to represent Australia at the Commonwealth Games. She ran an awesome race but did not make the finals of the 200 metres, finishing fifth in the semi-final. This was a wonderful result for an athlete who, through her injuries, did not think she would compete again. She has shown real determination, courage and perseverance to make the Commonwealth Games, and we were proud to watch this outstanding Hornsby resident continue to take on the world.

Perhaps one of Hornsby's most well-known athletes is Michelle Jenneke. Michelle shot to fame for the warm-up dance she does before each race. Michelle started hurdles when she was 10 years old. With her current personal best of 12.82 seconds she is the New South Wales record holder and ranks as the second fastest Australian women's 100 metres hurdler of all time. She is a proud product of the Cherrybrook Little Athletics Association.

That great organisation does wonderful things in our community. However, it was the dance she did at the junior championships before a race in 2012 that earned her 27 million views on *YouTube* and the name the "Dancing Hurdler". I know that the Temporary Speaker is one of those viewers and he should desist for looking at it now.

This is not the first time Michelle has represented Australia. She competed in the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014. Michelle missed out on a bronze medal by 0.1 of a second in the 100 metres hurdle final, with a time of 13.07 seconds, in what was seen by experts as a brilliant race and a show of her future potential. The Channel 7 commentator and athletics great Tamsyn Lewis said Michelle is a talented athlete and she was pleased Australians were able to see what she has to offer. The future holds huge things for Michelle but for now she is going to take a break from the sport—do not worry, Michelle intends to compete in the Olympic Games in Tokyo Olympics in 2020. Congratulations to Alysha, Rohan, Larissa and Michelle. Everyone in Hornsby has been cheering them on. Alysha, Rohan, Larissa and Michelle have made our shire enormously proud.

CESSNOCK ELECTORATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:45): Today's front page of the *Cessnock Advertiser* screams: "Will it take a death?" This is the daily concern of Weston residents who fear someone will lose their life at the intersection of Gingers Lane, Government Road, Hart Road and Sawyers Gully Road, near the Weston interchange of the Hunter Expressway. Prior to the construction of the Hunter Expressway, this section of road was relatively quiet. It was used as a back road connecting Weston with Rutherford. But the opening of the Hunter Expressway has created consequences that were not clearly considered by Roads and Maritime Services.

Over the past four years there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of traffic on the roads that feed into the Hunter Expressway, and this intersection has emerged as a popular access point. Quite frankly, it cannot cope with the volume. Traffic has increased tenfold at this intersection and crashes are a regular occurrence. In fact, in the past two weeks there have been three crashes at this intersection, and they can be added to the list of many that have occurred since the opening of the Hunter Expressway five years ago. Luckily no-one was killed in those crashes, but some motorists were seriously injured.

There are growing calls in the Weston community for action to be taken immediately to make this intersection safer. Local residents are concerned that since the opening of the Hunter Expressway, Gingers Lane now resembles Pitt Street because of the amount of traffic using it. The lane was never designed to cater for large volumes of traffic; rather it was meant to serve a quiet residential street. People are taking a shortcut along Gingers Lane to access the interchange and this creates congestion. It is now almost impossible for vehicles to turn right from Gingers Lane onto Government Road because of the massive increase in traffic travelling through the interchange.

Visibility issues at the intersection prevent motorists from seeing oncoming traffic from the left and the right, particularly vehicles coming towards the intersection from Sawyers Gully Road, where there is an 80 kilometre zone just up the road. Speeding is also a significant problem through the intersection and along Sawyers Gully and Government roads. That is largely because some of the feeder roads are in 80 kilometre zones and the Hunter Expressway, albeit separated, has a 100 kilometre speed limit. Motorists fail to adhere to the stop sign at the Gingers Lane and Government Road intersection, and this also increases the likelihood of crashes.

I appreciate that human error is causing that problem but we can either complain about the behaviour or do something to prevent it from causing an accident. Finally, the intersection of Gingers Lane and Sawyers Gully Road also acts as a bus stop for local school students. With the increase in traffic through this intersection, particularly traffic travelling in excess of 80 kilometres per hour, there is a real risk that students will be injured or killed by speeding vehicles that lose control at the intersection or a student might be struck by one of the vehicles involved in one of the frequent crashes at this intersection. In the last week I have received approximately 30 letters from concerned Weston residents who fear the worst if a solution is not implemented at this intersection soon. Of course we all understand what the worst is: It is another death on our roads.

These residents are begging for action from Cessnock City Council and the Roads and Maritime Services. They are not interested in which level of government is responsible for delivering a solution. All they want is for someone to act. All they ask for is some traffic lights, a lowering of the speed limit and relocating the school bus stop away from the intersection. These simple measures are sure to improve the safety of the intersection for everyone and will potentially save a life. I have conveyed my concerns and those of Weston residents to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight on a number of occasions. I am hoping that she, in conjunction with the local council, will act and find a funding solution that will fix this intersection. At the opening of the Hunter Expressway the former Minister for Roads and Freight, the Hon. Duncan Gay, promised that the Coalition Government would monitor and respond to any issues that arose due to the increase in traffic on the expressway feeder roads. This part of the road is one of those feeder roads. The Hon. Duncan Gay said:

We are going to have a look at it and if it needs something done, we are not going to leave the roads in an unfortunate situation.

I know that former Minister Gay has long left the building, but his words still ring true to my local residents and they ring true to common sense. There is a problem at this corner. One resident summed it up well when she said:

It's disgusting that it would take a death to escalate it—we shouldn't have to wait for that.

That is the general consensus of the people of Weston. I implore the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to intervene and find a solution for this dangerous intersection before a local resident is killed.

MINGYUE LAY TEMPLE BUDDHIST HALL

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (18:50): It gives me great delight to bring great news on the opening ceremony of the new Buddhist Hall and the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva statue blessing and purification at the Mingyue Lay Buddhist Temple in Bonnyrigg. It is a fantastic temple on a site in Western Sydney where Buddhists can come together not just in religious celebration but in celebration of the community and the great work that is done in looking after Buddhists throughout the whole of Western Sydney. It gave me great delight to be at the blessing of the statue and the opening of the hall. I particularly thank the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for inviting me to witness this historic moment, which has been described as a new milestone in the Mingyue Lay Temple's history.

The Mingyue Lay Temple has been established for 37 years. It is a moderately sized, beautiful multicultural Buddhist temple. Its success and magnificent development is the result of the hard work and commitment by the senior members, their efforts to guide the younger members, and the support of the whole community. It has become the focal point of the Buddhist community in Bonnyrigg and throughout Western Sydney. More than 30 years ago the first Buddhist seed was brought into the western region by senior members and cultivated in this western country in the southern Pacific region. It was well developed in the greater Western Sydney region, which is now a large district with residents of various ethnic backgrounds, especially followers of the Buddhist religion.

The opening ceremony of the new hall was a spectacular event attended by many Buddhist monks, not only from the Mingyue Lay Temple but also from the different temples throughout Western Sydney and beyond. I note that the Buddha's Light International Association was also well represented. Its temple at Wollongong is another gem in our multicultural, multi-faith society. I congratulate the former Senior President, Mr Thanh Ha, who was the first one to have the vision and guided the project committee in the development process. The new hall and statute was not a small project, with a cost of about around \$8 million. To date, I believe \$7 million has been raised; so there is only \$1 million to go. I congratulate the project committee, who have spent a lot of time and effort on this development, especially the Chairman, Mr James Chan, the Vice Chairman, Mr Sang Huynh, and the Vice Supervising Director, Mr Suy Chen Taing. They led a great team that worked on the designs, purchase of materials and construction planning.

I thank also the Venerable Ming Shang, who gave us guidance and valuable opinions on how best to create the hall and position the statue. It is indeed a magnificent building and statue and it was an honour to see it be sanctified. The Mingyue Lay community is delighted with its new Buddhist hall. I thank the 12 master venerables who helped during the opening and purification ceremony, as well as venerables from overseas and other local temples. I thank and recognise the board of executives directors, local and overseas skill workers, the chanting group, cooking team, dumpling group, volunteer sales group, office staff, and other volunteers. It was wonderful to see young people involved in volunteering to help the community. The notable lion dance group was headed by Ms Eva Liao, who worked very hard for the ceremony. I counted nine lions; it was a magnificent spectacle. Finally I thank all the guests, emcee Ricky Tang, and the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society President Vincent Kong for his leadership.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE POLICE NUMBERS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:53): I speak on the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force, which occurred in January 2018 in the electorate of Maitland, and the impact it has had on police numbers thus far. Before the changes were implemented, I raised several concerns about the re-engineering plans with the Minister for Police, Troy Grant, and the Commissioner of Police in October last year. The year before, following a question I asked about the number of police in Maitland compared to other electorates in the Hunter not being answered, I conducted my own research. I found that Maitland police were not resourced to the same level as in other Hunter communities when factors such as geographical area, population size, population growth, crime rates and crime complexity were taken into account. That analysis was supported by senior police at the State level. This state of affairs can reasonably be expected to be exacerbated by plans to relocate the Maitland police headquarters to Port Stephens.

Other objections I had to the proposed changes included the removal of one local area commander from Maitland, with the local area commander to be drawn from the new district at Port Stephens, and that senior crime positions would be removed and replaced on a one-to-one basis with more junior operational police. In other words, all the savings would go into general revenue rather than into my community. There was an initial failure to redirect any of the savings from this move to increase force members or resources. Further, there was a plan to relocate one of Maitland's two domestic violence liaison officers to Cessnock. I also raised an issue that is being faced across the State in relation to the re-engineering and its impact on the operation of safety action meetings, which are at the core of the Safer Pathway model.

The changes are creating ongoing problems for Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services. The services' tenders, which are due for renewal at the end of this financial year, will now be tendered out and not simply rolled out, despite the fact that the people who work in those services have been dealing with more than a 100 per cent increase in their workload with only a 20 per cent increase in resources. This re-engineering of police provided an opportunity to put more boots on the ground in Maitland at a time when Maitland police were struggling to contain rising crime rates with limited resources. Instead, management and administration positions have been shuffled, boundaries have been moved and there is one less officer on the ground in Maitland, as well as a potential collapse of the Safer Pathways model in this State.

The Police Association and a community petition initiated by me have requested 20 new officers in Maitland. The Government promised 10; seven have been delivered. With 234 new police recruits going out this week to start their careers in New South Wales, not one was sent to Maitland. Maitland police officers have told me of their struggles contending with multiple life-threatening situations simultaneously without the resources to properly address them all. These harrowing testimonials flatly disprove comments made by the Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter and Central Coast, Mr Scot MacDonald, who last week insisted that "there is no evidence a life has been lost or endangered because of police numbers."

There is no prospect of new officers other than the seven out of the promised 10 to bolster Maitland's police force and Maitland's rising crime rates show few signs of abating. While Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research statistics recorded a plateau in crime rates over the past two years, analysis tells a different story. In 2016 Maitland saw the third fastest growth in domestic violence incidents in New South Wales—a scourge we continue to grapple with. Indeed, in the past two months Maitland recorded the State's highest number of apprehended domestic violence order applications. These are not call-outs to domestic violence incidents but it means that local officers, in dealing with these issues, are doing more work than any other police in the State. This is far from the only indication that crime in Maitland is on the rise. In January and February seven incidents involving motorcycle gangs were reported in the area. The number of vehicle thefts has also spiked.

Today I implore the Government once again—as I have too many times before—to stop short-changing the people of Maitland. The rising crime rates, the complexity of criminal activity, the challenging geography, the population and growth of that population demand higher police numbers and better resources. I have always supported the Maitland police, and I commend the excellent work of our police in safeguarding our community and improving our education. But, no matter how exemplary the calibre of our officers or how diligent their work, the chronic under-resourcing of Maitland police hampers their ability to respond properly to protect our residents. In its current state the lack of police officers in Maitland poses a very real danger not just to them but also to our entire community. The day may soon arrive when too many incidents are reported on one night and officers cannot arrive in time to prevent serious harm. When that day comes, it will be on this Government.

REGIONAL FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (19:00): In recent times concerns have been raised with the member for Cootamundra, the member for Murray and me about the time taken to retrieve a loved one who has died tragically in unexplained circumstances and who requires a post-mortem. Forensic post-mortems are carried out in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. I sympathise with these families for the time it sometimes takes to retrieve a loved one and hold a burial. I speak from experience: It took me 14 days to have my dad returned before we could conduct a burial so I understand completely the feelings of these families.

In recent times I have received correspondence from Jill Jones, Dell Blowes and others expressing their concern and urging me to try to improve the situation. Steps have been taken to try to expedite country forensic autopsies that are required to be conducted in Newcastle. That has been helpful but more needs to be done, and other members have referred to the enormous stress that these delays place on families. As a result, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Murray and I have had discussions with our local Federal member with a view to training more forensic specialist pathologists in the regions. This is an important step in helping to fill the gap as our inquiries clearly show there is a worldwide shortage of forensic pathologists.

However, there is also an opportunity within universities to teach in regional cities such as Wagga Wagga. Currently, the Government is rebuilding Wagga Wagga hospital. By the time it is finished it will have cost \$452 million, and will include a state-of-the-art mortuary. I appeal to all the authorities involved, including the Coroner's Court, Health and Federal and State agencies, to introduce a plan to increase the number of forensic trainee pathologists and establish a presence by specialists to enable further recruitment and training. There are challenges involved but I know that the Federal member, the member for Cootamundra and the member for Murray are committed to assisting with this task. We need someone with enthusiasm who is successful in the general pathology training program.

The local hospital has accredited pathology training in its pathology department but it is a metro-based training program and unrelated to the extra forensic training that will be required. Students need specialised accredited training once they have done most of the pathology training. There are very few training centres in Australia and very few trainers and trainees. These days, as a general phenomenon, few autopsies are performed. That is a particular reason that subspecialist forensic pathologists need specialised training in addition to their specialist forensic knowledge. They have to work under the State Coroner and with police and technologists. I understand there is also an issue with remuneration.

From NSW Health, the State Coroner, universities and others I am seeking a plan that will begin to solve the problem. There is a real opportunity to train specialists at Wagga Wagga, where there are University of New South Wales, Charles Sturt University and the University of Notre Dame campuses. Other things need to be done, but I am sure that, with genuine dialogue between and commitment from all those involved, we can bring about change. Families should no longer have to suffer through delays of up to 14 days before they can retrieve their loved one for burial. The loss of a loved one is harrowing and terrible time. The need for a family to send their loved one to Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong adds difficulty to their already stressful and tearful days. I propose that we work further to bring about change. I encourage the universities to enter into dialogue. The Federal member and State members are on the same page about finding a resolution through enhancing teaching facilities in the region so that we can alleviate the stress of families.

READING RECOVERY PROGRAM

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:06): I express my support for the late, great Reading Recovery program. Last November it was announced—without any consultation with teachers or principals—that the Government had axed the Reading Recovery program that had been used in schools across the State for more than 30 years. The program was designed specifically to improve the reading skills of young students who were struggling. The one-on-one intensive literacy program for year 1 students ran for up to 20 weeks and came at an annual cost of \$50 million. That might sound like a lot, but it is just 2 per cent of what members opposite were willing to spend on Sydney stadiums—and the outcomes of the program were priceless.

Now that it has been axed, the Reading Recovery funds will be put into the Government's \$340 million Literacy and Numeracy Strategy catering to students from kindergarten to year 10. The Government says that new positions will be created to support teachers in diagnosing and understanding literacy issues amongst their students. But, as we all know, our teachers are already overworked. Even if they can spot an issue, there is no guarantee that they will have the time or the means to help a student—no matter how much they would like to. The one-on-one tutoring style of Reading Recovery is what made it so special. Most families simply could not afford that help otherwise.

Some students need tutors; others need a little extra help to keep up with their peers and not fall behind. A teacher who is managing a class of 20 or 30 cannot ignore the rest of their students to help the one or two who might be struggling. That is what the Reading Recovery program was designed to help with. Without it, or a similar program, students who are struggling will fall further and further behind. They will struggle with literacy forever. I believe a strategy that caters to students from kindergarten to year 10 is too broad. We need a program specifically focused on the early uptake of reading skills. Literacy is a critical skill. Without a program that targets struggling young readers, they will fall through the cracks.

Reading Recovery might have been an expensive program. It was a time-intensive, one-on-one program taught by expert tutors. But it also had many positive outcomes for those students, and I argue that it was worth it. If the current format of the program was not working, those opposite should have sought to fix it, not axe it completely. Teachers and principals alike are saying that the program should have continued in some form, because students need it. Sadly, the heavy-handed lot in Government decided that the future of our State's children was not worth consulting with their schools and teachers before they made this decision. I have seen firsthand just how important this program can be and how much of a difference it can make to a young child's life. About 20 years ago my son, Joseph, was struggling with his reading skills. He took part in the program, and he owes a big part of his love for reading today to Reading Recovery. The program and everyone involved in it were

just brilliant. My son is one of countless success stories that have come out of this initiative over the three decades that it has been running.

To add insult to injury, the department has now told schools that if they want to continue running the program they can, but they will have to fund it themselves. A spokesman for the Minister for Education said, "All New South Wales public schools will have the ability to carry out independent Reading Recovery programs if they so desire." This is not a matter of what schools desire; this is a matter of what schools can afford. Good luck to every principal and parents and citizens association who will now have to try to manage their budget or fundraise to support their struggling students. This program might not have been perfect, but it was a good program and it helped to deliver positive outcomes for many students. To cut it completely without first trying to fix it or without offering a suitable replacement is a disgrace. The Government is effectively abandoning the students who are already struggling the most. It is unacceptable. Reading Recovery was a great program that should have been improved, not axed by those opposite.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:12
until Thursday 3 May 2018 at 10:00.**